



CINDERS

September 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

Philadelphia Chapter News.....	1-2
PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS, by Frank Tatnall.....	4-5
Miscellaneous Rail News.....	6-7
Eric Dervinis Last Ride – EL Gladstone Branch.....	8

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Newsletter of the
 PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER
 NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
 Post Office Box 7302
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Chapter Website: www.nrhsphiladelphia.org

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 website: www.nrhsphiladelphia.org

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2024-25 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: Effective September 1, 2024, \$25.00 per person, which covers Philadelphia Chapter dues through December 31, 2025. (NRHS National membership dues for 2025 are \$50.00, billed directly by NRHS.) NRHS chapters bill their members separately for Chapter dues. Donation requests for Philadelphia Railfriends will be mailed during October, 2024-5 via separate mailing from *Cinders*. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS should forward remittance, payable to **Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS** in the amount of \$25.00 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.

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.) Beginning in early 2023, we effected electronic delivery of *Cinders* to those who elect to receive same.

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 reastwood2@comcast.net.

Meeting Notice

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

SEPTA Elkins Park Regional Rail Station, Elkins Central Meeting Venue, 7879 Spring Avenue, Elkins Park, PA 19027.
PLEASE USE THE SPRING AVENUE ENTRANCE TO THE "ELKINS CENTRAL" MEETING ROOM. PLEASE DO NOT USE THE TRACKSIDE ENTRANCE. THANK YOU!!

MEETING START TIME: 7:00 PM

Philadelphia Chapter's meeting on **Thursday, September 18, 2025** will feature well-known NRHS Member **Dan Copper** from our Harrisburg Chapter as our program speaker. Dan, railroad author, *Trains Magazine* correspondent and editor of *Railroad History Quarterly*. Dan also spent ten years as a conductor and locomotive engineer for **Norfolk Southern Railway**. While we don't have full details on Dan's program subject, we can be certain his subject will be a more than satisfactory program.

Chapter National Representative **Bill Welk** will be our presenter on **Thursday, October 16, 2025** with another interesting slide presentation. On **Thursday, November 20, 2025**, Rail Historian **James R. Rose** will return with a program entitled **The New York Central Railroad in Pennsylvania**, a follow-up on his program earlier this year on the Western Maryland Railway in Pennsylvania.

We will end our 2025 program year on **Thursday, December 11, 2025** (Note, please our December meeting is on the **SECOND Thursday**) with a program (subject to be determined) provided by our longtime friend **E. Steven Barry, Editor, Railfan & Railroad Magazine**.

In the Year 2026, **Frank Tatnall** has promised an appearance with a vintage program, providing logistics can be worked out.

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT AND/OR CORRECT E-MAIL ADDRESS?

If you are not receiving CINDERS by electronic delivery, we recommend that you consider making this change now. For the fourth time in two years, the Postal Service has increased the one-ounce postage rate and this affects Philadelphia Chapter members who receive CINDERS by U. S. Mail.

The Postal Service snuck another SURPRISE postage increase to everyone, including its own employees on July 21, 2025 when First Class was hiked from 73 cents for the first ounce to 78 cents for the first ounce. There was no advance warning what so ever, either to employees, customers or news media.

More and more Chapter members have changed their monthly delivery of CINDERS to electronic delivery. As of August, 2025 more than 100 members have signed up for eCINDERS.

It is more important now that we have on file your CURRENT and CORRECT E-mail address. To that end, we would ask that you E-mail your correct and current E-mail address to mkecat@comcast.net upon receipt of this issue of CINDERS. We need to keep control the cost of mailing CINDERS to both members and, more importantly, to "exchange" newsletter recipients, from whom we have no revenue source.

MARIE K. EASTWOOD, Secretary
Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS
September 1, 2025

If your Cinders Arrives in Damaged Condition

If your Cinders arrives damaged or with pages missing, contact Editor Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or reastwood2@comcast.net and a replacement copy will be promptly sent to you. The incidence of damage has been virtually eliminated through the use of envelopes for mailing each issue, although there is an additional cost involved.

RICHARD S. SHORT

August 16, 2025

We deeply regret to report the passing of longtime Chapter Member Richard S. Short, of Roslyn, PA on Saturday, August 16, 2025 after a prolonged illness. Richard, well known slide photographer, was 93 years of age. Funeral arrangements are still being made at Cinders presstime. A complete obituary, with complete information will appear in October Cinders.

ROBERT F. WILT (Bob)

July 24, 2025

(Courtesy Cantelmi Long Funeral Home, Bethlehem, PA)

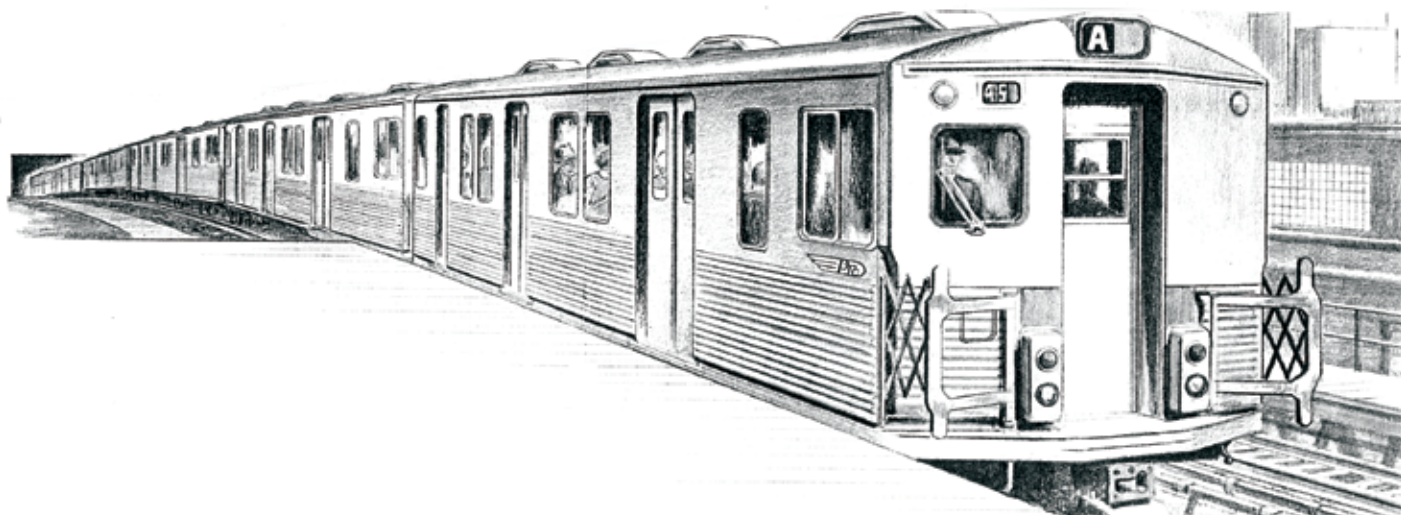
Well-known locomotive photographer Robert F. Wilt, 79, of Hanover Township, Northampton County, PA, passed away at his home on July 24, 2025, under the care of The Care Team Hospice. Bob was born on December 22, 1945. He was married to Diane (Garland) Hottle Wilt on January 10, 1987, and was the photographer at Diane's first husband in 1982. Her first husband died in 1985.

Bob was an author of railroad history and a World-reknown photographer, having a long career in wedding photography. Bob's reputation was most directly associated with Morning Sun Books, writing a whole host of documentary books on railroad history.

Viewing and services were held at Cantelmi=Long Funeral Home, 500 Linden St., Bethlehem, PA on Thursday, July 31, 2025, with a celebration of life followed on Friday, August 1, 2025 at St. Thomas United Church of Christ, 902 E. Macada Road, Bethlehem, PA 18017.

Donations in Bob's memory may be made to the above-named church. Memories of Bob may be recorded at www.cantelmifuneralhome.com.

Condolences are with Bob's widow, Diane, with thanks for sharing his railroad life with us.



PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA System

A full two months after the State's new budget for Fiscal Year 2026 was due, the Legislature in early September still was haggling over how much more money—if any—to give SEPTA. As a result, to help cover the \$213 million deficit in its current budget, SEPTA on August 24 slashed its bus and Metro rail services by around 20%, and was preparing to eliminate some Regional Rail trains effective Tuesday, September 2. But suddenly, a Philadelphia judge on August 29 ordered a halt to the 21.5% transit fare increase planned for September 1 as well as cuts in Regional Rail service. The judge said that “the status quo must be maintained.” She was responding to a lawsuit filed in Common Pleas Court by Consumer Advocate Lance Haver and two SEPTA riders, who contended the severe August 24 service cuts on transit lines treated Black, Latino and low-income riders unfairly because Regional Rail would suffer fewer cuts due to its largely white and higher-income ridership.

The same judge on September 4 handed down an even bigger surprise. She ordered SEPTA to restore *all* of the cuts in service that became effective on August 24. She tempered that action by giving the court's permission for the 21.5% fare increase that SEPTA had already implemented but had previously been ordered to cancel. SEPTA was struggling to reinstate the old fares, but it's been spared that daunting task. Management officials now can devote all their energies to bringing back the former service levels. SEPTA already had told transit riders to delay purchasing any of the new higher-priced monthly and weekly passes until the new fares could be reversed, but now they won't be. A confusing two weeks at the transit system, to be sure.

But wait, there's more to this saga—a lot more! On September 5 SEPTA asked PennDOT for permission to use \$394 million in State capital account funds to help pay the cost of full service over the next two years. That action, if approved, together with possible use of SEPTA's Service Stabilization Fund which is intended only for meeting short-term operating expenses, would give SEPTA enough money to run the restored service even if lawmakers in Harrisburg take no action on its current budget request. Unfortunately, this alternative could drain capital money away from SEPTA's long-term improvement projects—it's a “Band-Aid” in the words of General Manager Scott Sauer and not a permanent solution. For example, if some opportunity for new equipment arose in the future, the necessary funding might be unavailable. SEPTA plans to resume full transit and Regional Rail schedules on September 14, and the 21.5% fare increase will also become effective on the same date.

On Tuesday, September 2, service on nine bus routes and two trolley lines that reach Philadelphia schools was partially restored, after many students and teachers had found it difficult to attend classes without the service. The quick restoration was made possible through a grant from the City, but now will be part of the

larger action to restore all SEPTA service.....Also, on Thursday the 4th, the night the Eagles played their opening game of the season at Lincoln Financial Field in South Philadelphia, the previously announced cancellation of all sports express trains on the Broad Street subway had caused some 30,000 fans who normally use the service to worry about getting to the game. The area around the Sports Complex, of course, would also be jammed with thousands of other fans who normally drive to the game. But the Fan Duel sports betting platform came to the rescue, giving SEPTA \$50,000 toward the cost of operating the ten special trains to NRG station near the park, and giving free rides to homebound fans leaving the game.

Republican Senators from Philadelphia and surrounding counties have introduced bills to increase SEPTA's accountability and the State's oversight of the system. The legislation could lead to additional funding for SEPTA although the bills themselves do not authorize any more money.....On the plus side U.S. DOT said it was releasing about \$47 million for two new bus transit centers in South Philadelphia and accessibility improvements at Market-Frankford elevated stations.

Regional Rail riders endured several bad days in August, even before the controversy over service cutbacks surfaced in mid-month. There were several delays and cancellations during the summer not caused by a fire or derailment but by the uncomfortable fact that most of SEPTA's fleet of Silverliner IV cars has been in service for at least 50 years! This gives the local carrier the dubious distinction of operating the oldest commuter cars in the nation. After a series of breakdowns and fires, SEPTA last month decided to work with government agencies to enhance inspection procedures. As a result the agency had stepped up its inspection of the cars, leading to numerous train delays, cancellations, shorter consists and skipped stops. On August 14 SEPTA issued an online letter of apology to its riders. The two train fires before then (see June *Cinders* and previous issues), were specifically cited, and further details of equipment shortages were provided in a follow-up email on August 20.

Inbound Paoli-Thorndale train #5210 had to be evacuated at Ardmore station around 8:40 AM on Monday, August 4. A burning smell was detected but there was no actual fire. Shuttle buses were called and following trains bypassed the station.....Ten days later on Thursday evening the 14th a male trespasser was struck and killed by an outbound Media-Wawa train near the Fernwood-Yeadon station. Service on the line was suspended but restored that same night. Then, around 1 AM on Thursday, September 4, an unoccupied test train on the Media-Wawa line struck and killed another male trespasser near Fernwood-Yeadon station but morning commuter service was not affectedService between Malvern and Thorndale had to be suspended on Saturday afternoon July 26 due to a fallen tree in the AMTRAK catenary. Repairs were completed later

(Continued on Page 4)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 3)

that day and train #8555 leaving 30th Street at 6:10 PM was the first to operate through to Thorndale.....The bridge rebuilding program on the Chestnut Hill East line was not completed on September 2 as planned but delayed until Sunday the 7th. After the latter date limited train service will operate only between Chestnut Hill East and Wayne Junction, with center-city-bound passengers transferring at Wayne Junction. It's uncertain when direct service to center city will resume.

SEPTA's transit service suffered numerous weather-related train delays during the summer. Among the problems was the flash flooding which especially impacted the Broad Street subway on the afternoon of Thursday, July 31. Press reports said that the rain and windstorm sent water pouring into the Spring Garden and Walnut-Locust stations, slowing train service and making platforms dangerous. Some flooding was also reported at Jefferson station. Some Regional Rail service suffered delays of up to 30 minutesA male passenger was shot to death on a northbound Broad Street Line train which had stopped at the Girard Avenue station shortly before 7:40 PM on Friday, August 15. The suspected shooter turned himself in and claimed he had fired in self defense, which security video appeared to confirm. He had a valid permit to carry a concealed firearm.

Marcus Molinaro, a former Republican House member from New York, was confirmed last month as the new administrator of the Federal Transit Administration. In a statement Molinaro said that he "is committed to supporting our nation's public transportation systems and ensuring a safer, more accessible, and better-connected America." The new secretary received support from the American Public Transportation Association. Before his election to Congress Molinaro had been a New York County Executive, the county which encompasses Manhattan in New York City.



After more than four years of anticipation, Northeast Corridor passengers last month finally could ride their new high-speed trains. Now officially known as NextGen Acelas rather than the Acela II or anything else, the sleek new blue-and-silver speedsters were introduced on Wednesday, August 27 with a ceremonial Washington-to-Boston excursion for VIP passengers. It was the next day before the first revenue trips were run on Boston-Washington trains #2153/2154. For the time being at least, the NextGens will run on the very same schedules—no faster—as the present Acelas. The well-worn 20-year-old trains will be slowly phased out as all 28 of the new Acelas are gradually placed in service. (To date Amtrak has accepted five of the new trainsets.) It is expected that after a certain period of time the NextGen trains will run at a top speed of 160 mph rather than the current 150 mph, but more important will be their ability to safely and steadily tilt through curves at higher speeds than their predecessors. Alstom is building the new Acelas at its Hornell (NY) plant, with the last due to enter revenue service in 2027 (*Trains*).

AMTRAK said last month that it might be forced to eliminate its Keystone Service to Harrisburg if SEPTA carries out its threat to remove all Regional Rail service over Amtrak lines. As previously reported, SEPTA announced that if it does not receive more money from Harrisburg to cover the \$213 million deficit it was facing in the current fiscal year it may be forced to discontinue all five Regional Rail lines that operate on Amtrak-owned rails. This would save some \$71 million in annual trackage and electric power fees for Paoli-Thorndale service and the four other lines (see May *Cinders*). Evidently, Amtrak really needs the money from SEPTA to cover operation of the Harrisburg line, which also hosts the Paoli-Thorndale service. Last year Amtrak's Keystone trains carried about 1.3 million passengers between Harrisburg, Philadelphia and New York.

"The Porch at 30th Street Station" will soon be changed as part of the overall plan to renovate the station. The Porch is the plaza adjoining the south side of the building, which since 2011 has been run by the University City District as a recreational public space and placeholder for owner AMTRAK to eventually use as part of its 30th Street Station District plan. By October 31 UCD's furniture, umbrellas and planters will be removed, to be replaced by a larger more-impressive plaza outside the station. Over the years UCD has hosted a long series of concerts, flea markets, yoga classes and the usual gatherings of food trucks. Before that the area was nothing more than a strip of concrete used for parking. The rebuilt plaza will continue to serve as a recreational area for the thousands of workers in nearby buildings.

The Federal government will be taking over from AMTRAK the actual management of Washington Union Station. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy made the announcement during a ceremony to launch the first trip of the new NextGen Acela train on August 27. Duffy said the government, which already owns the station, will correct the current "disrepair," better manage the facility and attract more shops and restaurants to help pay for upgrades to the building, which was opened in 1907.....AMTRAK is converting at least a few of its 1996-2000-vintage P42 diesel locomotives to non-powered cab cars, to be used on the opposite end of certain shorter distance trains to replace ex-Metroliner cab cars and aging P40 locomotives. One of the first converted P42's to be spotted is #9700, the former #184, and reportedly the first of six to be converted. It's possible they could replace the cab cars now in use on Keystone trains to and from Harrisburg (*Trains*).

(Continued on Page 5)



PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 4)

The discussion intensifies concerning the recently-announced \$85-billion plan to merge UNION PACIFIC and NORFOLK SOUTHERN into the nation's first transcontinental railroad (see July *Cinders*). While the logical competitor would be a combination of CSX and BNSF, that now appears to be a remote possibility. Warren Buffett, the legendary chairman of BNSF owner Berkshire Hathaway, told the press last month that BNSF would not bid on either NS or CSX which had been seen as possible merger partners for BNSF. In the same week CANADIAN PACIFIC KANSAS CITY said that more Class I mergers are not necessary and it is not interested in participating in any such talks. Buffett argued instead that BNSF should forge closer ties with CSX to gain growth advantages without the expense and regulatory risk of an outright merger (*Trains*).



CSX, NS, OTHER ROADS

CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs meanwhile has said that CSX is not shopping for a merger partner, but will consider proposals that would raise shareholder value, improve service or lead to profitable growth. This was about at the time that activist investor Ancora Holdings, which fought an unsuccessful proxy battle with NS last year, said that CSX's operational and financial performance had slipped since Hinrichs took charge in late 2022, and its operating ratio had been rising. Thus far in 2025 it's been a difficult year for CSX with an unfavorable change in coal traffic and higher transportation costs. But actually the railroad recovered well from last fall's two destructive hurricanes and the continuing need to detour traffic due to the closure of the Howard Street tunnel in Baltimore for clearance improvement work. Then, in a July 1 cost-cutting move CSX also eliminated 125 management positions, most of them at its Jacksonville (FL) headquarters (*Trains*).

The groundbreaking ceremony for the new roundhouse at the Railroad Museum in Strasburg did indeed take place on July 29 (see July *Cinders*). Work has started on the 16,000-square-foot brick, steel and glass structure, which is expected to be ready for opening in late 2026 or early 2027. The tourist-friendly building will house six ex-Pennsy steam locomotives, five of which are currently stored outdoors. The \$15-million State-funded project has actually been in the planning stages since 2002 (*Trains*).

GETTYSBURG & NORTHERN RAILROAD, which operates some 27 miles of an ex-Reading branch line between Gettysburg and Mt. Holly Springs, has gotten into the passenger excursion business (again). This Patriot Rail subsidiary thus is reviving an excursion program that was operated several years ago as the Gettysburg Railway, until it was closed down around 2013. The current 90-minute-long operation, which started on August 22, is usually powered by a GP10 locomotive, renumbered to 1863 for the year of the famous battle. Trains operate out of the historic

1884 station in downtown Gettysburg. Evidently, service will run on Friday afternoons and mornings and afternoons on weekends (*High Green*).

NJ TRANSIT reissued all of its rail timetables effective August 24, except for the new Atlantic City Line schedule which became effective on August 31.....NJT says it's having an increasing problem with train engineers calling out and not reporting for work. The railroad often has had to cancel trains because of the problem, especially on the lines that operate out of Penn Station, New York, to Trenton and Bay Head. The engineers' union, which recently settled on a new contract with NJT, said that most engineers make four runs a day and often are called to work six days a week. As a result of cancellations some of the trains that do run are overcrowded. There are currently about 420 engineers on the active roster, down from 450 earlier in the year, and reportedly very few of them work on the extra board.

River Line light rail service had to be partially suspended on Thursday night, August 14, because a male trespasser was struck and seriously injured by a train in Riverside. Service was cancelled for a time between the Cinnaminson and Delanco stationsNJ TRANSIT has begun taking over the actual operation and maintenance of the River Line from contractor Alstom, with full transfer to be completed by the end of this year. The light rail line that runs between Camden and Trenton has been plagued with problems almost from the start of operations in 2004. Alstom was brought in later to run it but now owner NJT has decided to assume full control. Prior to the start of light rail passenger service, the line for many years hosted only freight operations by the Pennsylvania Railroad and its successors.

PATCO has issued a new schedule effective September 1, showing that all weekday "owl" service is cancelled between midnight and 4:30 AM (see July *Cinders*). Hourly overnight service on weekends will continue to operate as usual between Lindenwold and center city Philadelphia. This schedule will allow PATCO's heavy cleanup and maintenance program to continue uninterrupted during those weekday overnight hours. The change will affect only the small early morning ridership that averages just 25 passengers per hour.

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

(Members may wish to photocopy and or clip this notice and keep a copy in your wallet as you are out watching or riding trains. Please send corrections to the Editor.)

SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!

Wilmington & Western Railroad Preparing to Re-open!!

Have you ever been unable to move forward with an important project until you first go back and take care of some older, nagging issues? That's where the Wilmington and Western Railroad found itself not long ago. But, we're pleased to announce that the hard work is being completed, and we'll soon be back to provide the entertainment you deserve and expect. Let's bring you up to date.

In the Spring of this year, W&W made the difficult decision to pause all train operations in order to catch up on----and for the first time in many years----to get ahead of some critical maintenance of both track and equipment. We could have continued to run train excursions while making repairs and improvements, but that would have created a less than optimal experience for our passengers, and it might have lasted for an extended period of time. We found that unacceptable.

In addition to tending to relatively short-term maintenance items, we decided to look further ahead, in order to better plan for the inevitable long-term needs such as refurbishing bridges and crossings. The Historic Red Clay Valley's primary mission has always been to provide responsible stewardship for the land and equipment that is the Wilmington & Western----so it can be enjoyed, and passed to future generations in good physical and financial condition. So now armed with better insight into our most likely medium and long-term infrastructure needs, we're putting a plan in place to insure that major maintenance will not be put off until it suddenly becomes critical.

Since this Spring, we've accomplished a great deal. In fact, we've done much more than would have been possible if we had continued to run excursions. A few examples:

>Major repairs needed to all three diesel locomotives have been made, bringing them back to operational readiness for the first time together in some time. The Doodlebug is also fully-serviced and ready for us.

>Several passenger cars and a caboose have received needed cosmetic improvements such as new windows, roofs, recovered seating, painting, etc.

>Over 1,000 worn or damaged track ties have already been replaced; over 2,000 more have been identified, and will be replaced by the end of September.

>Two 1870-era stone bridges have been scheduled for immediate repair or replacement. The remaining stone bridges have been inspected, and will receive needed minor repairs next year.

>All of our maintenance-of-way equipment has been started and run, evaluated, and received repairs as required.

We're also making several procedural and structural changes to our organization, primarily to improve the responsiveness and efficiency of our support operations. This will help the Wilmington & Western deliver best-in-class safety, reliability, and overall rider experience.

So where does this leave our schedule as of mid-September, 2025? We are confidently committing to operate our traditional Christmas trains again this December. There is also a distinct possibility that we'll be able to complete all planned work in time to offer a limited schedule of popular fall trains.

We extend a sincere thanks to our loyal followers and supporters. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Baltimore Streetcar Museum Presents Fall Photo Festival

On Saturday, November 15, 2025 the Baltimore Streetcar Museum invites you to join us for a special photography Session. The Museum is not open to the general public on this day and participants will have a unique experience. The event will start at 1 PM with a safety briefing before operations begin.

We will have re-enactors in appropriate vintage attire and antique cars during day and into the evening (weather permitting). The night photo session will begin at sunset after a quick dinner break. We recommend that you bring a meal for dinner.

The event organizers will have constant LED lighting for use by participants who will need to have their own camera with a cable release/remote shutter trigger, tripod and flashlight. The cost for this event will be \$50 and will be limited to 25 photographers. All photographers must be registered in advance and reservations are first come, first served.

For additional information, please contact Bill Monaghan at FPT2799@comcast.net or Matt Nawn at matthew.nawn@baltimorestreetcarmuseum.org. The Museum's street address is 1901 Falls Road, Baltimore, MD 21211.





IN MEMORY OF RICHARD S. SHORT: Top: PTC double-end car #5263 at Frankford Avenue & Grant, July, 1955; Bottom: Trenton-Philadelphia Coach Company 1953 GM TDH-3714 #65 at Broad Street and Erie Avenue, March, 1954. Both photos, Richard S. Short



The Last Railfan Trip of Eric Dervinis, My Good Friend *by Steve Ferrell*

Eric had recently been told that his cancer was untreatable, and he was terminal. Ever the trooper, he continued to be active in many of his hobbies and friendships. Eric was part of my rail riding group, *Ride with Me Steve*; he enjoyed going with us on many rail excursions, prior to beginning his cancer treatments.

Eric wanted to do one more train ride before passing, and he was starting to become much weaker. So later this past winter, we planned a trip on the one ex-DL&W he had never ridden – The Gladstone Branch. The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad was his favorite line and the railroad that he extensively modeled.

We debated over how we could pull this trip off, given Eric's disabilities. One morning, Eric called me and shouted, "I know how we can do this"! He had arranged for a limo service up to Summit station and return and we would take the train to Gladstone where the limo drive would meet us and take us home. Still, Eric needed more help to get around as he was six feet, five inches tall. So, it was decided that he would bring Rob, his personal care giver, on the trip.

The trip could not have been more enjoyable. Eric and Rob and our limo driver picked me up at 7 AM and we drove to Gladstone. Here, we had lunch at the historic Gladstone Tavern, with a life-size horse replica on its deck. The gourmet lunches were all delicious. And after finishing lunch, we drove around this pretty town and then to Gladstone Station in time for early boarding of our train.

Our trains of Arrow III EMU cars left right on time and we were all impressed with the views. Gladstone is a bucolic and affluent area with many large estates and horse farms around. Many of the homes are country vacation homes for executives from Manhattan. Along the way, we passed through towns with cookie-cutter type stations like Hill. About 45 minutes later we arrived at the bustling Summit station. At Summit, the Gladstone Line joined with the Morris-Essex Line to New York eastbound and later, Hackettstown. At Summit, we took a break and then stayed and photographed the impressive station, platforms and tracks. The track and platform level are below the station in a deep cut. Now it was time to leave and we were all tired. On the way home we all took a nap, except for our limousine driver.



Eric at Summit Station



Eric with our limo driver



Eric at Gladstone station



Eric's care giver, Rob and the author at the restaurant and Gladstone Station



*The horse on the porch at the
Gladstone Tavern*