



# CINDERS

OCTOBER 2021



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Vol. 82 NO. 10

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER of the  
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER OF THE NRHS  
PO BOX 7302  
PHILADELPHIA PA 19101-7302

## IDA'S LAST REMNANTS SLAM REGION

*Brings deadly tornadoes & disrupts transportation*

*Frank Tatnall, Jr.*

Unlike the old Eddie Cantor song "Ida, Sweet as Apple Cid-ah," the eponymous hurricane that devastated the Gulf Coast on August 29 was anything but sweet. After causing horrendous damage and many deaths in Louisiana and other coastal states, now Tropical Storm Ida raced up the Ohio River Valley before morphing into a powerful nor'easter that hit Virginia, DC and Maryland. With its high winds and heavy rainfall, the storm then roared north to strike Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and southern New England with unexpected fury. The total cost of Ida's rampage from Louisiana to New England has been estimated at \$92 billion.

By Wednesday afternoon Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, the rain and winds were bearing down on Philadelphia, as the National Weather Service began issuing tornado warnings (eventually 14 in all). Torrential downpours caused flash flooding in many areas and residents braced for winds of up to 100 mph. Before the storm moved away on Thursday morning seven tornadoes had touched down in the Philadelphia region, three of them in Bucks County, one in Montgomery County, one in Chester County and two in South Jersey. The most destructive twister, rated an EF-3, hit the Mullica Hill area of Gloucester County, packing top winds of 150 mph and inflicting massive property damage. One woman in Fort Washington, Montgomery County, was killed when a tornado blew a tree onto her home, and three other people drowned in suburban incidents. A total of five deaths were counted in the Delaware Valley area. Altogether, Ida caused some 40 deaths over its 1,500-mile path from Louisiana to New England.

While no tornadoes actually hit Philadelphia proper, the -  
-- continued on page 4.

## PRESIDENT's MESSAGE

*Kevin Feeney*

Well, we tried to have a meeting on Sept.23rd but were stymied by yet another major storm in the Philly area with significant wind, rain, and flooding [*see more on page 3*].

So, the auction is rescheduled Thursday October 21<sup>st</sup> in the community room at the **Elkins Park SEPTA Station**. Parking is readily available at the time of our meetings. Please do NOT enter the room from the track side. Because of Covid, the room's capacity is limited to 30 people, which is about the usual the attendance level. It is recommended that everyone wear masks at least for now, and this is subject to change based on what the County Board of Health may mandate. **If you plan to attend the October meeting, please email or call me to make a reservation.**

On the auction block from our storage unit will be: public timetables from several RRs, employee timetables from NS, CSX and NJT, material from PTC, Red Arrow and early SEPTA, a wide assortment of RR, trolley, Philly and SFO postcards, postal items, RR and trolley books, transit items and some rare internal documents from BUDD Company. Everything will be priced in even dollar lots and settlement will be by cash or check as we have no ability to accept credit cards.

The last-minute cancellation of the September meeting was problematic as I had no way to quickly contact our members and friends. We may need to be able to do this in the future. I would ask everyone to please send me an email [with NRHS in the subject line] so that I can build a contact list for emergencies and other purposes in the future. Those without email could text or call me. [*My contact info is on page 2.*]

## 2022 Philadelphia Chapter Dues Bills in the Mail

Philadelphia Chapter Members and Additional Chapter Members will be receiving their 2022 Chapter dues bills during the middle of the month of October, according to Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Marie Eastwood.

The dues level will remain unchanged from 2021 - \$20.00 per member. Contributions in addition to dues are solicited and welcomed; those contributions above \$10.00 will be acknowledged. Dues may be sent to: Marie K. Eastwood, Secretary/Treasurer, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. Please DO NOT send dues remittances to the Chapter's Post Office Box 7302 address in Philadelphia; this will delay your renewal.

Prompt payment of 2022 dues is requested so the Chapter may avoid follow-up solicitations. Contribution notices to those holding a Philadelphia *Railfriend* (non-member) affiliation will also be sent to those individuals toward the end of October.

## 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

### CHAPTER WEBSITE:

For current Chapter information, as well as vintage views of Chapter trips and activities, visit:

**[www.nrhsphiladelphia.org](http://www.nrhsphiladelphia.org)**

### CHAPTER OFFICERS (*Elected*)

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## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Effective September 1, 2021, dues are \$20.00 per person, which covers Philadelphia Chapter thru Dec. 31, 2022. (NRHS National membership dues for 2021 are \$50.00, billed directly by NRHS.) NRHS chapters bill members separately for Chapter dues.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS should forward remittance in the amount of \$20.00, payable to:

Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS

Post Office Box 7302

Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302.

*Please be sure to include name, complete mailing address, telephone number and E-mail address.*

### ADDRESS CHANGES:

Send to Editor Emeritus at

Post Office Box 353

Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353.

(Include your CURRENT TELEPHONE NUMBER and E-MAIL ADDRESS so our records are complete.)

Also contact the Editor Emeritus if your copy does not arrive or arrives in a damaged condition.

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Correspondence regarding Cinders or exchange newsletters should be directed to the Editor by email "ic4277eb@yahoo.com" or mailed to:

Kevin Feeney, Editor

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Flash Train Show**, Saturday Oct. 16th 8AM-2PM  
Renninger's Antique & Farmers Market, 740 Noble St, Kutztown, PA 19530

## FUTURE MEETING DATES

**[whether in-person or Zoom]**

**2021: Oct. 21, Nov. 18, Dec. 16**

**2022: Jan. 20, Feb. 17, March 17, April 21, May 19\*, June 16**

*\*Possible change for NRHS convention that week*



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

“SEPTA Metro” could become the family name for SEPTA’s entire rail transit system, under a proposal unveiled last month. Obviously, local planners have taken a cue from several other



cities which use the Metro name to identify their transit operations.

Rebranding the SEPTA network of rapid transit and trolley lines with single-letter symbols and distinctive colors on signage, maps and printed materials should make it easier for riders to navigate the system. It is particularly aimed toward visitors, those with limited English language proficiency and anyone looking for quick information. Here are the new symbols: the Market-Frankford Line becomes the L Line (blue), Broad Street Line—B Line (orange), Norristown High Speed Line—M Line (purple), subway-surface trolleys—T lines (green), trolley route 15—G line (yellow), Media and Sharon Hill trolleys—D lines (red). Incidentally, the “M” designation is for Montgomery County and the “D” for Delaware County. This part of SEPTA’s Wayfinding Master Plan somewhat emulates New York, which has long designated most of its subway lines with letters. Evidently, SEPTA does not intend to place the Regional Rail lines under the umbrella of Metro.

While reimagining of the rail transit system is in the works, SEPTA also is moving forward with its “Bus Revolution,” a comprehensive redesign of the confusing bus network (see May Cinders). Throughout September and October SEPTA is holding a series of outreach events, both in-person and virtual, to lay out some details of the plan, gauge public reaction and receive suggestions. Implementation of the new bus network is expected to begin in 2023. SEPTA is pursuing a months-long effort to hire and train more bus drivers to address the shortage of drivers that is responsible for the continuing delays and cancellations on many bus routes. SEPTA imposed a four-month hiring freeze at the start of the pandemic so normal attrition and retirements ate into the available pool of drivers. “Customers are understandably frustrated,” said Scott Sauer, assistant general manager for operations. SEPTA’s goal now is to train 28 new drivers each month.

Neither SEPTA nor Transport Workers Union Local 234 have been saying much about their negotiations for a new contract covering thousands of transit employees. The current contract expires at the end of October. One of the sticking points is the union’s demand for hazard pay to compensate the workers who kept the system running through the long months of the pandemic. Two big organizations have sponsored free rides on

the Broad Street subway for Philadelphia Eagles fans heading home after games at Lincoln Financial Field. On Sunday, September 19, NRG Energy paid for the open turnstiles at its namesake station after the Eagles-49ers game, and on Sunday, October 3, Penn Medicine stepped up to pay for the rides after the Eagles-Chiefs matchup.

Heavy rains on Thursday, September 23, created problems on SEPTA lines in Delaware County. Flooding at Burmont Road in Drexel Hill caused serious delays for some Route 101 trolleys, and high water in the often-flooded CSX underpass at Sharon Hill forced Route 102 cars to turn back at MacDade Blvd., with shuttle buses used instead. Flooding on the Norristown High Speed Line also caused several delays.

SEPTA is looking to create a long-term “vision” for its Regional Rail system. This is a key piece of “SEPTA Forward,” the Authority’s five-year strategic plan to recover from the effects of the pandemic and prepare for the future. Among the elements of the plan are a major change in the railroad’s fare structure to make it part of a seamless transit network. Basic among the steps being considered are a possible reduction in fares to make Regional Rail more affordable to current and future transit riders, while allowing some bus, trolley and subway-elevated transfers to be accepted on commuter trains. Obviously, this recognizes the need that Regional Rail adapt to the apparent decline in traditional suburb-to-center city commuter traffic. Prior to the pandemic Regional Rail handled about 132,000 weekday passengers, but current ridership is somewhat over 20 percent of that figure. “It is time we reimagine our system based on the region’s changing and diverse travel needs—not just 9 to 5 commutes to work,” said Assistant General Manager for Planning Jody Holton.

Ah yes, slippery rail season will soon be with us again, and SEPTA is preparing to fight the annual battle with millions of dead leaves that fall on the rails and cause trains to skid past stations and signals. Starting later this month, work trains will be dispatched every night to remove the oily leaves by spraying a combination of water, gel and sand on the railheads. Now that service levels on Regional Rail have been increased to around 65 percent of normal weekday frequency, six of the locomotive-hauled push-pull sets are back in rush-hour operation. These are assigned to the Paoli-Thorndale, Trenton, West Trenton and Wilmington-Newark lines.

AMTRAK has reached a lease agreement with developer Plenary Infrastructure for the restoration of 30th Street Station.



Under the agreement Plenary will refurbish and restore the nearly 90-year-old building, finance the improvements and maintain the station for 50 years. The plans include expanded retail facilities, renovation of upper-floor

office space, modernization of facilities to accommodate future ridership increases and bringing the building into an overall state of good repair. AMTRAK has mandated that all of its employees be vaccinated for COVID by November 22. Employees will no longer have the option of weekly COVID testing.

In a surprise choice of mode, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson rode an AMTRAK Acela Express from New York to Washington on September 21, enroute from an appearance at the United Nations to a visit with President Joe Biden at the White House. Johnson mentioned Biden's unofficial title of "Amtrak Joe" in recognition of the many thousands of miles the President commuted by train when he served as a Senator from Delaware. Johnson told Biden that he is a "living deity on Amtrak," and the President responded by saying that he has traveled so many miles on the train that "if I were a conductor, I'd be No. 1 in seniority."

AMTRAK is hoping the President's \$1.2-trillion infrastructure bill is approved by Congress, because if it is the railroad will receive a cash infusion of \$66 billion—a huge increase over the \$2 billion or so it currently receives in annual government funding. The pending legislation would direct \$24 billion to improvements on the Northeast Corridor. Meanwhile, the federally appointed NEC Commission in a recently released report has proposed a plan to rebuild the Corridor by investing \$117 billion in more than 150 different projects. AMTRAK President Stephen Gardner said last month that the railroad remains committed to adding a second round-trip between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, supplementing the present Pennsylvanian service. But the plan depends partly on funding from the State and an agreement with NORFOLK SOUTHERN.

NS and builder Progress Rail last month unveiled a new locomotive model, the GP34ECO. Unit #4800 is intended for yard and intermediate operations and to qualify for environmental Tier 4 emission standards. NS assembled the locomotive at its Juniata shop in Altoona, working with Progress Rail and owner Caterpillar. The unit will be placed in service at Harrisburg, with NS and Progress carrying out field testing to confirm that it meets final emission requirements. Progress is the heir to the former Electro-Motive Division of General Motors.



Two rail unions have taken legal action against NORFOLK SOUTHERN over the railroad's alleged efforts to force engineers to work as conductors. If true, this could be a violation of union contracts. The unions claim that NS has eliminated more than 35 percent of its operating crew positions since December 2018 when it implemented the Precision

Scheduled Railroading strategy. Now NS is accused of trying to get rid of the conductor and brakeman positions, possibly to prepare for eventual one-person train operation...NS is receiving praise for reviving the old concept of less-than-carload freight service. The Thoroughbred Freight Transfer experiment involves moving boxcar loads of LCL freight via intermodal trains between Chicago, Atlanta, Croxton, NJ, and Miami.

NJ TRANSIT has been named one of America's best employers by Forbes Magazine. The annual list consists of 1,330 employers nationwide, of which only 90 are in New Jersey. The



survey is based on companies identified as best liked by their employees. NJT has nearly 12,000

employees. NJT reportedly is facing with a big interest bill from the Federal Transit Administration because it prematurely retired 32 ALP-44 electric locomotives before their established useful life of 25 years. The units, which had been purchased partly with funds from the FTA, are now graffiti-covered eyesores rusting away on a storage track in Morris County (NJ Advance Media).

READING & NORTHERN is heavily advertising its fall foliage excursions from Reading to Jim Thorpe and return. Full-page



color ads have appeared in the Inquirer and several local newspapers. Some of the trips this month will be pulled by Pacific locomotive #425 and others by R&N's newly

acquired F-unit diesels.

## IDA SLAMS REGION *Continued from page 1*

City suffered its worst flood damage in more than a century. On Thursday, The Schuylkill River crested at 16.5 feet at 30th Street, reaching the "major" flood stage designation and forcing the evacuation of at least one high-rise building. This was just short of the all-time record of 17 feet (flood stage is 11 feet). Buildings along famed Boathouse Row were flooded by the surging river, leaving behind severe damage. The depressed I-676 Vine Street Expressway was inundated with millions of gallons of water, giving it the appearance of a canal bisecting Center City. Several days were needed to pump out the water and reopen the highway.

The Schuylkill crested at a record 27 feet at Norristown, and the Neshaminy, Perkiomen and Brandywine Creeks all rose to dangerously high levels. Montgomery County unfortunately suffered the most extensive damage in the five-county Philadelphia region. Downed electric wires throughout the



PECO service area caused at least 110,000 customers to lose power.

Sections of the Schuylkill Expressway were shut down for a time as were the river drives, and the popular Main Street shopping district in Manayunk was flooded with torrents of brown water, damaging many stores and restaurants. Riverside towns such as Bridgeport were hard hit, as residents were ordered to evacuate and several boat rescues became necessary. Montgomery County alone reported 467 water rescues. Some communities such as Coatesville were drenched with rainfall of nearly ten inches, made worse by the fact that the soil was already saturated from earlier storms and could not absorb much additional water. The front page of the Friday *Inquirer* carried the scary headline “SWAMPED.”

The disruption of transit systems, highways and streets in the area may represent the most costly fallout from the storm, said an economist at the Moody’s financial services firm. The impact would be serious if “people can’t get to work and do what they need to do,” he said.

*Here's a summary of how various transportation modes in the Philadelphia region fared during and after the storm*

:

**HIGHWAYS** Many closures were necessary on Wednesday and Thursday, including portions of Routes 1 and 30 in Chester County, I-95 in Bucks County, the I-76 Schuylkill Expressway around 30th Street in Philadelphia along with other closures in Montgomery County, and of course the I-676 Vine Street Expressway in Philadelphia. Many streets were flooded in parts of the city, leaving scores of parked cars under water. But with the exception of the Vine, most major roads were back to normal by Friday, although many local streets remained impassible. Philadelphia Fire Commissioner Adam Thiel said on Thursday that “the flooding [in the city] reached levels that had not been seen in 100 years. And potentially this will be a record-breaking flood.”



[RT 611 in Abington behind your editor’s house. Neighbors have never seen flooding like this before.]]

**AIRPORT** Some flights were cancelled at PHL but there was no infrastructure damage or flooding at the airport itself. Normal operations resumed on Friday.

**SEPTA** The only two rail lines on which service had to be completely suspended were the Manayunk-Norristown

Regional Rail line, which was flooded by the overflowing Schuylkill River for at least seven miles between Miquon and Norristown, and the Norristown High Speed Line in the Bridgeport area. Service on many bus routes was suspended or detoured because of flooded streets. Recovery on some of those routes came quickly and others—such as Route 61 through Manayunk—took longer. SEPTA said it had no estimate of how much the storm would cost, in terms of lost ridership and physical damage.

On Wednesday, as Ida moved in with wind and rain, troubles started to develop on Regional Rail. By early evening Thorndale service was cut back to Paoli due to flooding on the railroad. Doylestown service was suspended beyond Colmar following a power outage, and service to Trenton was suspended due to fallen catenary wires on Amtrak. Water over the rails around Conshohocken forced Norristown trains to be turned back at Miquon, and Warminster-bound trains could no longer operate north of Willow Grove. On the Route 102 Sharon Hill line, trolleys were reversing back at MacDade Blvd. because of the usual flooding under the CSX bridge at Sharon Hill.

By 9 AM on Thursday, the worst of the storm had passed but high-water conditions remained in many locations, causing service disruptions. On Regional Rail all service on the Manayunk-Norristown and Warminster lines was annulled because of flooding conditions. Thorndale trains were originating and terminating at Malvern, and service to and from Doylestown remained suspended beyond Link Belt. By Thursday evening most lines were running—with up to 30-minute delays. The Norristown High Speed Line was being turned back at Gulph Mills station because of high water to the north. Several bus lines were truncated for the same reason, while others remained suspended due to the ongoing shortage of operators. Warminster service soon was extended as far as Willow Grove, and that evening all the way to Warminster station.

By Friday morning the 3<sup>rd</sup>, most service had been restored, except on the Manayunk-Norristown rail line which was heavily damaged by flooding from the close-by Schuylkill River, and on the NHSL light rail line north of Gulph Mills. However, service on many bus routes continued to be plagued by a persistent shortage of operators. The suspensions of Manayunk-Norristown and NHSL service remained in place on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> but the NHSL was restored to Norristown on Sunday.

In the City, street conditions led to delays on the surface trolley routes in West Philadelphia, but for the most part the five lines continued to run during the storm period. The Broad Street and Market-Frankford Lines also remained in service and, unlike in New York City where many subway tunnels were flooded, there were no such problems in Philadelphia. SEPTA said that it had recently improved the drainage systems in the tunnels so they were able to carry off any water that seeped in from the surface. On Tuesday, September 7, following the Labor Day holiday, two events happened on Regional Rail. Manayunk-Norristown

weekday train service resumed but only between Center City and the Spring Mill station near Conshohocken, and limited service on the long-closed Cynwyd line started again after being suspended since April 2020. (Weekday-only Cynwyd service consists of five trips in each direction.) Then, on Monday, September 13, full service to Norristown was restored after a week of heavy repairs to the track structure, signal system and grade crossing signals. SEPTA said that the restoration work would cost millions of dollars, but four crossings in Conshohocken will remain closed to motor traffic for an undetermined time.

**AMTRAK** Around 7 PM on Wednesday, September 1, Amtrak began to experience the onset of Tropical Storm Ida. Flash flooding and fallen power lines east of Trenton caused substantial delays for Northeast Corridor trains running between Philadelphia, Trenton and New York. By early the next morning, all Amtrak service between Philadelphia and Boston had been suspended, and the Empire Service between New York and Albany was shut down. A modified Acela schedule was operated between Washington and Philadelphia on Thursday morning. Regular service on the Corridor was restored early the next day.

Keystone Service trains between Philadelphia and Harrisburg continued to operate through the storm period, with delays, although the Pennsylvanian was cancelled on Thursday. Empire Service was not restarted until Tuesday morning the 7th, after mudslides and debris were cleared from the Metro-North mainline near Greystone station, on the Hudson River north of Yonkers. Long-distance trains also were affected by the Corridor shutdown, although near-normal service was maintained south of Washington during the storm period. Fortunately, the fragile Hudson River and East River tunnels in New York withstood the deluge of rain from Ida with no serious damage, in contrast to what happened when Superstorm Sandy flooded them in October 2012.

**NJ TRANSIT** Ida was not kind to NJT. The agency was forced to suspend all service as of Wednesday night September 1, except on the Atlantic City Line and the River Line light-rail between Camden and Trenton. However, the River Line did experience serious delays, and the street-level segment in downtown Camden was closed. (The latter segment reopened on Thursday the 2nd.) Most bus routes were operating, but faced delays caused by flooded roadways and stranded vehicles on the roads.

Three of NJT's commuter rail lines were back in service by Thursday evening on a weekend schedule: the Northeast Corridor Line to Trenton, the North Jersey Coast Line and the Morris & Essex. By Friday morning, most rail lines were offering regular weekday schedules, the Pascack Valley and Raritan Valley Lines being the exceptions. NJT reported that flooding had stranded 200 passengers on one of its Corridor trains for almost ten hours Wednesday night into Thursday

morning, after the train became disabled in four feet of water. Rescue attempts were unsuccessful until the water receded and the passengers could be evacuated about 6 AM. Fortunately, most NJT trains are restroom equipped.

**PATCO** Likely owing to its well-maintained property, PATCO experienced few problems either along its right-of-way in New Jersey or in the Philadelphia tunnels. The Ferry Avenue station parking lot was flooded for a time but drained quickly when the rain stopped. Train service was not affected.

**FREIGHT RAILROADS** Both CSX and Norfolk Southern had bigger problems than their service worries in the Northeast, since they also were heavily impacted by Ida in the South—mainly in Louisiana, Alabama and Tennessee. Flooded tracks caused numerous train delays across Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York State. NS announced on Thursday that because of water intrusion its intermodal facilities in Morrisville, PA, Elizabeth and Croxton, NJ, were closed to incoming container traffic. NS's Harrisburg Line along the Schuylkill River west of Philadelphia was disrupted by high water.

It appears that Ida was even worse than last year's "I" storm, Isaias, in terms of flooding, tornado damage and deaths. That storm struck the region about one month earlier, on August 3, 2020, and seemed very severe at the time. But its flooding was substantially less than Ida's, the Schuylkill River cresting at 13.3 feet in Philadelphia as compared with 16.5 feet during Ida last month. Public transportation experienced many difficulties in both events, but the impact on residents and businesses this time was even worse than with Isaias. For many reasons, it's hoped that these mammoth storms will not become an annual event in the Delaware Valley.

## FROM THE STORAGE UNIT



This pin appeared in the last issue. A member contacted me [sorry I don't recall his name] saying it was issued when SEPTA took over PTC in 1968. A similar RED button was issued in 1970 when SEPTA took over RED ARROW Lines.

Thanks to **Bill Welk** [see page 7] who came up from South Philly to help go thru the storage unit in advance of the auction.

On Saturday 9/18, your editor had a table at the **NJ Historic Bus**



**Festival** in Trenton NJ and sold \$374 of donated bus maps, timetables, and transit items. It was nice to see the parade of the historic busses at the end of the show.



## MEET OUR NEW NATIONAL REP

My name is Bill Welk and since April 2021 have been the Philadelphia Chapter's national rep. I live in South Philly and retired from the Army Corps of Engineers about 18 months ago after working there a little over 30-years as a civil engineer. I grew up in Queens, NYC and moved to Philadelphia in 1984. I joined the NRHS soon after moving to Philadelphia. I am also a member of the Electric Railroaders Association (ERA). My family still lives near where I grew up so I get to visit them by train several times a year. I became interested in railroads after looking at a Lionel catalog from the late 50s and riding the NYC subways.



I am currently digitizing my train slides and black and white photos, and based on the progress I have made, estimate I have about three more years before I am finished. Once I brush up my PowerPoint skills, I look forward to showing my photos at a future meeting.

I represented the Chapter at the recent national convention in Milwaukee but stopped in Chicago on the way there seeing this METRA electric train along Michigan Ave.



I took AMTRAK's *Hiawatha* service from Chicago to the stop for the Milwaukee Airport and rode behind this new Sprinter engine.



While in Milwaukee, I rode on its new streetcar line called "THE HOP" reflecting the City's beer heritage.



It was nice to see that the streetcars were made in Pennsylvania.



I will be representing the Chapter at the NRHS' Fall Conference on October 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> hosted by the Twin Forks Chapter in Ronkonkoma NY.

## Region Loses Prominent Rail Historians

The Atlantic Seaboard has recently lost four different rail historians during the late summer period of 2021.



Harrisburg Chapter lost Past President Robert F. (Bob) Lyter on Sept. 6, 2021. Bob was Chapter Treasurer from 2009 to 2014, and previously served as President from 1997 to 1999. In addition to his numerous Chpt. duties, Bob also served as a counselor at the NRHS RailCamp East for a number of years.



Former NRHS National Officer Stephen L. Wasby, of Eastham, MA passed on August 2, 2021, at the age of 84. Wasby had an extensive career in the legal field and college and university profession. At NRHS, he served on and directed the Society's Heritage Grants Committee.



Potomac Chapter Member Wes Vernon passed away on August 8, at age 89 from complications of Alzheimer's disease. Wes was a broadcast journalist for nearly 50 years, working in radio in Montana, Utah and Wyoming before becoming a correspondent for CBS News in Washington, DC. He was active in the Southern Railway and Norfolk Southern steam excursion programs.



Well-known local author and publisher Dr. Harold E. Cox, 90, passed away in care of the Residential Hospice of North East Pennsylvania-Wilkes-Barre on Sept. 8, 2021. Cox was the author and publisher of countless soft-cover trolley books, many of them dealing with the Philadelphia Transportation Company. Cox was a professor of

history at Wilkes University and received his doctorate at the College of William and Mary in Virginia.

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. of Bryn Athyn Train Wreck December 5

The Old York Road Historical Society will partner with the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust in observing the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bryn Athyn Train Wreck, with the annual lecture and walk to the train wreck site along the former Reading Railroad's Newtown Branch, on Sunday, December 5, 2021.

The event will begin with a presentation on the collision between Philadelphia & Reading Newtown Locals #151 and 156 near Woodmont, Pennsylvania on the morning of December 5, 1921. Retired Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS President Larry Eastwood will begin the event with a lecture and question-and-answer session at 1:30 PM. At 2:45 PM, OYRHS President David Rowland will lead a walking tour to the crash site with a brief ceremony commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

This year, attendance at the lecture is restricted to 80 individuals, and advance registration is required. Pre-registration is required through the PERT at by December 3, 2021. PERT members may attend free of charge; for others, there will be a charge of \$10.00. The lecture will be held in the Church Hall of the Lord's New Church (***please note new location this year***), 1725 Huntingdon Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006 – opposite the north side of the June Fete Fairgrounds. The attendance restriction only applies to the lecture. All are welcome to gather for the 2:45 PM walk from the Lord's New Church to the crash site along the Montgomery County Pennypack Trail. Questions may be directed to Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or by email to [ayrestower@comcast.net](mailto:ayrestower@comcast.net)

Larry Eastwood produced this postcard in 2002 to



celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. Post Office in Bryn Athyn that has been housed in a railway station built

by the Philadelphia & Reading Railway in 1902.