

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER



CINDERS

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NEVIS THE MENACE IS BACK!

DIESELS

by
Ben Nevis

Just recently I obtained a copy of Jerry Pinkepank's latest book, the DIESEL SPOTTERS GUIDE, and I have whiled away many idle moments with it. The Guide is a much needed reference work of America's diesel locomotive parade. I wish it had been available back in 1950 when the swing to dieselization was going full blast. The nearest thing to it that I remember was the Penny's motive power guide put out in the late 40's. But that covered steam and electric as well as diesels.

Something that struck me about this guide was the fact that so many of the units which are depicted in its pages are no longer with us. Like many other railfans, I guess, I figured that the new diesels which were hitting the rails back in the 40's would still be rolling today. How wrong I was! After reading Mr. Pinkepank's fine article about the Alco PA's in TRAINS magazine, I was all set to grab my movie camera and head out to Marion, Indiana to shoot up the Erie's units until I rechecked my movies and discovered that I already had ample footage devoted to them. I also have the LV's and GM&O's PA's safely on film. But I don't have a single frame of a Baldwin Centipede or EMD's BL models. Ditto for ALCO's DL-109. Tough.

The other item which the Diesel Spotters Guide brought home to me was the almost total lack of aesthetic design on America's diesels. To me, a railroad locomotive should be more than just a machine on wheels. It should have an appearance that will please the eye. Page after page of the Guide is filled with photos of road switchers that, for all intents and purpose, look alike. Of course, this isn't Jerry's fault; the blame lies with America's engineers. However, there were a few diesels which managed to look attractive and my first choice goes to the Baldwin Sharknose, especially the Pennsy passenger units. For one thing, the Shark was decidedly different; it had the look of a ship's prow cleaving the waves. Then too, the carbody sides were nicely flaired into the roof. My second choice goes to the ALCO PA's. If the Sharks and PA's left something to be desired on the mechanical side of the ledger, they certainly were nice to look at.

What is my favorite all-time diesel? I know I'll get plenty of flak thrown at me on this but it is THE TRAINMASTER. Unfortunately, these brutes never won favor; they were ten years ahead of their time. The men down on the ex-Virginian spoke very highly of the TM's and the tonnage ratings over Blue Ridge proved their point. In my mind, the TRAINMASTER separated the men from the boys. I have heard that they were top-heavy and tended to roll on the curves but this has never been confirmed to me by an engineer who handled them.

What's ahead for us in diesels? I don't know and I won't hazard a guess. But I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised when I learned that Uncle John Santa Fe had ordered semi-streamlined road switchers from EMD and GE. If we must have road-switchers shoved down our throats, the least the designers can do is streamline them a little. It might make them a little easier to stomach.

THE CANADIAN SCENE

Canadian Pacific's Fall timetable brought no new surprises. The only train which was missing was the EXPO LIMITED and this was expected. Joe Rafferty reported that the Limited was a real disappointment; it was never very heavy and almost always ran late.

However, the CN made a number of changes in their schedules. The CABOT was combined with the OCEAN, which now runs via Edmundston. The mixed trains which operated from Joffre to Edmundston are no longer shown in the timetable. Two trains are missing from the Toronto-North Bay run. Some good news, however, from the affiliated Grand Trunk are the afternoon trains between Detroit and Chicago via Durand. Alas, the TURBO's are still waiting in the wings; it is a shame that they were not in service for the EXPO. However, one good note is the apparent continuance of the EXPO EXTRA's between Montreal and Toronto. Also worth noting is the fact that the CN's Fall timetable is printed throughout on slick paper. Is this the first time?

Reports have it that GO TRANSIT around Toronto has been a smashing success. A recent survey showed that only 10% or so of the riders had any criticism of the service. On September 14th the system carried its one-millionth rider. The self-propelled cars from Hawker-Siddely went into service about that time also.

TRACTION TERMINAL

The best news for juice fans in many a moon was the announcement that a new electric line will be built in Ohio. Early in October, the American Electric Power Co. revealed that a 15 mile electric railroad would be built to haul coal to a power station located in Morgan County, Ohio. What makes this significant is the fact that it will be operated with 25,000 volt, 60 cps commercial power, the first in this country. Two 5000 HP C-C locomotives will be supplied by General Electric.

The City of Philadelphia will soon request bids for rehabilitation of the original Broad Street Subway cars. Ed Tennyson hopes that the PTC will enter the low bid and do the work in the city-owned Fern Rock shops.

Track laying on the new South Jersey rapid transit line began on Monday, November 27th, 1967 with installation of the first of forty-1440 ft. lengths of welded rail. A Kansas City firm is doing the job and brought the rail all the way from Kansas City by special train. Meanwhile, the yards and shops at Lindenwold are nearing completion and a few underframes were seen at Red Lion during our tour of the plant in October.

Red Arrow's rail lines gained a reprieve when Mr. Taylor's highly routed rail-bus "totally collapsed" in a 7-inch snow storm in late November. The experimental vehicle was tested on the P&W and then the Reading's West Trenton line, but met its Waterloo on the B&O mainline west out of Washington. The bus could not get traction on its rear wheels in the snow. Plans for 40 of the hybrids were scrapped and the future of the Media and Sharon Hill trolley lines seems better. But, don't forget they laughed at Edison, too.

MAIN LINES

Soo Lines has ordered ten U30C locomotives from GE, while C&O has opted for nine units from the same builder.

Espee has ordered fifteen double deck suburban cars.

The 35 St. Louis cars for the PRR's North Jersey service will have chemical toilets similar to the corridor cars. It is reported that these toilets are good for about 40 flushings and then require service.

MAIN LINES (Cont'd.)

An era ended on November 22, 1967, when the Erie-Lackawanna ferries discontinued service between Hoboken and Barclay Street, Manhattan.

Some PRSL equipment is now sporting fancy new decals similar to the Pennsy decals.

N&W recently ran a monster coal train consisting of 500 cars and six diesel units between Iaeger, W. Va., and Portsmouth, Ohio. So what does that prove?

So many passenger trains are getting the axe nowadays that it is hard to keep up with all of them. However, we were saddened to learn that the KCS has applied to discontinue all of its passenger service. No one can say that they didn't give it a good try.

IC's Panama Limited now carries coaches and the Pennsy's Broadway Limited will soon be combined with the General.

Southern plans to combine its Crescent and Southerner.

The Long Island has started a new service known as the "Silver Streak" on its Port Jefferson branch with some ex-NYC stainless steel coaches. The cars were rebuilt to suit commuter needs.

Ye Olde Rumore Mill has it that there will be no East Coast Champion to Florida this year.

Some happier news for a change. On November 14, 1967, United Aircraft's TURBO-TRAIN opened it up and hit 157.3 mph on New Haven's main line between Mansfield and Attleboro, Massachusetts. This was on ordinary jointed track. Whew!

It is reported that one of the Canadian National Turbo's is in Providence also for tests.

RED FACE DEPT. Just in case you don't know, the Pennsy's AFTERNOON CONGRESSIONAL's now run between New York and Washington on a 3 hour, 20 min. schedule. When Joe Rafferty saw them at North Philly on October 29th, he thought they were merely running ahead of time.

RAILFAN'S DELIGHT

Philadelphia railfans are fortunate in that the Pennsy still puts on a good show for them every year, thanks to the Army-Navy football game. The 1967 classic fielded just 14 trains but it was still worth watching. There were 3 trains of Silverliners, one each from New York, Paoli and Trenton. The cadets had two trains, all P-70's. Equipment of note included the QUEEN MARY, B&O's WAYSIDE, the Long Island heavy weight parlors, a gang of UP sleepers, and some L&N stock. Your editor finally broke down and bought what must be one of the world's most expensive train rides, a ticket from North Philly to Municipal Stadium. Well, I always wanted to ride over the high line and that was the only way to do it. By the way, does anyone know what the score was? The game, that is.

Equally noteworthy was the Thanksgiving Day weekend travel through North Philly. Joe Rafferty reported that although travel was heavy on Wednesday, November 22nd, the PRR ran just one extra section, 2nd 175. However, Sunday, November 26th was just great, with a total of 12 extra sections. Advance 153 was a train of Silverliners from New York to Baltimore while advance 152 had tired red MU's from Philly to New York. Train 174 ran in 3 sections.

TRIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The year 1967 was a busy one for your trip committee. Altogether, we prepared seven trips of varied interest for the benefit of the chapter's members. Unfortunately, member participation was disappointing. Let's review the record.

Our first trip in 1967 was the Wilmington Shop tour on January 14th. Mark Bennett handled this one. Next was a PTC trolley tour out of Woodland Depot on March 12th, our first PTC trip in almost ten years. Joe Rafferty arranged this one. Then came a visit to the E-L's MU Shed and engine house at Hoboken on June 24th; this was set-up by Chairman Fredrick. Another PTC trip followed in August, this one out of Luzerne Depot, and again scheduled by Joe Rafferty.

After months of planning and frustration, the chapter moved back into the mainline railroad fantrip column with the Canaan trip on October 8th. The Canaan trip WAS SUCCESSFUL, despite the harassment we received from sources both within and without the chapter. To wrap up the 1967 season, we had a fine tour of Budd's Red Lion plant on October 14th and then a "Quicky" bus trip to the Hawk Mountain Line on November 5th.

The Trip Committee has several interesting tours in the planning stage for 1968; our success depends on YOU. We solicit your suggestions as to the type of trips you want, within reason. Help us get rid of the staid, old Philadelphia Chapter image and replace it with the ACTION image.

Your Trip Committee

R. W. Fredrick, Chairman
Mark Bennett
Harry Myers
Joe Rafferty

MEMBERS COLUMN

The 2:00 A.M. Milk Train is back on the timetable of the Norwood and Pacific R.R. The railroad's management, Rodger and Alice Fredrick, had to re-instate the service for the benefit of a new customer, Patricia Anne, born October 18th, 1967. Rumor has it that the N&P top brass are anxious to drop the milk run, as it is a time-consuming, sleep-robbing and money-losing proposition.

Don and Bobbie Riegel and the kids are now comfortable settled in their new home in Independence, Kansas. Don reports that the old Union Electric tracks are showing through the asphalt in town.

Genial Joe Rafferty made the Grand Circle Tour of Expo 67 last summer via Chicago. Joe had a tough time finding someone who knew about the special fare, much less sell him a ticket.

Sam and Real James and daughter Suzanne are enjoying their mansion in Haver-town. Although the P&W is just a few blocks away, Sam still prefers to ride the tired red cars.

Also new home owners are Mark and Maureen Bennett. They have a five-level in Morrisville, Pa. Or is it six, Mark?

Walt Zackon is in his second year at Rutgers studying the French language despite the fact that his cute first year teacher isn't on the job this term. C'mon, Zackie, let's get back to the Pennsy MU's.

THE EDITOR'S NOTES

CBS had an interesting review about the WABASH CONNONBALL on the evening news program of Monday, November 27th. Lew Hoy and I saw it. How many other chapter members caught it?

How come? Now that the railroads are rapidly becoming freight only, the remaining passenger timetables look better than ever.

Mark Bennett and I watched two of the Corridor Cars running tests on Saturday, November 18th. I was taking movies and couldn't see the action too well, but Mark said the 800's rolled through the interlocking at Nassau tower with hardly a trace of sidesway. The Doepler Effect from the air-horns was fabulous.

Does Kodak have something against railfans? Seems that all of the technical advances are a little too late to do us any good. We could have used Super-8 and Kodachrome 11 years ago.

Walt Zackon and I watched the BROADWAY roll through Devon one crisp evening last October and it brought memories of another fine Fall evening many years ago when I watched it wheel through Downingtown with 16 cars. It was King of the Road then. How the mighty hath fallen.

Anyone who mouths off about this lousy issue of CINDERS will be promptly offered the Editor's job.

Best wishes of the season to all of you.

CINDERS, now published on an irregular schedule, does not necessarily reflect the position of the Editor, the chapter, or the National.

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