

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

P. O. BOX 7302, PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19101



Cinders

JANUARY, 1975

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OUR JANUARY MEETING: Remember the great feature film Broadway Limited, which was shown at our January, 1973 meeting???? This month - Friday, January 17, 1975, to be exact - the Philadelphia Chapter again goes Hollywood!! Not the X-rated Hollywood of today, of course, but the Hollywood of long ago when the rip-roaring Western thriller and the slapstick comedy were in their heyday.

We'll lead off with those two zany characters, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy in the comedy short, Berth Marks, followed by another team of well-known buffoons (not buffs), the Three Stooges, in Hold That Lion. Then we come to the feature presentation, The Great K&A Train Robbery, starring the legendary cowboy hero Tom Mix and his "wonder horse", Tony. In this 1926 silent classic, filmed largely on the Rio Grande, Tom plays a masked detective who - with Tony's expert help, thwarts a dastardly gang of thieves and wins the love of the railroad president's daughter.

Does Tom himself become president of the K&A? Can he keep the line out of bankruptcy? Can he save it from the clutches of the ICC? The film doesn't go into such details, but we do promise you an evening of laughs and excitement in the old Hollywood tradition. BE SURE AND BE WITH US ON FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY 17, 1975, TO KICK OFF THE NEW YEAR!!!! Dinner is at 6:00 p.m. (RESERVATIONS NECESSARY, PLEASE), and our meeting will start at 7:30 p.m.

DINNER RESERVATIONS: A number of our members are not making the required dinner reservations. Repeaters who fail to make these reservations will not be seated for dinner! It is mandatory that the Engineers' Club know how many are going to be present for dinner, as the portions prepared are based upon the count that Frank Tatnall gives the Club. Please cooperate - you are cheating your fellow members if you do not make an advance reservation. Reservations are to be phoned or mailed to Frank Tatnall by Monday, Jan. 13, 1975.

SLIDE CONTEST IN FEBRUARY: The Chapter's Annual Slide Contest will be held in February. This advance notice will let you dig through your boxes of slides and choose some goodies to enter in the contest. As usual, there will be prizes for winning entries. Rules are the same as the 1974 Contest, and will be published in the February issue of CINDERS. Mark the date on your calendar NOW - Friday, February 21, 1975.

(MORE CHAPTER NEWS ON PAGE 4)

"ON THE SCENE"

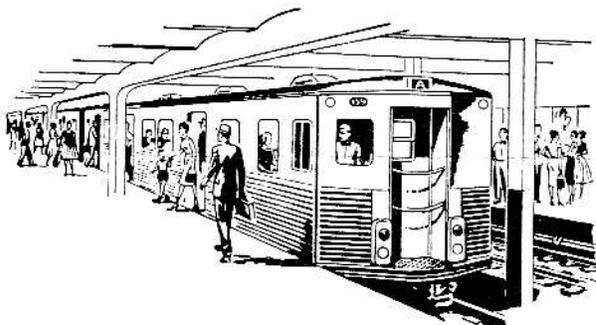


with El Simon

.....As 1974 drew to a close, AMTRAK had about 1355 cars repainted in its new livery. About 140 cars actually owned by Amtrak are still running in their old colors-but perhaps half of these are stainless steel, anyway. Unlike the locomotives, AMTRAK only rarely has renumbered a passenger car without repainting it.....A switch in emphasis finds many cars which originally received a medium overhaul going back in for a heavy overhaul, so the number of refurbished cars has remained fairly constant these last few weeks.....In the Corridor, only five 2900-series coaches, coach 3165 and parlor 7136 remain unrefurbished. (As I've noted before, the "Clocker" series coaches are not owned by Amtrak and are not presently slated for refurbishing). The four parlor-observations are considered "Clocker" cars and are only operated on a limited basis-as when an Amtrak car is bad-ordered and must be replaced. The dining car situation is again very tight because of the lengthened Florida trains.....The winter season addition to Florida - The Miamian - is to run only four weeks this year and will be discontinued by the date of our January meeting. It was an eleven-car train, including five coaches and three sleepers. All Florida trains are formed exclusively of refurbished cars except a very few SANTA FE baggage cars. The last car in SCL livery-diner 5914 - went to Mechtron over a month ago.....AMTRAK is negotiating to purchase PENN CENTRAL's Shops at Beech Grove, near Indianapolis. These shops have consistently produced the greatest number of refurbished cars each month and are one of only two or three contract shops which do wreck rebuilds. This complex was originally the "Big Four"'s Shop and, ironically, the PC at one time planned to close these shops in favor of Altoona. Now, Altoona is closed instead.....The EMPIRE SERVICE has received several additional refurbished coaches to operate in Detroit service. This pool still includes ten unrefurbished PENN CENTRAL cars, however, and some are still lettered "NEW YORK CENTRAL" - they were last refurbished in 1967.....Many "Clocker" cars have not been refurbished in ten years - especially the former sleeping cars. But, they were rebuilt with minimum maintenance in mind, with plastic panelling and other features.....Future equipment deliveries start with four ANF Turbotrains to come in February, 1975. These are similar to the two RTG sets now in service and should be based in Chicago - likely running to Milwaukee and Detroit.....BUDD will begin delivery of 292 coaches and snack-coaches in April, 1975. Delivery will extend through August, 1976. These cars were ordered in three groups of 57, 200, and 35 cars and are the Metroliner-type design, but unpowered, of course.....Then, ROHR is to deliver seven license-built RTG Turbotrains between March and September, 1976. Present plans call for some to run in the Corridor between Boston and New York.....Bids should be let for 250 bi-level and 200 single-level cars by the end of January to complete AMTRAK's new car program detailed to Congress last summer.....On the locomotive side, AMTRAK in late December had 146 E and F units in service. 25 General Electric units are on order for 1975 delivery and around 45 E's have been rebuilt with several others in the shops. The E unit, therefore, is not in any imminent danger of extinction.....Prototype AMTRAK electric units 950 and 951 are undergoing extensive testing and they have the usual teething problems associated with any new units. While test trains have been operated, no revenue trains had been operated at year's end.....JERSEY CENTRAL has at least five rebuilt RDC's so far - two trimmed in red (556-57), done at Elizabethport Shops, and three trimmed in blue (552-553, 559), done by General Electric at Little Ferry. No PRSL cars have been used on NJ this winter. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

"ON THE SCENE", Continued from Page 2

.....The READING's 20 new 3400-series EMD GP39-2's had arrived at year's end, and ten MP1500 switchers were also expected. LEHIGH VALLEY received its first GE power - twelve U23B's painted red.....In other commuter news, at year's end, GENERAL ELECTRIC had delivered new cars up to 299 for SEPTA(PC) and 585 for NEW JERSEY DOT - a total of 82 of 200 cars going to Penn Central. But, only seventeen old MU's have been written off to date. The Trenton "Pull" train was replaced in December while the one to New Brunswick was to be replaced in early January.



"In Transit"

by E. Alfred Seibel

.....The night of December 29, AMTRAK's new GE electric locomotive #951 made its first entirely successful run - no bugs turning up. It had been at PC's Wilmington Shops, where it underwent some modification, and on the morning of December 30, its companion #950 was seen being taken down to Wilmington from 30th Street. Twenty of AMTRAK's GG1's are definitely going to have a major overhaul, so it looks as though these popular locomotives will be around for a while, yet.....Another READING Silverliner IV grade crossing accident - this time, involving car 9022 at Link-Belt (County Line Road) crossing. It struck a tractor-trailer truck used to haul sewage and fortunately, the tank was empty. Ironically, car 9023 was the previous Silver IV involved in that grade crossing accident at Fulmor.....The changing of the couplers on the older PENN CENTRAL Silverliner II's and III's is more than just a coupler change. In order to operate these cars mixed with the Silverliner IV's, wires must be run through the older cars, and these wires will have nothing to do with the older cars' operation. Theoretically, the wires are just snaked and then pulled through - but obstructions in conduit have penetrated the insulation and on some cars there just wasn't any room to place additional wires. New conduits have to be installed. We asked how the Reading managed to do the same job and we were informed their Silverliners have provision for additional wiring.....A step to relieve parking lot crowding at PENN CENTRAL's Media station was taken with the opening of a 200-car parking lot at Elwyn, one mile to the west, on Monday, December 9. The PC wanted to increase its fare from Elwyn on the Media-West Chester Branch to Penn Center Station. However, Media has a pay parking lot, holding 144 autos, while parking at Elwyn is free. The next step is improving the station and railroad siding at Elwyn. Now, if those in charge would only increase train service beyond Media.....Buses replaced train service on the New Canaan Branch of the PENN CENTRAL (New Haven Line). Because the buses could not maintain the railroad schedule, they left New Canaan 26 minutes earlier than the published times. Bus replacement is temporary to permit the complete rebuilding of the branch's roadbed, plus tie and rail renewal. Connecticut DOT is footing the bill.....PATCO's Bridge cars 401-403 never made it to Wilmington and Mechtron Industries. Mechtron has such a large backlog of AMTRAK equipment to repair, refurbish and rejuvenate, they cannot touch PATCO's three rapid transit relics until 1977 - and by that time, PATCO hopes to be receiving new cars.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

"IN TRANSIT", Continued from Page 3

.....We gain some and we lose some - - - The last 5 class P2b electric passenger locomotives, used in AMTRAK's Empire Service between Grand Central and Harmon, were taken out of service and FL9's used in their place. The P2b's were originally Class P, Cleveland Union Terminal locomotives, built in 1929 by General Electric. With the coming of the diesels on New York Central's Lines West, 21 of the 22 Class P's were converted to 3rd rail, 600 volt DC operation during 1953-54. At the time of the merger, 10 remained, and were renumbered 4625-4634. They are now stored at Harmon, which has become a graveyard for electric locomotives and MU cars. To this writer, the P's were a handsome and impressive electric locomotive.....When the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia closed in 1876, the newly organized New York and Sea Beach Railroad purchased the large Victorian structure, named the United States Building, dismantled and packed it very carefully, shipped the pieces off to Coney Island, NY. Here, the giant jigsaw puzzle was unpacked, reassembled and rechristened "Sea Beach Palace". Besides serving as the NY&SB passenger terminal at Coney Island, it contained a hotel, a restaurant seating 3000 persons, billiard rooms, dressing rooms, ticket offices, and the railroad's directors rooms. It opened with the commencement of passenger service on July 18, 1877, and its location was just about where the present Stillwell Avenue terminal of the New York Rapid Transit System has been for the past 55 years.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER NEWS (Continued from Page 1)NEW MEMBERS:

BLACKBURN, Arthur H., 60 W. Plumstead Ave., Lansdowne, PA 19050 (215-623-1682)
 BLATTNER, Wayne N., 1010 Forrest Ave., Norristown, PA 19401 (215-275-1869)
 CAMPBELL, Robert L., 1538 S. 56th St., Philadelphia, PA 19143 (215-729-3389)
 SHANNON, Joel H., 2921 3rd St., Trooper, Norristown, PA 19401 (215-539-8934)

It's a pleasure to welcome another large group of members to the Chapter this month, for the second month in a row. We hope all of you will enjoy your association with us, and will benefit by your NRHS membership.

1975 DUES PAYMENT REMINDER: THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE OF CINDERS for those members who have not paid their 1975 dues. Renewals have been coming in at a good rate, and we hope to have 100% renewal this year. Judging by the large number of new members, we must have a good organization to be attracting people. So, don't let your membership lapse. 1976 is coming, and our Convention plans are already in gear. You won't want to miss out on any of the activities. RENEW TODAY. Treasurer Finkbiner expects to be at our January meeting to accept dues payments.

CHAPTER 40TH ANNIVERSARY PROJECT NEEDS YOUR HELP: March 9, 1976, is the 40th Anniversary of the Philadelphia Chapter. A commemorative booklet is planned, and information is being gathered by many of our senior members who have done such a large part in bringing this Chapter to where it is today. But, we do need black and white photos (preferably 5x7 or 8x10) of Chapter trips and activities over these 40 years to include in the book. All material volunteered or loaned will be returned after we're through with it. Anyone possessing spare trip flyers or tickets should look through your collections = if you're willing to donate same so we can use them, please do so.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP BADGES WITH YOUR NAME ON THEM - 50¢ EACH - LIMIT - 11 CHARACTERS PER BADGE - AVAILABLE FROM HARVEY SELIGSOHN AT THE JANUARY MEETING. GET YOURS THIS MONTH!!