



CINDERS

JUNE 2016



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Number 6

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

Founded 1936, incorporated 1973 as a 501c3 non-profit corporation

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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 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.

Annual Wagner Summer Dinner August 19 at West Trenton, NJ

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.

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.

Convenient train schedules on the West Trenton Line are available for those attending. Train #6370 leaves 30th Street at 3:50 PM, and Train #2372 leaves 30th Street at 4:22 PM, arriving

West Trenton at 4:32 and 5:02, respectively, making most local stops. For those who cannot leave early, West Trenton Express #6374 leaves 30th Street at 4:42, and arrives at West Trenton at 5:57. This train makes no stops between Temple University and Bethayres, departing Bethayres at 5:20 PM. Returning, the best option is Train #389, departing West Trenton at 8:53 PM, and arriving 30th Street at 10:01 PM. This is a through train from West Trenton to Elwyn.

Reservations are being accepted for the August 19 dinner. Send \$40 per person, payable to **Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS** to: Summer Dinner, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302.

Longtime Chapter members will recall that when Philadelphia Chapter operated the "Farewell to the Reading" trip from Reading, PA to Port Reading, NJ on Sunday, March 21, 1976, we made a stop at West Trenton where all 350 passengers on the train were fed at Freddie's, which has been in business for 80 years.

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

REMINDER!!

**There is NO meeting in June.
Our meeting schedule will
resume on September 16.**

This issue of CINDERS is being mailed on or about Monday, June 13, 2016. There will be another issue somewhere near the end of July, providing final notice for our August 19 dinner in West Trenton. Another issue will appear near the end of August, in time for our meeting on Friday, September 16.

Chapter Announces Tentative Meeting Dates for 2016-2017 Year

Philadelphia Chapter Officers have announced the tentative dates for our 2016-2017 meeting year. They will be subject to the availability of meeting space at Drexel University.

All of dates fall on the normal third Friday of the month, except December, when we traditionally meet on the second Friday. The dates are as follows:

September 16, 2016
October 21, 2016
November 18, 2016
December 9, 2016 (second Friday)
January 20, 2017 (Inauguration Day)
February 17, 2017
March 17, 2017 (St. Patrick's Day)
April 21, 2017
May 19, 2017

We have not set a potential date for a June, 2017 meeting, but will do so as the year evolves.

Chapter Board Meets May 10; \$2 Dues Increase Approved for 2017

Philadelphia Chapter's Board of Directors held its Spring, 2016 meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at Amtrak's 30th Street Station.

At that meeting, the directors approved a \$2 increase in our Chapter dues for the year 2017. This is the first increase since 2012, and will assist in defraying increases in printing *Cinders*, which has been caused by paper increases. Postage costs have increased during the five-year period, in spite of the recent decrease in the cost of a stamp from 49 cents to 45 cents.

Membership Chair Sheila Dorr was present and reported on some items from the NRHS Spring, 2016 Conference, which was held at Cumberland, MD the weekend of April 23-24.

President Larry Eastwood reported to the Board that he is working with SEPTA on a potential tour of their 19th floor Control Center at 1234 Market Street. While it was thought that June or July would be possible, it's recognized that SEPTA will have its hands full with the Democratic National Convention here from July 25-28, and we should wait until August or later.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS Board of Directors Meeting Summer, 2016

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

**Tuesday, August 9, 2016
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM**

Members welcome and encouraged to attend

NRHS National Update – May, 2016

The NRHS held its Spring, 2016 Conference at Cumberland, MD the weekend of April 23-24, 2016. Both National Representative Peter M. Senin, Jr., and Chapter Membership Chair Sheila Dorr were in attendance, and they have forwarded some notes which we share with you. We thank them for taking time to attend.

It was reported at the Open Session meeting that NRHS National membership has continued to decline with 7612 paid members for 2016 as compared to 8223 on the rolls as of December 2015. NRHS Vice President Joe Maloney reported that the NRHS Membership Roster is a "work in progress", being handled by volunteers. An earlier Membership Roster neglected to show Chapter President Larry Eastwood, with 54 continuous years of membership, indicating they have a way to go.

Maloney also reported that three NRHS chapters achieved significant milestones in 2016: Lehigh Valley (75 years), Indianapolis, Old Pueblo and Promontory chapters, 50 years each. He said that 216 members would be receiving 25 and 50-year NRHS pins during 2016.

It was reported that the membership records contractor, Amilia, was doing good and was inexpensive. (*Editor's Note: Did we really have to go to Montreal, Canada to find a contractor?? Is there no capable organization in the United States to handle our records?*). The Society is looking for volunteers to assist with membership records so the records can be stabilized and made more accurate. Also with Membership Records, a new tri-fold membership folder has been developed by Jeff Smith, and apparently, 5,000 copies will be produced.

An *NRHS News* dated June 2016 has been distributed electronically to those for whom NRHS has E-mail addresses; it remains to be seen if hard copies will be sent to others. The new issue contains the Member Discount List, painstakingly prepared by Wes Ross of Lexington, KY each year as a benefit to members who are planning to visit tourist rail attractions.

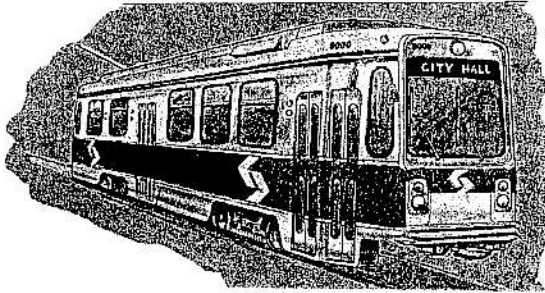
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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA TRANSIT



A big item on SEPTA's current agenda is the Democratic National Convention, which is coming to town in late July. While the actual convention sessions will be held July 25-28 at the Wells Fargo Center in South Philadelphia, thousands of visitors will arrive well before that and will be attending something called "PoliticalFest" at seven different venues in the city. Moving all those people to, from and around town will be a challenge for SEPTA as well as for AMTRAK and the airlines. Streets and major highways will see more bus traffic. Amtrak is gearing up to handle the added crowds and Philly Phlash will operate a bus loop for PoliticalFest. When it comes to the convention itself many attendees are expected to ride the Broad Street subway as well as Regional Rail lines from outlying points. Bus shuttles also will be run between center city hotels and the Wells Fargo Center.

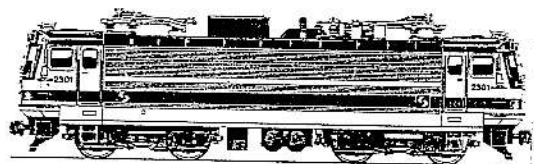
Not to be forgotten in the political hubbub is SEPTA's introduction of its long-awaited Key fare collection system, set for Monday, June 13 (see May Cinders). Initially, only 10,000 "early adopters" will be able to obtain Key Cards, but more cards likely will be made available later in the summer. When in full use riders will tap the Key Card against an electronic reader at a station or on a vehicle, the fare being deducted from the riders' pre-loaded accounts. Key Cards will be accepted only on transit lines until such time as the system is activated on Regional Rail as well, which is optimistically projected for next year.

SEPTA's operating and capital budgets for Fiscal Year 2017 starting July 1 were approved by the SEPTA board at its May 26 meeting. The operating budget of \$1.4 billion is 3-1/2-percent higher than that in FY 2016, while the capital budget of \$548.6 million represents an increase of about \$13 million over the current fiscal year. The largest single item in the new capital budget is \$168 million for vehicle acquisitions and overhauls, with SEPTA Key coming in second at \$77.2 million. Labor and fringe benefits make up 72.2 percent of the operating budget. The current headcount of employees is 9,653 which includes an increase of 49 positions in the safety and security areas..... SEPTA has earned the Pennsylvania Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence to recognize its energy-recycling technology on the Market-Frankford Line.

SEPTA began busing Route 101 passengers last month between Providence Road and Orange Street in Media, due to construction of a new Super Wawa store along State Street. The bus shuttles are to end on June 17.....Route 10 Overbrook is to be bused from early June until late July because of a trackwork project, and Route 15 Girard Avenue will operate with buses for the entire summer..... SEPTA plans to spend \$1.8 million to rebuild the bus loop at 61st & Pine Street. It is a terminus for busy Route 42.....All trolley service in the subway was diverted to the 40th Street Market-Frankford station over the weekend of April 23-24, due to repair work in the tunnel.....A 55-year-old man visiting from Texas fell off the platform at the 13th Street Market-Frankford station just before 5 PM on Tuesday, May 24, and was struck and killed by a westbound train. Shuttle buses were pressed into service between the 30th Street and Spring Garden stations until about 6:30 PM.

SEPTA Chief of Police Thomas Nestel III helped subdue an intoxicated driver and his passenger in Kensington on Wednesday afternoon, May 11. Nestel stepped into the melee involving a crowd of neighbors, and used his taser to assist a city police officer in making the arrests.....The SEPTA board last month approved a \$412-million contract with New Flyer of Canada for 525 diesel hybrid buses, to be delivered over a five-year period.....Railway Age Magazine has recognized a SEPTA manager as one of the "fast trackers" in the American rail industry. He is Anthony Fazio, 36, SEPTA's manager of track design, who came over from an engineering position at AMTRAK.....SEPTA is in the design stage for a complete rebuilding of the 5th Street station on the Market-Frankford Line. A Federal TIGER grant is expected to help with the cost, with construction to begin in June 2017.

SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL



SEPTA is going all out to make the new Crum Creek viaduct at Swarthmore a reality this summer (see May Cinders). The \$90-million project will be speeded along by an 11-week shutdown of rail service on the Media-Elwyn line south of Swarthmore, beginning June 18 and extending through Labor Day, September 5. The concrete piers and supports already have been completed, and the present 120-year-old steel bridge towering 100 feet above the valley will be demolished. In addition, the stone piers from the original bridge dating from much earlier also must

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be removed. Then the new precast bridge deck resting on steel girders can be slid into place. Shuttle bus service will be operated during the outage, handling Elwyn, Media, Moylan-Rose Valley and Wallingford passengers to and from their trains at Swarthmore station. Some of the buses will run express during rush hours. The shutdown also will allow crews to stabilize three rock and earthen slopes near the Media station. Several public information open houses were held by SEPTA last month in the affected areas.

Work also is proceeding on the new Secane station on the Media-Elwyn line. The \$21.2-million project includes construction of a new pedestrian tunnel under the tracks, the excavation for which took place over the Memorial Day weekend. Bus shuttles were operated over the entire line to and from University City station on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Some work also was done on the Crum Creek project and other bridges received timber replacements during this three-day outageIn addition to the ongoing plan to extend Media-Elwyn service to a new station at Wawa, for which \$2 million is included in the Fiscal Year 2017 capital budget, SEPTA is participating with PennDOT in the Borough of West Chester's study for a possible restoration of rail service to West Chester. Although the track is still in place, most of the catenary was removed after the end of regular service in 1986.

SEPTA is moving forward with the extension of Positive Train Control (PTC) throughout its system. The first section to be activated was the Warminster Line on April 18, followed by the Fox Chase Line on May 23. Sometime this month the first part of the plan to begin PTC operation of SEPTA trains on AMTRAK lines is expected to occur. AMTRAK already has PTC in service—in the form of its Advanced Civil Speed Enforcement System (ACES)—on the Northeast Corridor and the Harrisburg Line, and SEPTA had adopted the same system. The Lansdale-Doylestown line reportedly is the next to go under PTC operation.....A full reprint of all Regional Rail timetables will be effective June 19, with the next schedule changes to come in September.

SEPTA is joining with AMTRAK in planning the Paoli Station Accessibility Improvements project, which is to begin this summer. The project includes a new high-level center island platform, a new pedestrian overpass with elevators connecting the present station with the center platform and the north parking lot, expanded parking and improvements to the station building in compliance with Federal accessibility standards. An open house was scheduled at the station on June 8. The center island platform would be built in the space now occupied by tracks #2 and 3. Total cost of the project will be \$36 million funded both by SEPTA and Amtrak, with completion set for winter 2018. This is seen as the first stage in the long-planned Paoli Intermodal Transportation Center project.

SEPTA and the Uber ride-sharing service will run an experiment this summer to see if Uber can conveniently bring passengers to 11 Regional Rail stations which suffer from inadequate parking facilities. Riders will get a 40-percent discount off the normal cost of an Uber ride. The targeted stations are

Melrose Park, Elkins Park, Jenkintown, Glenside, Warminster, Lansdale, Doylestown, Woodbourne, Swarthmore, Wayne and Exton. The new service will cost SEPTA nothing.

Friday, May 20, was a very tough day for Regional Rail riders, due primarily to two trespasser fatalities. It began at 11:47 AM when southbound train #6305 struck and killed a 26-year-old man just north of the Fern Rock Transportation Center. All Lansdale, Warminster and West Trenton service was suspended for the next two hours, with delays rippling throughout the system and causing more than 25 trains to be annulled. Many trains were turned back at Fern Rock during the outage. As if that wasn't bad enough, at 6:20 PM CSX train Q191 ran over an 18-year-old male trespasser near the east end of the Delaware River bridge, which is shared by SEPTA's West Trenton trains. SEPTA riders endured many delays along with at least 12 annulments. Shuttle buses were pressed into service between Woodbourne, Yardley and West Trenton until the railroad was reopened around 8:50 PM.....Paoli-Thorndale service was delayed for a time on the morning of Sunday, May 22, when a broken steady span was found in the catenary just east of Devon station. Two SEPTA trains had to be annulled and two AMTRAK trains were delayed until repairs could be completed.



AMTRAK

Two of the three AEM-7's that remain on AMTRAK's active roster will power the "Farewell to the AEM-7" excursion out of Washington on Saturday, June 18 (see article in May Cinders). The 942, suitably polished, will lead the train to Philadelphia and return, with a tour of the Wilmington shop included. Either #917 or 946 will be the other unit on the specialAs mentioned here last month, AMTRAK has equipped around 15 of its P42 diesels with ACSES controls, meaning that trains 43/42 now can operate between Philadelphia and Harrisburg without assistance from an electric locomotive. After a two-day trial in mid-April the diesels were returned to the shop for some minor adjustments and beginning April 19 the ACS-64 electrics again were leading the trains on the Keystone Line. Phase III Heritage unit #145 made the first unassisted run west on train #43 May 2, and that same day the last electric pulled #42 east from Harrisburg. ACSES-equipped units seen in recent days include #89 and 94, the 145 making its last run west on May 20.

All Viewliner I sleeping cars will receive new Phase III paint and new names, according to a report in *Railpace*. For example, car 62043 (ex-Sunset View), has been repainted and renamed **New River**.....A new bridge is under construction to carry 41st Street over AMTRAK in West Philadelphia. A few years ago a new span was built for 40th Street—complete with trolley tracks!.....Work on constructing a mile-and-a-half-long third track on the Northeast Corridor between "Yard" and "Ragan" interlockings near Wilmington has been underway for the past three years, but due to bridge problems is still not complete.....There were reports that AMTRAK was talking with city officials in the Lehigh Valley about running an inspection or excursion train between

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Allentown and New York sometime next year. The idea would be to test the feasibility of starting regular train service over the route in the future, but recent reports indicate that the proposed excursion probably won't happen. NORFOLK SOUTHERN, over whose tracks the train would run for part of the trip, seems cool to the idea. NS Spokesman Rudy Husband said that his railroad hasn't completely ruled it out, but "as far as we're concerned, the case is closed unless things change" (*Trains*).



**CSX, NS
OTHER
ROADS**

NJ TRANSIT certainly has been having its problems of late. After announcing a tentative contract agreement with its 17 rail unions in March, NJT learned that the members of two of its operating unions, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen and the United Transportation Union, had rejected the contract. So it's back to the negotiating table in this long-running dispute, during which unionized employees have received no wage increases. Then there is the problem of uncertain State funding for the agency, as some monies from the Transportation Trust Fund have been diverted to other uses. Reportedly, leaders in the State Senate will proposed a stopgap bill to keep NJT afloat. Some of this uncertainty may have led the man chosen to head the agency, William Crosbie, to back out at the last minute (see May *Cinders*), and Deputy Executive Director Neil Yellin retired last month. He was replaced by Amy Herbold who moved over from Governor Christie's office. NJT's chief of policy and planning, Michael Drewniak, was named as interim chief of staff, after recently coming to NJT from his former job as spokesman for Christie. State Senate President Stephen Sweeney is pushing a bill that would ban NJT engineers from operating a train if they have been convicted of drunk driving in a motor vehicle.

NJT's Atlantic City Line has had several recent service disruptions due to problems with the 120-year-old Delair bridge over the Delaware River. Buses replaced late-night train service between Pennsauken and 30th Street Station May 11-13 to allow for repair work on the bridge. Then on Monday, May 16, buses were again pressed into service when the bridge failed to close after a ship passage, which has happened all too frequently. CONRAIL owns the bridge and operates freight trains on the south track.....River Line light rail service was disrupted on Thursday morning, May 5, when a southbound train struck an SUV on the Main Street crossing in Riverton. There were two injuries in the car and two in the train. Shuttle buses were used between Route 73 Pennsauken and Cinnaminson during the two-hour shutdown.....Talk has begun, again, about extending the River Line from its present terminus at the Amtrak station into downtown Trenton. But where the money would come from to build the extension is unknown.

PATCO suffered a service disruption on Monday, May 23, when a work crane flipped over at 1:30 AM near Woodcrest station. The worker operating the crane was injured and it took some time to remove the machine. The accident blocked one track, forcing PATCO to operate on an emergency schedule (every 15 minutes) until around 4 PM.....Freight traffic on U.S. railroads is down from a year ago, and not just in the coal business. For the first 20 weeks of 2016 carload traffic was 14 percent less than in the same period of 2015, and intermodal—which usually does pretty well—was down 1.7 percent. The railroads suffered a big hit on coal which was off nearly 30 percent as cheap natural gas and environmental regulations have caused many electric utilities to either convert or close their generating plants (*Railway Age*).

CONRAIL has installed a new lift bridge across Mantua Creek in Paulsboro, NJ, replacing the ancient A-frame swing bridge that was damaged by a derailment in November 2012. The bridge was not properly locked when a freight train derailed four tank cars into the creek, one of them releasing toxic vinyl chloride gas and creating an emergency situation in the town. The bridge is on the busy Penns Grove secondary track, which serves numerous industries (*Railpace*).....The *Daily News* last month carried a picture story about the Rail Explorers Company, a group that operates large multi-seat rail bikes for tourists who seem happy to pedal their way along the tracks. The Explorers now are running on three miles rented from the WILMINGTON & WESTERN out of Ashland, DE, but will end their season this month when W&W again needs its entire line. Last year the group ran its rail bikes between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake, NY.

Railroad Museum Schedules Conrail, Reading Railroad Days

As Summer arrives, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania at Strasburg has announced Conrail Days and Reading Railroad Days, all taking place in the month of July. These two special events will prove ample opportunity to enjoy the unique heritage of railroading in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country.

Conrail Days will take place at the Museum from July 22-24, 2016, and is hosted in partnership with the Conrail Historical Society. The exhibit will highlight the equipment, history and people of Conrail, created from six bankrupt railroads in the 1970's. Some examples of CR equipment are on hand at the Strasburg site, although most evolved from the predecessor roads.

Reading Railroad Days 2016, meanwhile will take place from July 3-10, 2016. The Reading Railroad Technical & Historical Society plays a major role in this event, including a very large and detailed HO gauge model railroad depicting Reading operations. Also included during this week-long exhibit are special interpretive tours of certain pieces of the Railroad Museum's collection of Reading Company equipment.

The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania is located at 300 Gap Road (PA Route 741), Strasburg, PA 17579, directly across the street from the Strasburg Rail Road. Admission charge is \$10 for adults, \$9 seniors (65+), \$8 youth (3-11) and Children under 2 free. For additional information, call the Museum at 717-687-8628 or visit the website www.rmmuseumpa.org.

Complete Details Available for Reading & Northern Budd RDC Trips

The following is a complete update to the article published in May *Cinders* on the Budd RDC trips scheduled for operation this summer on the Reading & Northern Railroad. Two different series of trips and destinations will take place.

All-day excursions will take place traveling from Pottsville-Schuylkill Haven-Tamaqua-Jim Thorpe and return, on the following dates: Saturday, June 18, Sunday, July 10, Saturday, August 13 and Sunday, August 28. A picnic-style lunch will be served on board as you travel along. The trips on the above dates will depart Pottsville Union Station at 9:00 AM, making stops at Schuylkill Haven (9:15) and Tamaqua (10:15), arriving Jim Thorpe at 11:30. The return trip will depart Jim Thorpe at 3:30 PM, arriving back at Pottsville at 6:00 PM. Ticket prices for this trip are as follows: Pottsville - \$39.00; Schuylkill Haven - \$37.00; Tamaqua - \$24.00.

Additional trips will be operated from Pottsville, Schuylkill Haven and Port Clinton to North Reading and return on the following dates: These trips will depart Pottsville Union Station at 9:00 AM and will return at 1:30 PM. Departure and return times at Schuylkill Haven will be at 9:15 AM, with return at 1:00 PM. Ticket price from Pottsville is \$25.00, Schuylkill Haven is \$24.00. A guided tour of the Reading & Northern's facilities at Port Clinton is included with this trip, as is an on-board picnic lunch.

Those wishing tickets and additional information should call the R&N at 610-562-2102, or by visiting the website: www.lgsry.com. Former Reading RDC-3 #9166 and RDC-1 #9168 will be used. These cars have open windows and operating restrooms.

Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS "Harris" Tower Hosting Visitors

Harris Tower Railway Museum, located at 637 Walnut Street, Harrisburg, is open for visitors Saturdays from the end of May through October, from 9 AM to 4 PM. During this past winter, the building has undergone significant repair to include window and floor restoration, and revamped displays. Admission to the Museum, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is free.

Centerpiece for the 1930's PRR structure, acquired from Amtrak and restored by volunteers in the 1990's, is the original—but computer driven—interlocking machine and model board. Visitors, under guidance from volunteer docents, are welcome to "throw" switches while watching train movements on the lighted model board. Tied into the system is a 1940's Teletype machine that prints out Pennsylvania Railroad passenger train movements during World War II. Period railroad artifacts and train models are only display as well.

The tower is also a safe viewing and photography point from which visitors may observe close-up, Amtrak and Norfolk Southern train movements. Harris Tower is a major project of Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS. The Chapter, a non-profit educational organization, is one of over 149 NRHS chapters located throughout the United States as well as England, Canada and Japan.

Here's a suggestion for Philadelphia Chapter Members: on any given Saturday, buy a round-trip ticket on Amtrak's Keystone Service to Harrisburg, have lunch in a local restaurant and enjoy some time in Harris Tower observing and photographing the rail action.

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

Strasburg Rail Road to Expand Its Shop Facilities

In an article written by Tim Mekeel which appeared on the webpage **Lancasteronline** on June 1, the Strasburg Rail Road is about to embark on a \$1.75 million expansion of its locomotive restoration and repair shop.

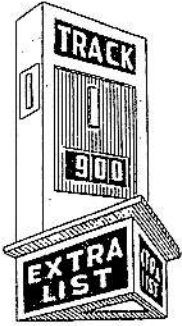
The piece states that Strasburg, while not widely known for its repair facilities and business, is indeed highly popular. The Strasburg shop possesses the rare skills needed for quality repairing, restoring and reproducing historic passenger cars and steam locomotives. Strasburg currently has a 24-employee workforce, and with the expansion hopes to add six full-time employees to its workforce. While welders, mechanics and machinists are relatively common, Strasburg knows if it advertises for a steam locomotive boilermaker, they are hard to find.

The Lancaster County tourist railroad currently has a 18,000 square foot shop, and will gain an additional 12,000 square feet as a result of the project. Of the \$1.75 million cost of the expansion, Strasburg will get started with a \$765,000 low-interest loan from the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority. The 15-year State loan carries a below-market, 2.25 percent interest rate for the first seven years. Construction will hopefully begin in September, with completion sometime in 2017.

The expanded facility will permit Strasburg to take on more "contract" work for other railroads. Currently, 80 percent of the shop's work is done on the Railroad's own equipment, but the addition will bring the balance of outside and in-house work to 50-50, according to SRR President and Chief Mechanical Officer Linn Moedinger.

Strasburg's financial health has been helped by its expanding venture into freight service. In recent times, the Railroad has had to decline some outside contract work because of the shop's physical constraints.

Chartered in 1832, Strasburg is the oldest short-line railroad in the United States, with some 300,000 people visiting and riding the historic trains each year.

**Tuesday, June 14, 2016:**

Regular monthly meeting of Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS, Hoss's Restaurant, 743 Wertzville Road, Enola, PA. Optional dinner at Hoss's 5 PM, business meeting and program begins 7 PM. Program will feature "Information and the Railroad Industry", an illustrated talk by Alex Lang, Chief Information Officer for Oakmont, PA-based Carload Express, Inc. and how information technology applies to the short line railroads.

Saturday, June 18: Amtrak will operate "Farewell to the AEM-7" excursion, Washington, DC to Philadelphia, PA and return, with tour at Wilmington, DE shops. Ticket availability uncertain at publication date. Check complete article in May issue of *Cinders* for complete details.

Saturday, June 18; Sunday, July 10; Saturdays

August 13 & 28: Reading & Northern Railroad Budd RDC's #9166 and 9168 will operate trips Pottsville-Schuylkill Haven-Tamaqua-Jim Thorpe and return. Full details Page 6 this 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 19543-8843. All proceeds will go toward restoration of former PTC Peter Witt car #8042 at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum.

Wednesday, June 22 through June 24: "Conrail Days" at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Route 741, Strasburg, PA. Event will be presented in partnership with the Conrail Historical Society. Regular Museum hours and admission charges will apply. For additional, information, visit the website www.rrmuseumpa.org or call the Museum at 717-687-8628. More details are available on Page 5, this issue..

Sunday, July 3 through Sunday, July 10: Reading Railroad Days at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Route 741, Strasburg, PA. One highlight of the week will be the large and ever-expanding HO scale model railroad built and operated by members of the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society. Other exhibits featuring the Reading will also be available. Regular Museum hours and admission charges will apply. For additional information, visit the website www.rrmuseumpa.org or call the Museum at 717-687-8628. More details are available on Page 5, this issue.

Saturday, July 30; Saturday, September 10:

Reading & Northern Budd RDC's #9166 and 9168 will operate trips Pottsville-Schuylkill Haven-Port Clinton-North Reading and return. Complete details on Page 6 of this issue.

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.

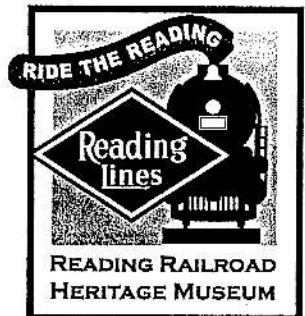
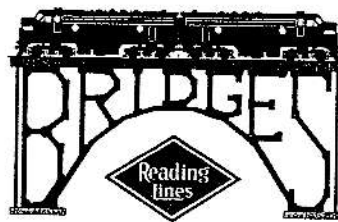
Friday, August 19: Philadelphia Chapter's annual Bill Wagner Summer Dinner, to be held this year at Freddie's Restaurant, 12 Railroad Avenue, Ewing, NJ, adjacent to former Reading Railroad "Trent" tower and a two block walk from SEPTA's West Trenton Regional Rail station. Complete details on Page 1, this issue.

Saturday and Sunday, September 24-25: 40th Anniversary celebration of the Reading Company Technical & Historical Society. Complete information in future *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 to move around and plenty of 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, this issue.

Reading Railroad Heritage Museum Opens RDG Bridges Exhibit



The Reading Railroad Heritage Museum in Hamburg has opened a fascinating new exhibit, "Bridges of the Reading Railroad", which will be open to the public through the end of October.

Pictures of some of the 2,200 bridges built by the Reading in a wide variety of styles are featured. Artifacts from the Reading's famed "swinging bridge" at the Outer Station in Reading, PA are displayed.

Visitors will learn why the Reading was connected to San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge as well as the Poughkeepsie (NY) Bridge; see a turntable bridge in action, enjoy the eight-foot Shepp's Bridge model. Visitors will also be able to build a bridge of their own design and test its strength.

The Reading Railroad Heritage Museum is located at 500 S. Third Street, Hamburg, PA 19526. It is open on Saturdays (10 AM-4 PM) and Sundays (Noon-4 PM). Admission is \$7 for adults, senior (65+) \$6, children (5-12) \$3 and children 4 and under Free. RCT&HS Members also receive free admission. For additional information, please call the Museum at 610-562-5513, or visit website: www.readingrailroad.org.

Western Pennsylvania Railroading in the Days of Coal and Steel

by Peter Vaira

This a personal remembrance of growing up in western Pennsylvania when coal mines and steel mills were the major industries, and the trains that hauled those products were pulled by great steam locomotives.

I grew up on a farm located three miles from the Monongahela River which flowed from that point 20 miles north to Pittsburgh, to join the Allegheny River, to form the Ohio River. Along the Monongahela River were numerous steel mills and steel product plants that constituted one of the greatest industrial complexes in the world. It was crucial in the effort to win World War II.

I attended a country school in Sunnyside, named after the nearby Sunnyside Coal mine, within easy sight of the river. My family bought goods and supplies in those towns along that river. Watching the trains and towboats on the river was a daily occurrence.

The Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad ran on one side of the Monongahela River traveling through McKeesport, Glassport, Elizabeth, Monessen, Charleroi, and Brownsville. The Pennsylvania Railroad ran along the other shore through Clairton, Monongahela, Donora.

Coal trains of up to 100 cars traveled from Brownsville to Pittsburgh and beyond every day on the P&LE. It took a steam locomotive nearly ten minutes to inch a consist of loaded coal cars from dead stop to full motion. My maternal grandfather's house was a hundred feet from the rail bed, and any visit there would be interrupted by the long trains thundering by for at least ten minutes at a time.

The most interesting occurrence was the daily operation of the freight train that serviced all the industrial plants and industrial sidings along the railroad. In those days there were many businesses that depended upon the railroad for supply service. Each day a switching locomotive, referred to as a shifter by local railroaders, would travel backward, to permit the placement of cars on the sidings with the engine crew facing the siding. The consist always carried a full sized caboose for the brakemen, as it was a full day of work, and the crew needed food or foul weather breaks. No transfer caboose here. The shifter pulled a consist of at least 20 freight cars of different varieties. At the small village of Axelton, often referred to as East Monongahela, the shifter would spend several hours dropping off or picking up cars for the two factories located there. I spent seventh grade at Axelton school, and every recess and lunch hour I could watch the shifter working a hundred feet away. Real railroading.

My family often utilized one of the industrial sidings along the P&LE to receive a box car of fertilizer for the farm, or to ship a boxcar of hay to a buyer. The cars were delivered and picked up by that shifter. Years earlier my father delivered fresh milk from the farm to a waiting refrigerator car every morning for transfer to Pittsburgh from a similar siding. All those industrial sidings are gone, and there is no longer a shifter to watch as it did its job.

The American Steel and Wire Company was located in Donora, on the side of the river where the Pennsylvania Railroad ran. The plant also contained a zinc works that became infamous in 1948 when an atmospheric inversion trapped smoke discharged

from the furnaces for two days, killing 19 persons. The Donora industrial facility was a huge complex, nearly a mile long, occupying over 300 acres of riverfront property. It was served by the Donora Southern, a railroad owned by U.S. Steel. It operated with three steam switch engines, generally 0-6-0's. The Donora Southern had a little over three miles of main line track which connected to the Pennsylvania Railroad, and nearly six miles of sidings in the steel and wire plant and the zinc works. A major job of the railroad was hauling hot molten slag from the steel furnaces to a raised dump track about two miles away where the molten slag would be dumped from special cars designed for this service. The slag is a product left over after iron is extracted from the iron ore. When transported from the furnaces, the slag was still liquid, with temperatures of over 1000 degrees. When dumped it was like molten lava from a volcano, emitting a violent red flash, lighting the sky at night, and could be seen for miles. The cars were released by hand by brakemen; a very dangerous job. It was a great spectator event to watch the 0-6-0 switcher back up the graded track pulling six or eight dump cars, and then stop to unload the molten slag. When the slag cooled it formed gravel like material to be used for unpaved roads.

On the Pennsylvania Railroad side of the River, The West Penn Railways Company, a light rail interurban, operated a branch line passenger service from Brownsville to Pittsburgh, a good subject for another article.

The coal and steel businesses are now gone from western Pennsylvania. The steel plants are parking lots or retail stores. The Donora industrial complex is closed. A mixed emotion here, good riddance of the zinc works and the slag dump. The sidings along the P&LE no longer exist. There is no shifter to watch doing its daily work. The colorful yellow trolleys of Penn Railways can be found only in a trolley museum in Washington, Pennsylvania. An excellent book regarding the demise of the steel industry in western Pennsylvania, is *And Finally the Wolf Came*, by John Hoerr, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

NRHS National Update – May, 2016

(Continued from Page 2)

RailCamp is filled up, with 24 going to the East Coast Camp and 12 to the West Coast Camp this summer. Sponsors are already accruing funds for the 2017 version. Becky Gerstung of Niagara Frontier Chapter is doing much of the organization work for RailCamp, founded in 1998 by Bruce Hodges of Oneonta, NY and our own Larry Eastwood.

Heritage grants totaling \$35,000 were announced for 2016, and a list is contained in the June *NRHS News*.

In Convention news, the 2016 gathering is set for Denver, CO starting July 19, and there are 233 registrations as of May 1. The 2017 Convention has been tentatively set for June 9-12, 2017 in Nashville, TN. The year 2018 is still open, although planners are looking at a California convention featuring former Santa Fe steam locomotive #3751; nothing is definite at this time. For 2019, the Convention could be scheduled in May, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike. The Convention would be based in Salt Lake City.

While final results have not yet been announced, it was reported that the 2014 Convention in Arkansas produced a small loss of \$982.00. The Rutland, VT event in June, 2015 might see an expected loss of \$2,000.