

CINDER S

JULY 2016



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NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
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Minus 120 Cars, SEPTA Struggles to Move Its Rush Hour Riders

Trains Are Borrowed from Other Agencies To Help Replace Sidelined Silverliner V's

by FRANK TATNALL

Say you're running a railroad and suddenly one third of your equipment goes missing. What do you do? SEPTA was confronted with that very dilemma on Friday, July 1, when an alert car inspector discovered a fatigue crack in a truck component on Silverliner V car #812 and it became obvious that if not corrected a serious accident could occur. Engineers on all Silverliner V trains then on the road were instructed to observe a speed restriction of 50 mph for the rest of their runs. Further inspections revealed the same defect in all but five of the other 119 Silverliner V cars.

The next day the public was informed that the entire fleet of 120 Silverliner V's was being withdrawn from service, and that special weekday schedules would be published online effective Tuesday morning, July 5. (It was fortunate that this occurred on the three-day Fourth of July weekend, giving a harried staff some extra time to work out the new schedules.) Assuming that most of the 231-car Silverliner IV fleet would be available, plus the 45 push-pull coaches, it was decided to take the existing Saturday schedules, for which the IV's were more than adequate, and "modify" them for weekday service. This was done by adding extra rush-hour trains and lengthening other trains, consistent with the amount of equipment that could be put on the road each day. Fortunately, inspection of the trucks on the 40-year-old General Electric-built Silverliner IV cars revealed no such defects.

As might be expected, the first few days of reduced service could be described as controlled chaos, with many trains overcrowded and running late. One immediate problem involved passengers attempting to board at close-in stations such as Glenside and Overbrook, who often were left standing as jam-packed trains passed them by. As the month progressed, the situation improved somewhat, with equipment borrowed from Amtrak, NJ Transit and Maryland's MARC arriving and quickly being placed into service. Extra short-turn trains were sent out from time to time to pick up those stranded at the close-in stations. Cynwyd line passengers were being bused to/from 30th Street.

From the start, SEPTA General Manager Jeffrey Knueppel was forthright with the public about the crisis, holding a number of press conferences to update everyone on what was being done to address it. As more leased equipment arrived, the "interim" weekday schedules were further modified, effective first on Monday, July 11, and again on the following Monday the 18th. But on-time performance continued to be poor, anywhere from 45 to 60 percent versus the norm of 85 to 90 percent, although some of the delays could be attributed to the unusually hot weather in mid to late July which triggered mandatory speed restrictions. Another schedule change is anticipated on August 1.



Regular weekday rush-hours require 291 cars to operate 788 trains, and by July 18 SEPTA was able to field a total of 233 cars on 577 trains. By the end of that week SEPTA had arranged for five additional cars, bringing the total to 28 cars acquired from other agencies: 15 from MARC, eight from NJT and five from Amtrak. When all of them are in service they will comprise four trains, three of which Knueppel refers to as "Super Trains" because they have eight cars and required the lengthening of platforms at selected stations along the Northeast Corridor. To date the majority of the leased equipment is being operated on Amtrak-owned lines, possibly due to the more reliable power supply on those lines.

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NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, INC.
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2016-2017 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: Effective September 1, 2016, \$20.00 per person, which covers Philadelphia Chapter dues through December 31, 2017. (NRHS National membership dues for 2016 and 2017 are \$50.00, billed directly by NRHS). NRHS chapters bill their members separately for Chapter dues, which is done annually in November. The donation requests for Philadelphia Railfriends are mailed during November via separate mailing from November *Cinders*. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS should forward remittance in the amount of \$20.00 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.

Editor's Note Regarding This Issue of *Cinders*

This issue of *Cinders* has been prepared during the week of July 17-23, 2016. Because of the ongoing situation on SEPTA Regional Rail with the Silverliner V failures, we need to inform you of some adjustments.

The Silverliner V situation changes from day to day, and the information we share with you regarding leased equipment was effective July 18, and other information was gathered during that week. It is anticipated that any adjustment to Regional Rail schedules will next be effective on August 1.

The Chapter Board of Directors Meeting, scheduled for Tuesday evening, August 9 at 30th Street Station, has been cancelled. A Fall, 2016 Board meeting will be announced in our next issue.

Our Annual Summer Dinner, scheduled for Friday, August 19, 2016 at Freddie's Restaurant in West Trenton, NJ will be held as scheduled. Please see the Dinner Notice on this page for adjusted train schedules to West Trenton.

R. L. Eastwood, Jr.
President and Editor

Last Call for August 19 Summer Dinner at West Trenton, NJ

This will be the last call for Philadelphia Chapter's annual Bill Wagner Summer Dinner, a longtime tradition, will be held this year at Freddie's Restaurant in West Trenton, NJ on Friday evening, August 19. Freddie's is located at 12 Railroad Avenue in Ewing, NJ (West Trenton), immediately adjacent to the former Reading "Trent" tower, and about a two-block walk from SEPTA's West Trenton Regional Rail line station. When Philadelphia Chapter operated its "Farewell to the Reading" trip on March 21, 1976, we fed the entire train during a stop at West Trenton. **Come join us in West Trenton on Friday, August 19.**

Because of the ongoing lateness of trains due to the Silverliner V crisis, we have shown the suggested trains to use to get to West Trenton, if coming by rail. It is recommended that those riding SEPTA to West Trenton use Train #5350, which departs 30th Street at 4:32 PM, Suburban Station 4:37, Jefferson Station 4:42 and Jenkintown at 5:04 PM, arriving West Trenton at 5:42 PM. Given the current lateness of trains, Train #6352 is a last-minute option, leaving 30th Street at 4:55, Suburban at 5:00 and Jefferson at 5:05, arriving West Trenton at 6:00. This train skips Jenkintown. Return Train #3565 leaves West Trenton at 9:02 PM, arriving Jenkintown 9:38, Jefferson Station 10:00, Suburban Station 10:05, and 10:09, and continues through to Malvern, terminating there at 11:16 PM.

The dinner will be served family style, with platters, and the menu will feature a mixed salad, Penne Alfredo, entrees of broiled salmon, chicken piccata and veal parmigiana. Mixed vegetables and mashed potatoes come with the meal, as does dessert choice of New York cheesecake or ice cream. The price for the dinner is a reasonable \$40 per person.

Cocktail hour will commence at 5:00 PM at the bar, and we will sit down to dinner at 6:00 PM. All drinks will be "on individual settlement", to quote the policy of the former Pennsylvania Railroad.

Reservations must be received by Wednesday, August 10, 2016. Send \$40 per person, payable to **Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS** to: Summer Dinner, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS
Board of Directors Meeting
Summer, 2016
Tuesday, August 9, 2016

THIS MEETING HAS BEEN
CANCELLED

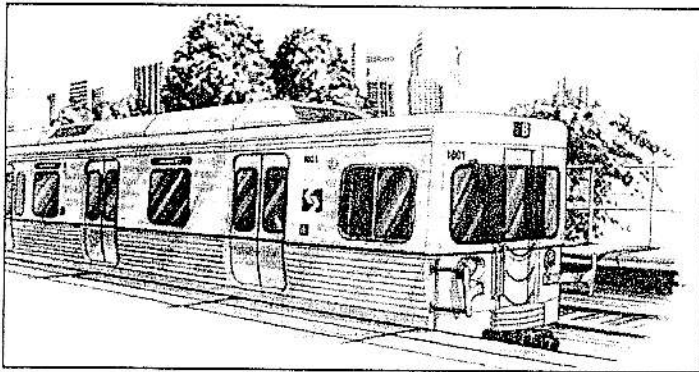
It will be scheduled in October

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA TRANSIT



By the end of June SEPTA had sold out its first batch of 10,800 Key Cards, the first public rollout of its new electronic fare collection system (see June and previous *Cinders*). Each of these cards can be loaded with weekly or monthly TransPass fares at the kiosks located in 12 "early adopter" stations and at SEPTA headquarters, 1234 Market Street. They may be used everywhere on the system except on Regional Rail. Around 5,000 more Key Cards will soon become availableIn October SEPTA plans to begin mailing out photo ID cards to seniors good for free transportation on transit lines. It's understood that Medicare cards also will continue to be accepted.

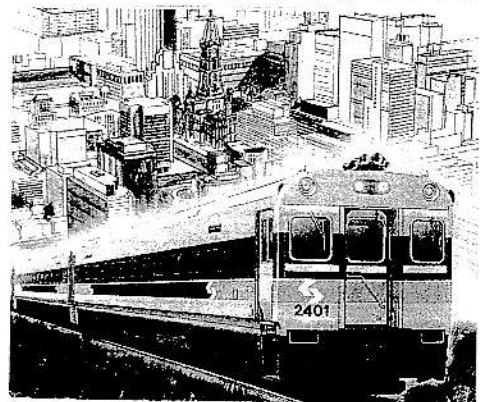
In mid-July SEPTA began negotiations with Transport Workers Union Local 234 on a new contract covering some 5,000 transit workers. The current two-year contract expires on October 31. Health care and pension benefits are expected to be major issues.....SEPTA last month renamed the 5th Street subway station on the Market-Frankford Line as the "5th Street/Independence Hall" station. This is part of SEPTA's plan to upgrade its presence in the Historic District, with reconstruction of the station to begin next summer.

As *Cinders* was going to press, SEPTA was gearing up to handle some of the crowd expected to attend the Democratic National Convention at the Wells Fargo Center starting on Monday, July 25. Service on the Broad Street subway will be beefed up and 125 buses made available to shuttle passengers between the Wells Fargo center and some 30 hotels in center city and around the Airport. A big effort is being made to attract locals from the city and suburbs to view the various special attractions in "PoliticalFest," including a mockup of Air Force One, the presidential plane, at the Convention Center. The shortage of equipment on Regional Rail could become an issue although most DNC-related travel is expected to be in off-peak hours, and the travel restrictions that were put in place for the Pope's visit last September will not be repeated. Some bus transportation to and from Wells Fargo could be slowed by the 85 permitted protests and marches in center city and around the convention venue.

SEPTA has contracted with New Flyer of Canada to supply 525 new diesel hybrid buses. These are based on the design of buses built for WMATA of Washington, DC, one of which SEPTA borrowed to evaluate before placing the orderA suspicious package was reported in the parking garage at Norristown Transportation Center around 1:30 PM on Sunday, June 5, forcing the evacuation of the center and garage until police determined that there was no threat. All bus service was halted for more than an hour, and Norristown High Speed Line trains were turned back at Bridgeport. One Regional Rail train was turned at Conshohocken and three others were delayed.

This summer SEPTA is replacing about 9,800 feet of track along Route 15 Girard Avenue. The work is being done at three locations in North and West Philadelphia, and some of the track being replaced dates from the 1940's and '50s. Buses will operate over the entire route until Labor Day weekend..... SEPTA postponed the "trolley tunnel blitz" it had scheduled for ten days in mid-July, due to the service problems on Regional Rail (see separate article in this issue). The blitz period was to be used for heavy maintenance in the tunnel, a follow-up to the track and wire work carried out during the previous three summers. SEPTA elected to close the tunnel only over the weekend of July 16-17 for electrical work, with trolleys diverted to the 40th Street. SEPTA possibly could schedule the full blitz sometime before Labor Day.

SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL



Overshadowing everything else on Regional Rail last month was the sidetracking of the Silverliner V fleet (see separate article), but there was other news on the railroad. SEPTA moved ahead with installation of its new Positive Train Control (PTC) system, placing it in service June 13 on the Lansdale-Doylestown line and then on Chestnut Hill East July 25. Manayunk-Norristown and CH West are said to be next. SEPTA also has been working to activate PTC on services which use AMTRAK lines, including Trenton, Paoli-Thorndale and Wilmington-Newark. And work continues uninterrupted on the new Crum

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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Creek viaduct on the Media-Elwyn line, with shuttle bus service provided between Swarthmore and the four stations affected by the bridge outage. It's hoped that trains can begin running over the new bridge right after the Labor Day weekend..... Another positive development is the class of 29 engineers in training at Regional Rail. This is the largest group in quite a while, and will certainly help to relieve the current shortage of engineers.

Construction of the new Levittown station is well underway, following settlement of a lawsuit between SEPTA and the Borough of Tullytown (see May Cinders). The old station was demolished in June.....Work on the ground-level connection to the Cynwyd line has been temporarily halted, but the new switch connecting it to AMTRAK near 52nd Street was installed in May.....SEPTA officials said that they expected to have a final design for the new Ardmore Transit Center in hand sometime in July. Replacement of the station building initially was part of an ambitious economic revitalization project sponsored by Lower Merion Township, but that plan was considerably downsized. SEPTA then agreed to assume responsibility for erecting a new station to replace the present inadequate structure which dates from the early 1950's, and to construct a 500-space parking garage.....As it does every year, SEPTA offered additional service on the Manayunk-Norristown line for spectators wishing to view the International Cycling Classic on Sunday, June 5.

A severe windstorm struck the Philadelphia region just before noon on Wednesday, June 8, downing trees and wires in many areas. The storm brought down catenary wires near North Philadelphia station, stranding several AMTRAK trains and forcing SEPTA to suspend service on the Trenton and Chestnut Hill West lines for more than two hours. At least 20 SEPTA trains had to be annulled. In addition to the problems on the Corridor, a large tree branch fell on the catenary near Upsal station on the CH West branch. Service on that line was not restored until after 4 PM. The press reported that one westbound Amtrak train, #95, which was disabled somewhere east of North Philadelphia, was towed by a diesel locomotive into 30th Street Station. The same storm blew down a tree at "Hunt" interlocking near Wayne Junction, causing a loss of overhead and signal power on the Mainline to Jenkintown. Power on #1 and 2 tracks was quickly restored but the tree was not removed from #3 and 4 tracks for almost two hours, causing some minor delays.

Temperatures in the 90's during much of July also caused delays, as SEPTA was forced to invoke the Rule F-S1 speed restrictions. This is a precaution against possible sagging catenary or rail problems. Several major delays were recorded in recent weeks, perhaps the most disruptive being the total shutdown of the Corridor between Philadelphia and Chester at 10:20 on Friday morning, June 24, when police became engaged in a gun battle with a criminal near the Folcroft station. An officer was seriously wounded and the suspect taken into custody before the railroad could be reopened. Numerous Wilmington line trains were annulled and some passengers were bused until the all clear was given at 12:30 PM.

Wire issues are common in summer months and this year is no exception. On Monday morning, June 20, a pantograph on train #3452 got tangled in the catenary at Glenside station and a few minutes later wires near Jenkintown were reported down on top of train #6406. Numerous other trains were delayed and some busing was arranged. The wire train completed repairs around 2:15 PM. On Friday afternoon June 24th a fallen tree near Shawmont shut down the Manayunk-Norristown line, forcing a two-hour suspension until almost 6 PM when one track was reopened between "16th Street Junction" and Miquon. Then on Sunday the 26th a power failure north of the phase break at Temple disrupted service on six lines for over an hour, causing annulments and delays until power was restored at 2 PM. Two days later sagging wires over tracks #3 and 4 on AMTRAK's Harrisburg line between Rosemont and Villanova created delays for both Amtrak and SEPTA trains, as all trains had to operate on #1 and 2 while repairs were made. A power loss on #1 track between the phase break and Wayne Junction occurred on the morning of Friday, July 8, but there were few serious delays. Passengers on train #200 stranded at North Broad were transferred to another train.

Another unexplainable trespasser incident happened on the West Trenton line on the evening of Monday, July 18. A CSX train reported a man sitting on the Delaware River railroad bridge north of Yardley. SEPTA train #5368 was held at Yardley while police collared the trespasser, but by that time the train was 70 minutes late and its spin from West Trenton was annulled.....Westbound Paoli-Thorndale service was interrupted during the evening rush hour on Wednesday, July 6, when a trackside brush fire broke out near Wynnewood station. Firefighters had to occupy the adjacent tracks but eastbound trains could still get by.

AMTRAK



In mid-June the often-discussed 30th Street Station District Plan for development of the station area was jointly unveiled by AMTRAK, SEPTA, Drexel University, PennDOT and Brandywine Realty Trust. The plan envisions the use of air space above Amtrak's yards north of the station, which would be linked with the area between 30th and 32nd Streets that includes 18 million square feet of mixed-use development. Proponents state that the proposed \$2 billion investment in roads, utilities, parks, bridges, and transit services would unlock some \$4.5 billion in private real estate development, in addition to the \$3.5 billion proposed for Drexel's Schuylkill Yards project being developed by Brandywine Realty (see April Cinders). SEPTA expects to start preliminary work on part of this plan, restoring the underground pedestrian connection between Amtrak and the 30th Street subway station. SEPTA General Manager Jeffrey Kneuppel said that the District Plan is a good example of how transportation can drive economic development.

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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The last of 70 new ACS-64 electric locomotives ordered by AMTRAK rolled out of the Siemens plant in Sacramento, CA, on June 2, and in a special ceremony was accepted by Amtrak President Joseph Boardman. "Sprinter" unit #670 arrived at the Wilmington shop a couple of weeks later, completing Amtrak's plan to replace its aging fleet of AEM-7's on the Northeast Corridor. Amtrak recognized the fine performance of the 1980's-vintage AEM-7's with a farewell fantrip on Saturday, June 18, which operated from Washington to Philadelphia and return. The nine-car train was headed by two of the three still-active units, #942 and 946, with inspection car 10001 Beech Grove on the tail end. Editor Larry Eastwood was on board (see his report elsewhere in this issue).

As part of the city's effort to welcome visitors to the Democratic National Convention July 25-28, AMTRAK said that it will "roll out the welcome mat" at 30th Street Station. Several improvements have been made to the interior of the building, including "living walls" of vertical and horizontal planters furnished by the University City District and a "Taste of Philly" event with kiosks selling locally favorite foods such as soft pretzels, Tastykakes, Peanut Chews and sodas. Patriotic red, white and blue lights will bathe the 29th Street façade of the station. No special trains to the convention have been announced but many attendees are expected to ride Amtrak to and from Philadelphia Under a provision of the FAST Act of 2015, the Federal Railroad Administration last month announced that it would entertain bids from private operators to take over the operation of up to three of AMTRAK's long-distance services.

Two trespasser deaths occurred on AMTRAK lines in the Philadelphia area during a seven-day period last month. The first was at Bryn Mawr station on Friday afternoon, July 8, when eastbound Amtrak work train KP904, running on track #2, struck and killed a female trespasser around 3:45 PM. All service was suspended, with the westbound tracks being the first to reopen. Eastbound Amtrak trains were further delayed and the two inbound SEPTA trains already enroute, #1548 held at Rosemont and #1552 stopped at Radnor, were terminated. Passengers from both trains were bused ahead, while two other trains were annulled and several delayed. All tracks except #2 were restored to regular operation by 5:30 PM. Then, a week later on Friday, July 15, northbound Regional train #184 ran over a woman standing on the #2 track at Ridley Park station.

Northeast Corridor service was suspended in both directions at 11:20 AM, immediately after the death at Ridley Park was reported. Around 12:30 PM some of the 359 passengers on board #184 were transferred to SEPTA train #210, which had been held back at Eddystone. (Presumably the rest of the AMTRAK passengers elected to remain on their train until it was released from the scene about two hours after the incident.) Other Amtrak trains were delayed for an hour or more by the shutdown, while six SEPTA trains had to be annulled and several others were delayed. No northbound trains were allowed to stop at Ridley Park station until the remains of the deceased were removed from the platform in mid-afternoon.

AMTRAK Acela Express #2170 became disabled at Wilmington station on Wednesday afternoon, June 15. Passengers were transferred to the following Acela #2172, but then that train suffered an equipment problem and was almost 40 minutes late departing the station. Several SEPTA trains were delayed by the ailing Acelas.....AMTRAK trains #42 and 43 were held out of Harrisburg on Tuesday, May 31, when NORFOLK SOUTHERN freight train 13R bound for Hagerstown, MD, derailed nine empty boxcars on the tight curve leading from the Pittsburgh Line to the Lurgan branch. This blocked the connection just west of the passenger station which both trains use to move to and from NS. Train 42 was almost three hours late in reaching the station.



CSX, NS
OTHER
ROADS

NJ TRANSIT in late June reached a tentative agreement with the two unions that had rejected an earlier contract offer (see June Cinders). Leaders of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen and the United Transportation Union said they were satisfied with NJT's new offer, but it still had to be ratified by their members..... An Atlantic City-bound NJT train struck and killed a trespasser near Pomona on the morning of Wednesday, June 1. The train was delayed for almost three hours, but the 100 passengers remained on board On several days in June NJT was busing Atlantic City rail passengers between 30th Street Station and Cherry Hill due to CONRAIL maintenance work on the 120-year-old Delair bridge..... The New Jersey Legislature is looking at a proposal from some South Jersey members to build a new train station at Atlantic City International Airport. The Atlantic City Line runs adjacent to the airport, but nothing will be done until the lawmakers and Governor Christie can agree on a plan to replenish the State's Transportation Trust Fund, which is nearly exhausted.

CSX suffered two major problems back in June. First there was the freight train wreck inside the Howard Street tunnel in Baltimore on June 13, in which 13 cars derailed in the low-clearance tunnel, two of which containing hazardous acetone. It took four days to reopen the busy mainline to Bay View, Philadelphia and the Northeast, forcing many trains to be detoured over circuitous routes. Then toward the end of the month devastating floods struck southern West Virginia, knocking out the ex-C&O mainline west of White Sulphur Springs for three days A male trespasser was struck and killed by westbound CSX train Q141 near Langhorne station shortly after 2:30 AM on Tuesday, May 31. SEPTA service on the adjacent tracks was not affected due to the early hour. Four days later, on Saturday afternoon June 4, a woman was injured while trying to climb between cars on a stopped CSX train at Langhorne station.

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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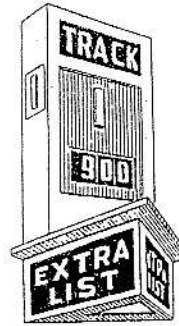
NORFOLK SOUTHERN reportedly has again cleared the trees that were blocking the view from the tourist area at Horseshoe Curve. This was done several years ago but the trees had grown back.....NS has released photos of RPU6D slug unit #891, newly rebuilt at Altoona for use with a SD33ECO mother unit. The slug is decked out in the green and black livery used on low emission unitsRail freight traffic in the U.S. was down by seven percent during the first half of 2016 as compared with the year-ago period. The Association of American Railroads said that carload traffic was off more than 12 percent while intermodal business declined by two percent. Coal and oil were the biggest losers in traffic volume (*Trains*).

The FRA held a hearing in Washington on July 15 to weigh arguments for and against its proposed rule mandating two-person crews on all freight trains. Railroad management officials blasted the proposal as unnecessary regulation while union representatives supported it.....STRASBURG RAILROAD will spend \$1.75 million for an addition to its shop, building more than 12,000 square feet onto its existing 18,000-square-foot shop. The expanded facility is needed to meet the demand for outside contract work, said SRC President Linn Moedinger. Six more full-time positions will be added to a shop force recognized for its quality work (*Trains*).....The original Pennsylvania Railroad freight station at Ardmore, dating from 1895, is in danger of being demolished as part of the planned expansion of the adjacent Suburban Square shopping center. Currently being used for storage, the wood-frame shed is one of the last of its kind in the State, and the Lower Merion Conservancy is trying to save it. The old PRR freight house at Bryn Mawr has been partially incorporated into the present Tango Restaurant.

Taking a cue from the High Line Park in New York City, Phase I of the proposed rail park just north of center city is expected to begin early next year. A group called Friends of the Rail Park has an ambitious plan to convert former Reading rights-of-way into a linear park, a section of which will be atop the old railroad viaduct from Vine Street to north of Spring Garden Street. But the first phase will be on the old City branch extending from the former "Callowhill Street Junction" atop the viaduct downgrade to Broad Street. Eventually the park is to be extended westward under Broad Street, then in the cut to the Art Museum area and beyond, a total of three miles. The city government is supportive of the effort and partial funding has been pledged by the William Penn and Knight Foundations.....A man was killed on Saturday afternoon, June 25, when he apparently jumped in front of a PATCO train at the Woodcrest station. Service was suspended for almost three hours.

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.



Saturday, September 10,

2016: Reading & Northern Budd RDC's #9166 and 9168 will operate trips Pottsville-Schuylkill Haven-Port Clinton-North Reading and return. Full details on Page 6 of June *Cinders*.

Saturday, August 6:

Cooperstown & Charlotte Valley Railfan day, 136 East Main Street, Milford, NY 13807. Events run from 9 AM until 10 PM, and feature a whole host of rail activities with fan interaction. Tickets will be available on day of event. For more information, call 607-432-2429 or visit Leatherstocking Railway Historical Society at www.lrhs.com. Make note that hotel/motel accommodations can be tight because of baseball camps in the area during August.

Friday, August 19:

Philadelphia Chapter's annual Bill Wagner Summer Dinner, to be held this year at Freddie's Restaurant, 12 Railroad Avenue, Ewing, NJ, adjacent to former Reading Railroad "Trent" tower and a two block walk from SEPTA's West Trenton station. Full details on Page 2, this issue.

Saturday and Sunday, September 24-25: 40th

Anniversary celebration of the Reading Company Technical & Historical Society. Complete information in September *Cinders*.

Sunday, September 25:

Lehigh Valley Chapter 40th annual Train Show Chrin Palmer Community Center in Easton, PA. Admission: \$5 per person; food available on site. This is an excellent show with plenty of space as well as convenient parking.

Through October 30:

"Bridges of the Reading Railroad" at the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, 500 S. Third Street, Hamburg, PA 19526. Many different photos and models of the RDG bridges. Museum hours are Saturdays, 10 AM to 4 PM and Sundays, Noon to 4 PM. Admission: Adults \$7, seniors (65+) \$6, children (5-12) \$3, children 4 and under free. RCT&HS Members Free. Complete details on Page 7 of June *Cinders*.

Philadelphia LCL.....

Through roundabout circles, we have learned of the death of **Richard Barben**, of Westmont, NJ, a member of NRHS and our Chapter since 1972. Dick was a longtime employee of the Campbell Soup Company. We have name of a former neighbor, but have been unable to contact him. As far as we know, there were no services. We will attempt to seek additional information.....West Jersey Chapter Member **Norman R. Seidelmann**, of Pennsauken, NJ, passed away on June 29, 2016 at the age of 75, following a period of declining health. Norm was known to many Philadelphia Chapter members and was a SEPTA bus driver prior to his retirement.....Speaking of retirement, longtime Chapter Member **Vince Jakubowski** has retired from SEPTA. A SEPTA locomotive engineer, Vince was at the controls of many of Philadelphia Chapter's excursions during his career. His last runs, on July 23, were on Trains 9723, 9728, 9733 and 738 between Jefferson Station and Trenton, with the last train ending up at Chestnut Hill East early on the morning of July 24.

Minus 120 Cars, SEPTA Struggles To Move Its Rush Hour Riders

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Amtrak loaned SEPTA three of its new ACS-64 locomotives, #610, 618 and 659, while the NJT train is powered by its own ALP-46 locomotive, #4627. (See box for the consists of the four trains as of July 18, before the five additional MARC cars arrived.) SEPTA has estimated that renting all of this equipment will cost at least \$600,000 per month. The six graffiti-covered ex-NJT Comet coaches stored at Overbrook for the last three years were moved to Wayne shop on July 16, but it is not known whether SEPTA intends to place them to service again. It is reported that the NJT train now in operation must be returned to its owner on August 19 for increased seasonal football traffic.

Knueppel took pains to describe just what had gone wrong with the Silverliner V's, which after all are comparatively new since the last cars were not delivered by Hyundai-Rotem until 2013. The average Silver V car has only run an average of 15,000 miles in service. (Because completion of the order was three years behind the contract date, Rotem was liable for \$13 million in damages, but these funds already have been spent to overhaul 33 push-pull coaches at the builder's South Philadelphia plant.)

Assistant General Manager Ronald Hopkins led a group of reporters out to the Overbrook shop on July 14, where one of the cars was placed on a lift and the undercarriage exposed to view. He said that the inspector had discovered a flawed weld in the assembly of a so-called equalizer beam, one of which is on each of the car's four trucks. These beams transfer the weight of the car to the axles and are attached to the truck frame by steel "beam seats." Some of the cracks in the beam seats were found to extend into the beams themselves. Metallurgical studies were begun to determine the cause of the cracks and what can be done to make the cars roadworthy again. Consultant LTK Engineering was hired to perform a top-to-bottom evaluation of a random Silverliner V car, #850, which was found to have no defects other than those already found on the equalizer beams.

It was made clear that none of the Silverliner V's are likely to be back on the road by Labor Day. SEPTA has determined that satisfactory repairs cannot be made to the existing beams so new beam seats and at least some new equalizer beams

will need to be manufactured and installed. There was much finger-pointing in the press as to whether the fault lay with the builder, which is based in South Korea, with the Ohio subcontractor which manufactured the beams, the Pittsburgh-area firm which actually did the welding, or with SEPTA for awarding the \$274-million low-bid contract to an inexperienced firm rather than to Kawasaki, a company with a long history of building transit cars. SEPTA Chairman Pasquale Deon, Sr., in a July 21 interview, defended the decision to award the contract to Rotem, telling the *Inquirer* that "I was very comfortable with those guys being able to do the job." But former SEPTA Chief Mechanical Officer Jonathan Klein said that giving the business to Rotem was a "political decision," and should not have been made.

SEPTA does hold a warranty from Rotem, and in addition to replacing the faulty parts the company could be held liable for any liquidated damages caused by manufacturing defects. The full extent of its liability is yet to be determined. It is probable, however, that SEPTA will have to absorb the loss of revenue caused by the service cutbacks, and possibly the cost of leasing equipment from other agencies. SEPTA management also is concerned that the inconvenience caused by this situation may have a long-term negative effect on Regional Rail ridership, which reached record levels in Fiscal Year 2016 ended June 30.

SEPTA is looking at ways to improve its interim service, possibly with additional leased equipment and the operation of express buses to supplement trains from origins such as Fox Chase. Customers also were being urged to seek alternate transportation, especially on SEPTA transit lines such as the Broad Street and Market-Frankford Lines and the Norristown High Speed Line. Additional parking has been arranged at lots near Broad Street and Market-Frankford stations.

Now the work begins to get the Silverliner V's back in service. Hyundai-Rotem has started ordering steel for new beams and beam seats, and will proceed as soon as SEPTA's engineering staff and consultants determine a course of action. A Rotem spokesman was quoted as saying that "the design of how [the beam seat] was welded and the weld itself are in question," meaning that they do not want to do it the same way again. There is fervent hope on the part of all Regional Rail customers that an answer will soon be forthcoming, and work started quickly to refit the cars. Most riders have found the V's to be fast and comfortable, with many amenities not available on the older IV's. They would like to have their nice new cars back, but with the assurance that they are safe.

SEPTA Borrowed Equipment Consists – July 18, 2016

(PLEASE SEE PAGE 8 FOR FIVE ADDITIONAL MARC CARS HELD FOR SEPTA ON MONDAY, JULY 25!!)

AMTRAK – One Harrisburg Trainset – ACS-64 locomotive, Amfleet I coaches #82729, 82567, 82669, 82602, Cab Control Car #9638 -- Assigned to Trains 1580, 1582, 1581, 1583 between Suburban Station and Bryn Mawr.

MARC Set A – Amtrak ACS-64 locomotive, MARC IIB coaches #7791, 7721, 7731, 7729, IIA Cab Car #7754
Used on Trains 1291/1292 (AM), Trains 1297/1218 (PM) between Suburban Station and Newark, DE

MARC Set B – Amtrak ACS-64 locomotive, MARC IIB coaches #7707, 7726, 7730, 7716, 7728, SEPTA Bombardier Cab Car #2410
-- After trial on Train 6391 (AM) and Train #6348 (PM) between Powelton Avenue Yard and Neshaminy Falls (West Trenton Line) equipment had some interface issues with power and is currently a protect equipment set based at Suburban Station

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT – ALP-46 electric locomotive #4627, Comet IV coach #5015, Comet IIm coach #5414, Comet IV coach #5243, Comet IIm coaches #5438, 5456, 5412, 5407, Comet V cab car #6040 – Assigned to Trains 1794 (AM) and 1763 (PM) between Trenton and Center City Philadelphia

--Information compiled by Harry Garforth, Frank Lancaster and Larry Eastwood

Amtrak Retires and Celebrates The Life of the AEM-7 Electrics

*by R. L. Eastwood, Jr., President
Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS*

On Saturday, June 18, 2016, Amtrak celebrated the end of a spectacular 36-year career of its AEM-7 electric locomotives by operating a railroad-sponsored excursion between Washington, DC and Philadelphia, PA, using two of the venerable "toasters" to power the sold-out nine-car Amfleet train.

It's perhaps a bit sobering to realize that on March 11, 1980, I was invited by Amtrak to ride a test run of the prototype AEM-7, #900, west of Paoli, and here, 36 years later, I was on board to observe the end of a long and dedicated career.

AEM-7's #942 and 946, rather battered after some three million miles of service each, powered the special. Following the locomotives were Amcoaches #82807, 82724, 82673, Amcafe 43366, Amcoaches 82991, 82601, 82995, 82803 and Office Car #10001-Beech Grove.

The special departed Washington Union Terminal on time at 9:00 AM, and raced up the Northeast Corridor to the Maryland Commuter Rail (MARC) station at Halethorpe, MD, a very new facility with high-level platforms, elevators and an overhead crosswalk. Amtrak and MARC police were present to provide security and passengers detrained, and the special backed out of the station and executed a "running arrival" for the benefit of the photographers. All the while, two Amtrak trains sped through the station at track speed.

Departing Halethorpe, the train operated with little delay through Baltimore enroute to Philadelphia's 30th Street Station. While there were some mechanical issues with the 942 and 946, they were virtually unnoticeable and cell phone speed recorders rose to the 125 mph track speed whenever permissible. Enroute, we passed Amtrak's Wilmington Shop, where an army of blue-shirted Amtrak employees saluted and photographed the train. There were any number of locomotives displayed awaiting our afternoon visit on the return trip from Philadelphia.

Arriving in Philadelphia at just about 12 Noon, more Amtrak police and volunteers were on hand to load some 500-plus bag lunches prepared by Jersey Mike's a hoagie vendor located in 30th Street Station. Once the bag lunches were loaded, we departed for "Zoo" tower where the train would be turned on the seldom-used "New York-Pittsburgh Subway", used by through New York to Western PRR trains.

The train spooked photographers who thought the turn would be made from west to east, but did the opposite, ending up at "Stiles" interlocking on the Amtrak/SEPTA Harrisburg Line. The move was quickly executed and the train began to retrace the route to Washington, with its Wilmington Shop stop next. The Amtrak volunteers really hustled all the bag lunches through the train to passengers, and passing through 30th Street's lower level on the return, all the empty trays that held the lunches were off-loaded and we moved south to Wilmington shop.

Arriving at "Landlith" interlocking on the north side of Wilmington, the train backed in to the south end of the main shop

building, where passengers detrained to tour the facility. Amtrak President Joe Boardman was on board the **Beech Grove**, and he detrained to greet the passengers as well as the many Amtrak employees on hand who guided the passengers through the Shop.

For this writer, my last tour through Wilmington Shop was probably in 1980, when Conrail GG1 #4800 was transferred, through Lancaster Chapter, NRHS, to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg, PA. Since that time, the employee force (and the cast of wheeled characters) has definitely changed.

A large cadre of Wilmington employees, volunteers and retirees enthusiastically led the 476 passengers through the shop, and it was obvious that an extensive amount of preparation had been done to demonstrate and illustrate what this venerable facility does to keep Amtrak rolling.

Equipment was strategically displayed. Observed were Acela Express power units #2003 and 2001, GP38-3 #524, ACS-64 #623 and 669 (the latter having just been accepted and readied for service), and AEM-7 #905. Exiting the building, visitors were greeted by the Amtrak Police and their Police Mobile Command Center.

Moving alongside the office building, on display were AEM-7 #928, ACS-64 #670 (the last of the order, just delivered from Siemens in California), HHP-8 #690 (ex-660), General Electric 80-ton switcher #1100, P42DC #145 in the triple-stripe scheme, ACS-64 #642 and P42DC #42, both in their famed Veterans' paint scheme, and a whole line of out-of-service AEM-7's coupled together. After a nearly two-hour layover and tour, the train was reboarded and departed for Washington to end the trip.

At this time Amtrak Vice-President, Operations for the NEC, Chris Jagodzinski passed through the train, presenting each passenger with a beautiful commemorative pin with a head-on view of the 942 on it, and thanking each person for riding. It should be pointed out the Jagodzinski was very personally involved in the operation of the train, with attention to detail evident in every facet.

As we rolled along toward Washington, Amtrak conducted a lottery, offering for sale a locomotive bell and other AEM-7 collectibles, including nearly 100 locomotive number boards. The bell was priced at \$500, and the number boards at \$75 each. At those prices, Amtrak probably realized between \$7,500 and \$10,000 from eager railroadiana collectors!

Amtrak's Bruce Van Sant, a notable rail historian, did the narration on board as well as participating in the lottery for the railroadiana items. All commentary heard on board and following the trip was highly positive, and the rail history/enthusiast community owes Amtrak and its dedicated employees a deep debt of gratitude for providing a memorable send-off to a notable electric locomotive. I'm pleased to have participated.

MORE MARC CARS FOR SEPTA

In a late news item, MARC's Morning Sheet issued on Monday, July 25 has identified five (5) additional MARC IIb push-pull cars being held for loan to SEPTA, as follows: #7708, 7714, 7704, 7701, 7734 (all straight coaches, without a cab car. It is unknown when they will arrive; it is believed they will be used to fill out eight-car consists of the present two MARC trainset SEPTA has in use.