

CINDERS

APRIL 1998



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Volume 59

Newsletter of the

Number 4

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

National Railway Historical Society Inc.

Post Office Box 7302

Philadelphia, PA 19101

SEPTA, Union Negotiators Keep Talking

It was a tension-filled Saturday evening, March 14, and the clock was ticking relentlessly toward a midnight strike deadline. Hundreds of SEPTA City Transit Division employees were receiving their picket-line instructions when at precisely 11 PM Steve Brookens, the barrel-chested president of Transport Workers Union Local 234, appeared before the microphones in the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel, where negotiators were closeted. He declared that there would be no strike--at least not that night--explaining that with the appearance at the bargaining table of SEPTA's Chief Strategist David L. Cohen, as demanded by the union, there had been sufficient progress to warrant an extension of the expiring contract. While rejecting SEPTA's call for a two-week extension, Brookens promised that "we'll keep negotiating until we have an agreement or until I pass out, whichever comes first." He later indicated that as long as talks continued in good faith and a contract was "in sight," there would be no strike and the system would operate as usual.

To the great relief of the 450,000 passengers who ride the City Transit Division on a normal weekday, the bargaining sessions continued in high gear on almost a round-the-clock basis through early Monday morning, and the union assured the public there would be no strike until at least midnight. And there certainly would be no midday strike, as some feared, which would strand riders. During breaks, SEPTA and union negotiators were generally close-mouthed about the issues still on the table, but media sources said there had been measurable progress and that SEPTA had finally made an offer of a 12-percent pay increase over four years and improved pension benefits. There was little revealed about the union's previous intransigence toward a litany of work-rule changes that SEPTA had been demanding, nor about other incendiary issues such as the hiring of part-time employees, cutting absenteeism, scrapping the present no-layoff clause and asking workers to pay a part of their health-insurance costs. Meanwhile, the union pressed its half-million-dollar radio and newspaper ad campaign, in an effort to gain public support for its earlier position that it had already helped SEPTA save millions of dollars in costs.

In the days leading up to the strike deadline, SEPTA announced several steps it was taking to ease the burden of a shutdown, such as rerouting suburban bus lines to connect with Regional Rail trains. The railroad, as in past strikes, would be the centerpiece of SEPTA's plan, with up to 50 percent higher ridership expected. To cope with this, extra cars would be added to some trains, a few trains would be extended beyond their normal terminals, additional stops would be made within the City and special arrangements would be made for crowd management at center-city stations. No fares would be collected on inbound trips, while two fares would be required on outbound trips, either at the station gates or on board. The most controversial alternative, however, was SEPTA's plan to use 90 specially-trained management employees to operate partial service on the Market-Frankford and Broad Street Lines, as well as in the trolley subway. That brought cries of anguish from the TWU, with a call for a general strike in the City if this "union-busting" tactic were carried out, and City Council also denounced the plan in a non-binding vote on Friday the 13th.

No labor contract is agreed upon, of course, without compromise and some softening of the positions of each side. At *Cinders'* presstime, negotiations were continuing in an atmosphere of some optimism that the strike--once considered highly probable--could actually be averted.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION

Notice is given of election of Chapter officers to be held at the Annual Meeting of Philadelphia Chapter, National Railway Historical Society on Friday, April 17, 1998, beginning at 7:30 PM.

Any member in good standing who is interested in running for election to office for the position of President, Senior Vice President, Vice President & Treasurer, Secretary or National Director may be nominated from the floor at the April 17 meeting. All incumbent officers have agreed to stand for re-election to office.

MARIE K. EASTWOOD
Secretary

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS, Inc.
Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

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MEETINGS: 7:30 PM, third Friday of each month (except second Friday in December), at Eakins Lounge, Thomas Jefferson University Alumni Hall, 1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA. Dinner at 6:15 PM (\$19.50 per person), Meeting 7:30 PM.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$31.00 per person, which includes Chapter and National dues. Chapter-only dues \$16.00 per person per year. Membership applications should be forwarded to: Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Membership in the parent National Railway Historical Society is required to hold Chapter-only status.

ADDRESS CHANGES should be sent to the Editor at Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. PLEASE INCLUDE NEW PHONE NUMBER!

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EXCHANGE COPIES SHOULD BE SENT TO: R. L. Eastwood, Jr., Editor, P. O. Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353

MEETING NOTICE:

FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 17, 1998
Eakins Lounge, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University,
1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA (three blocks south
of Market East Station)
Dinner at 6:15 PM (\$19.50 per person), Meeting at 7:30 PM
Parking in Wills Eye Hospital garage, 9th Street above
Locust (\$5.00 after 6 PM), or Parkway Garage, also 9th
above Locust (\$5.75 after 6 PM), Downtown Garage, Walnut
Street east of 10th (\$5.00 after 6 PM)

Our April 17 meeting will feature Chapter Member Paul Kutta with an illustrated slide talk on the Reading Railroad, as viewed from his camera, during the 1960's and 1970's. Members will recall Paul's excellent slide show on the Pennsylvania Railroad last year, and he has covered the Reading during its waning years, and we'll all be sure to enjoy recalling fond memories.

Our usual sit-down dinner will be held in the Eakins Lounge, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University, at a cost of \$19.50 per person, beginning at 6:15 PM. DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 14, 1998 to National Director Frank Tatnall at 610-828-0706. This is a strict deadline, and we ask that you please specify when ordering if you desire a fish dinner.

Please mark on your calendars our May 15, 1998 meeting, when Member J. William Vigrass will thrill us with a narrated slide program, the "Midwest in the 1950's".

CHAPTER TO SELL FP7 900 TO RCT&HS

Philadelphia Chapter will sell its spare ex-Reading FP7 locomotive #900 to the Reading Company Technical & Historical Society. The Chapter's board in February voted to sell the currently-inoperable unit to the RCT&HS, which has leased it for the past five years with partial or total restoration as the ultimate goal. The 900 is stored in the Reading Society's display yard at Leesport, PA.

Only three of the former Reading FP7 passenger locomotives still survive: #900, #902 owned by Lancaster Chapter and #903 also owned by Philadelphia Chapter. The latter two units were restored to operating condition by the Chapters over the past few years and have powered several recent excursions over the Delaware Valley Railway.

Chapter Dinners to be Suspended Next Season

At the Chapter board meeting held on February 24, a decision was made to discontinue the dinner service which has traditionally preceded the Chapter's monthly membership meetings. Slowly declining attendance at the dinners, plus the resignation of Frank Tatnall as dinner chairman after many years in this capacity, led to the decision.

While discontinuance of the dinner service will have no effect on the following business and entertainment session, the board will consider the possibility of advancing the starting time of the meetings from 7:30 to 7 PM. President Doug Watts is seeking input from the membership on this proposal.

Auction of NRHS Railroadiana Set for May 9

A large collection of surplus railroad books, magazines, pamphlets and other material from the NRHS Library will be sold at a public auction to be conducted by Auctioneer Ted Maurer on Saturday, May 9. The auction will begin at 10 AM in the Ridge Fire Hall on Route 23 west of Phoenixville. The material will be part of a large sale of railroadiana comprising as many as 700 lots. A preview will be held Friday evening from 7 to 9 PM and during the two hours preceding the auction.

A major share of the proceeds from the sale of NRHS items will go to the Library Fund for maintenance and the purchase of new materials and supplies. Chapter members are urged to attend the auction and take advantage of this opportunity to add to their personal collections.



Amtrak's Northeast Corridor schedules will change on April 5, but Intercity schedules, in most cases, won't change until May 17.

Amtrak's Intercity SBU has announced that funds have been released to restore 31 out-of-service cars to active service. While a listing was not available at presstime, likely candidates seem to be Superliners at Beech Grove and Amfleet II coaches in Delaware.

Work continues on replacement of worn swing hanger crossbars on the 1400-series Material Handling Cars. By the end of March, Amtrak facilities at Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia were expected to have all 72 surviving 1400-series MHC's restored to service. The missing 1400's placed additional stress on the use of box cars in mail service, rather than their intended use in express service. Also, there had been some disagreement with the freight railroads concerning the operation of empty box cars at certain speeds. The 70000-series cars (the first group) were primarily working in substitute mail service while negotiations continued over the proper role for the 200 new 71000-series cars. Perhaps this has been resolved because in late February and early March over 60 cars were relocated from storage via freight trains.

The eight additional P32 dual-mode locomotives (710-717) from GE are due in March and April, and some have been observed at Altoona for painting.

The Northeast Corridor SBU has issued some changes to its Club class food and beverage service. Three sets of breakfast and lunch/dinner entrees will be rotated every two weeks between trains originating in Boston, New York and Washington. To record the choices, and perhaps contrast this service to the much-mentioned "family service", the choices are:

	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch/Dinner</u>
1	French Toast Gruyere Omelet	Herb Chicken Beef with Wine Sauce
2	Blueberry Pancakes Egg Burrito	Chicken Parmesan Mesquite Beef
3	French Toast Egg Burrito	Chicken with Mustard Sauce Salmon with Hollandaise

There will be a choice of red and white wines, alternating monthly. One month the red is a Cabernet Sauvignon, the other it's a Merlot. Whites are either a Chardonnay or a Sauvignon Blanc. Menus are fancier and indicate the brand names featured. To improve quality, a Club Class Service Guide has been issued to crews.

New York's James A. Farley Building, the General Post Office, is expected to become the site of an enhanced Amtrak station and commercial development. An agreement has apparently been reached with the Postal Service, although the precise portion of this huge building which will be transferred to Amtrak is still under negotiation. At Wilmington, DE, the station will receive a number of improvements, including new canopies and a rebuilding of the high-level platform serving tracks 2 and 3.

February's mild weather resulted in improved operations on the Corridor, with three of four NEC SBU categories exceeding their on-time performance goals. Improved reliability and employee dedication was also a contributing factor. Only the Metroliners fell behind, but still achieved a respectable 91%.

Work continues in New England, with the segment of Amtrak's line between "Harold" tower and New Rochelle receiving new welded rail and concrete ties and, in some locations, track and catenary relocation. The Connecticut River bridge east of Old Saybrook will be undergoing a number of mechanical upgrades, resulting in some service disruptions, including one which is scheduled to occur March 20-22.

The only Heritage Fleet coaches in revenue service are 15 rebuilt cars in Empire Service, including eight named cars on the Adirondack.

The West Palm Beach (FL) Safety Patrols continue their spring tradition, with special train 816 noted on March 5 from Miami to Washington. The train was powered by P42's 86 and 60, one of which was ailing. This occurrence, plus meet delays on CSX, put the train into Washington over two hours late. The equipment used on the train included seven Superliner coaches, Superliner sleeper 32064, Superliner diner 38010 and eight more Superliner coaches, an impressive train.

The ninth and tenth rebuilt Heritage dormitory cars (ex-10-6 sleepers) have been released by Beech Grove -- car 2505 (ex-2911-Pacific Forest) and 2508 (ex-2884-Pacific Slope). The former car was released on March 4 and the latter on March 6.

Between April 3 and July 11, highway reconstruction in Wisconsin will result in extension of two Chicago-Milwaukee round-trips to Watertown, WI, with four intermediate stops also scheduled.

ON THE SCENE (Continued from Page 3)

In California, the Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) will begin service between Stockton and San Jose via Altamont Pass. The two-hour trip will be made by two morning westbound and two evening eastbound trains.

Twenty years ago, Amtrak was still operating the National Limited between New York and Kansas City with two sleepers, a diner-lounge and four coaches, plus two more out of Washington. The train was, of course, steam heated at the time, and the food and lounge service was provided in either a former Chessie or SP Sunset car.

The Broadway Limited's Washington section consisted of two coaches, a Slumbercoach and sleeper. The train's New York section included a Slumbercoach, four coaches, a former Army ambulance car, twin-unit diner, sleeper-lounge and sleeper. The Slumbercoaches were former New York Central cars and the sleepers included ex-Rock Island cars. The Washington-Harrisburg section included a diner-lounge, one of which was a Lewis & Clark Traveler's Rest car, 8352.

A calamitous winter in Chicago the prior year had forced Amtrak to place Amfleet cars on certain long-distance trains with only limited food service and, initially, no sleepers. But, by early 1978, these pioneering HEP Heritage cars were available, so the Cardinal did have a single sleeper, if only carrying an Amdinette for food. Some of Amtrak's lesser-remembered efforts were still on show, too. The Shenandoah (Washington-Cincinnati) rated an Amdinette, 60-seat Amcoach and 84-seat Amcoach. The Hilltopper to Norfolk via the N&W was perhaps even weaker with a 60-seat Amcoach and an Amcafe.

The Montrealer was still an impressive conventional train, with two or three sleepers, a diner, lounge car (numbers 3300-3302) and five or six through coaches (and some locals). The coaches could be any kind of "foot rest" types, including the infamous examples with extra seats jammed into any existing space (older readers will recall with dread the infamous 6000-series cars). The Crescent was still a Southern Railway operation, and through cars were conveyed to New York on trains 191 and 192. These could be Southern or Amtrak cars. Both trains to Florida, a combined Champion-Silver Meteor and Silver Star, each ran 18 cars destined to both coasts of the Sunshine State. Both trains included a sleeper-lounge, two diners, a lounge and, on the Meteor, a Slumbercoach and, yes, leg-rest coaches, too.

Empire Service still offered full meal service on the Niagara Rainbow and three ex-Union Pacific lunch-counter diners and Ranch car 8150 were assigned to Buffalo for this purpose. Only one parlor car, 3630, was still assigned to the Corridor, but the 3632, 3634 and 3644 were assigned to Washington for use as lounge cars. The Night Owl carried early Heritage HEP sleepers 2917 and 2923. Chicago's few new HEP sleepers were already on the Cardinal and Panama Limited.

Metroliners were truly that. The MU trainsets protected all of these premium runs (it was not yet Metroliner Service). Four six-car and five four-car trainsets generally made 1.5 round-trips each. The 44 cars required (out of 61) included six parlors, twelve cafe and 26 coaches. The first four cars had already gone to GE for rebuilding by this time. Clocker service between New York and Philadelphia found 24 Arrow II MU cars covered this service.

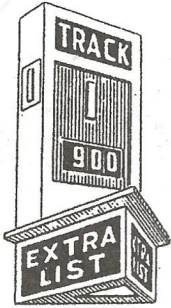
To go back further, at the end of World War II, Reading and Jersey Central operated food service cars over no less than five routes. On the New York & Long Branch, a diner was provided to accommodate commuters who worked a half day Saturdays, then quite common. The car had been discontinued during the worst of the War, but was restored and ran until April, 1949. The car was a Reading cafe car which either dead-headed or sometimes ran in service from Bay Head around 4 PM to Jersey City.

One car was operated over the Bethlehem Branch. Until September, 1948, the car served breakfast in the morning to Interstate Express passengers, heavy on Pullman trade. It returned in the evening on the Scranton Flyer to Bethlehem or Allentown to serve dinner (the unique parlor-coach 699 ran Philadelphia-Scranton both ways on this train). In September, 1948, the parlor-coach was discontinued and the cafe car rescheduled to run through to Scranton, returning in the morning. The lounge area was sold as a parlor section. The car still served breakfast but Pullman passengers were now on their own. Service on this route ended in April, 1950.

Two Jersey City-Harrisburg round-trips were scheduled, including the Queen of the Valley. Each car made a round-trip and spent the night at each terminal. Service was reduced in April, 1951 to a single car operating on the "other" train between Allentown and Harrisburg, serving lunch westbound and an early dinner eastbound (April, 1951 marked the end of Reading-Jersey Central diners based at Jersey City, although Baltimore & Ohio cars would tie up there another seven years). The abbreviated service lasted only a few months and was terminated in August, 1951.

On the main line, the predecessor of the King Coal had offered a diner-lounge or (usually) a diner-parlor between Philadelphia and Shamokin since 1933 (buffet parlors had served on this route). This service was continued on the newly-streamlined King Coal in 1949, but was cut back to Pottsville in 1952. Parlor service ended in 1955. In 1948, Reading installed the modernized Schuylkill, providing two round trips between Pottsville and Reading Terminal. Breakfast was served southbound, lunch on the return to the Coal Region, dinner back and late snacks on the evening return to Pottsville. Service on both trains ended in the spring of recession-scarred 1958.

The Jersey City service was down to three trains making four round-trips after March 1, 1945. One round-trip leaving Jersey City at 2:12 PM and Reading Terminal at 5 PM was discontinued in September, 1946. Of course, the Crusader was scheduled to make two round-trips, leaving Reading Terminal at 7 AM and 2 PM and returning from Jersey City at 10:12 AM and 5:12 PM. The Wall Street Special, with a CNJ former Blue Comet observation, worked the other commuter trip between Philadelphia and Jersey City. It was replaced by the newly-rebuilt Wall Street in March, 1948. The train left Reading Terminal at 7 AM, returning at 1:12 PM Saturdays (half-day crowd) and 4:42 PM Monday-Friday.



APRIL 4, 1998: 8th annual Museum Symposium at Drew University Hall of Science Auditorium, Madison, NJ, 9 AM-5 PM, sponsored by Friends of the New Jersey Railroad & Transportation Museum and United Railroad Historical Society. Admission: \$35 (includes lunch, refreshments and one-year membership in the Friends group). For tickets, write to: Friends of New Jersey Museum, c/o Capt. Bill McKelvey, 103 Dogwood Lane, Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922-2327 (telephone 908-464-9335).

APRIL 4, 5, 11: "Easter Bunny Express" diesel-powered excursions from Whippany Railway Museum, Route 10 West, Whippany, NJ at 12 Noon, 1, 2, 3 and 4 PM for ten-mile round-trip over Morristown & Erie Railway. Fares: \$7 adults, \$4 children under 12. Advance tickets for other than Noon trips may be ordered by sending check to: Whippany Railway Museum, P. O. Box 16, Whippany, NJ 07981-0016, enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope. For information, telephone 973-887-8177.

APRIL 14: Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Blue Unit circus train (55 cars) will arrive South Philadelphia from Long Island, NY for 12-day circus engagement at the CoreStates Center. Expected route is via Conrail Trenton Line through West Trenton, for probable afternoon arrival.

APRIL 20: "The Railroads Come to Delaware County" illustrated talk by noted Artist and Historian Ted Xaras, at the main campus of Delaware County Community College, 901 South Media Line Road, Media, PA, starting at 7:30 PM. Admission free. This is part of lecture series "Getting Around: Transportation in Delaware County through the Centuries," sponsored by Delaware County Historical Society. For information, telephone 610-359-1148.

APRIL 25: The new Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum will open its doors to the public. ARMM has renovated the former PRR 1882 Master Mechanics' Office and Test Department Building into an interpretive facility covering the men and women who fabricated the machines that made the railroad run. The museum is open Tuesday-Sunday, and admission is \$3.50. For free schedule of inaugural season events, call 1-888-4-ALTOONA, Extension 2, or access on the Internet at <http://www.railroadcity.com>.

APRIL 25-26: "All Aboard Days" at B&O Railroad Museum, 901 West Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD, featuring steam operation, 10 AM-5 PM. Regular admission charges apply. For information, telephone 410-752-2490.

MAY 2: "Delmarva Special" rare-mileage excursion from Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD to Pocomoke City, MD and return via Amtrak Northeast Corridor to Newark, DE and Conrail Delmarva secondary track, sponsored by Washington, DC Chapter NRHS. Amtrak train leaves Washington Union Station 7:30 AM, Baltimore Penn Station 8:15 AM, arriving Salisbury, MD 12 Noon, Pocomoke 1:30 PM. Train will return to Baltimore 8 PM, Washington 8:45 PM. Food service available on the train, and at Salisbury a Dogwood Festival will feature crafts, food and entertainment. Pullman Dover Harbor will offer first-class service. Coach fares: \$69 adults to Salisbury, \$49 children (3-15); \$84 adults to Pocomoke, \$64 children. First-class fare: \$189 per person. Order tickets from: Delmarva Special, Washington, DC Chapter NRHS, P. O. Box 151, Alexandria, VA 22313-0151 (telephone 703-273-8440).

MAY 3: 10th annual Baltimore Transportation Memorabilia Show & Sale at Maryland State Fairgrounds, York Road, Timonium, MD (10 miles north of Baltimore), 10 AM-4 PM. Admission: \$5.00 adults, children under 12 free. For information, contact Jim Hutzler at 703-768-2990 or Ira Reed at 703-971-5630.

MAY 9: Public auction of surplus books, magazines, pamphlets and other printed rail-related material from NRHS Library by Ted Maurer, Auctioneer, at Ridge Fire Company, Route 23 west of Phoenixville, PA, starting at 10 AM. Advance viewing will be the previous evening from 7 to 9 PM and on auction day from 8 to 10 AM. This material will be combined with other lots in an auction expected to total more than 700 lots. For information, telephone Ted Maurer at 610-323-1573 or 610-367-5024.

MAY 10: Mother's Day Extras on West Chester Rail Road. Diesel-powered trains leave West Chester, PA (Market Street) at 12 Noon, 1:30 and 3 PM for Glen Mills and return. Fares: \$8 adults (mothers \$4), \$5 children (2-12). Reservations suggested by telephoning 610-430-2233.

MAY 16: Rail Expo at Haluwasa Shoreline two-foot-gauge railroad at Camp Haluwasa, off Route 30, Ancora, NJ. For information, telephone 609-561-3081.

MAY 16: Tentative date for NJ Transit's Try Transit Festival (formerly Hoboken Festival), 10 AM-5 PM at Hoboken Terminal, Hoboken, NJ. Admission free.

MAY 16-17: Spring Open House at Reading Society of Model Engineers 15-inch-gauge Laurel Run Railroad off Mount Laurel Road, Temple, PA, 12 Noon-5 PM. Admission by donation. Live steam and diesel-powered trains will operate. For information, telephone 610-929-5444.

MAY 16-17: Railroad/Transpo Heritage Days at Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum, 300 South Burhans Blvd., Hagerstown, MD, 10 AM-5 PM. Admission: \$3 adults, 50 cents children (12 and under). Features include miniature steam railroad rides; model trains; locomotive, caboose, antique truck and fire engine displays; plus food and gift shop. For information, telephone 301-739-4665.

JUNE 6-7: Pennsy Days at Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, 9 AM-5 PM Saturday, 11 AM-5 PM Sunday, co-sponsored by Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society. Art, photography, models, railroadiana, special lectures, demonstrations and videos highlighting the PRR will be featured. Artists will discuss and sell their works, and there will be a special exhibit of the museum's famed railroad art and print collection. Regular admission charges apply.

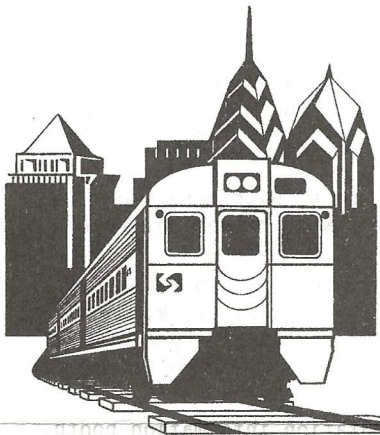
JUNE 28: Public run day at Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Route 29, Rahns, PA, featuring three gauges of live steam and diesel model trains.

PHILADELPHIA



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

By early last month SEPTA had completed the overhaul of 42 Silverliner IV cars at Wayne Electric shop. At a cost of \$202,000 per car for labor and materials--some 1,200 man-hours are needed for stripping and installation work--the program includes a substantial upgrading of the interior appointments and replacing of certain mechanical equipment. It represents a big saving over the \$1.5-million pricetag for a new MU car. The rebuilt cars are easily recognizable with their brighter interiors, new seats with bluish-gray upholstery, new flooring, paneling and signage. Much unseen work has also been done on the air-conditioning, public address and other systems, and external red, white and blue striping may eventually be added. All 231 of the General Electric-built cars will be overhauled, aimed at extending their lives for 20 years.



To meet the objections of CONRAIL, which sometimes moves high-and-wide loads to Lukens Steel in Coatesville, SEPTA has decided to build a low-level platform on the outbound side of the new R5 Thorndale station. Construction was to begin last month, for completion in fall 1999.....A survey commissioned by the major U.S. airports ranks Philadelphia International 30th out of 36 airports--in spite of its convenient rail service. The survey of 90,000 passengers rated Tampa, FL as the best terminal and Detroit Metropolitan as the worst..... Total attendance at the March 1-8 Philadelphia Flower Show was about 286,000, second best in the history of the event. In 1997 SEPTA reported carrying ten percent of show visitors, but has not released this year's figures.....Under normal conditions, SEPTA says that Suburban Station is the busiest on its Regional Rail system, with average weekday boardings of 20,800, and Jenkintown is the busiest station in the suburbs with 1,400 boardings.

SEPTA planned to operate a special train to Leaman Place, PA on March 21 for delegates to the annual Commuter Rail Conference of the American Public Transit Association, held this year at the Philadelphia Marriott. Refurbished Silverliners 284 and 299 were to be used, and transfer to the STRASBURG RAIL ROAD was scheduled on the six-hour excursion. APTA delegates were also set to tour SEPTA's Wayne Electric and Overbrook shops.....Radnor rather than Bryn Mawr will become the disabled-access station required for the mid-Main Line area.....Work on the 400-foot inbound platform at Cornwells Heights was completed last month..... Restoration of the historic Overbrook station will be finished in 1998.....New red signs have been installed at all stations on the R7 Chestnut Hill East line (except for the green signs at Mount Airy)..... Chestnut Hill East and Oreland are virtually the only stations in SEPTA territory which remain little changed from their Reading days. Buildings are unmodified and platform canopies are still in place on both inbound and outbound sides. The stations were built around 1930 when the Reading electrified.

SEPTA's ten new Bombardier push-pull coaches, due in late 1999, will probably be numbered in the 2600-series, rather than in the 2500's with the present coaches. They will have 117 seats instead of 133 due to their center-door configuration.....Installation of ditch lights on all MU cars must now be completed by June 30, under an extension granted by the Federal Railroad Administration.....SEPTA is preparing to turn over its five retired Pioneer III MU cars to the FRA, for crash testing at the AAR's test center near Pueblo, CO.

SEPTA's latest cost estimate for the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro from Philadelphia to Reading is \$403 million for commuter rail on the existing CONRAIL line, or \$720 million if the preferred light rail alternative is built. The feasibility study for the 60-mile route, due this spring, envisions 20,800 daily riders on commuter rail or 30,500 on light rail. The next step is to begin a Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement to determine the preferred alternative and a construction plan on which to base funding requests. A separate study is being made to extend the Route 100 to King of Prussia Plaza.

New M4 cars 1021-1022 for the Market-Frankford Line were delivered March 10, bringing to 20 the number of new cars on the property. Cars 1002-1003, delivered in January 1998, have been returned to the ADtranz shop for upgrading to current standards.....The 75th anniversary of Philadelphia's pioneering trackless trolley installation is planned for this November by the Philadelphia Trolley Coalition. If anyone has slides or memorabilia to contribute to this observance, please contact Joel Spivak at 215-755-7717. SEPTA's ambivalent attitude toward the remaining trackless operations makes them an endangered species.....Metro Magazine recently published APTA figures showing fixed guideway transit mileage in the U. S. This includes 3,097 miles in commuter rail service, 737 in heavy rail, 359 in light rail, 322 in trolley-bus and 1,024 in motor bus, for a total of 5,539 miles, not including cable cars. It is presumed that the bus figure includes reserved bus lanes in freeways.

The Republican-led Senate last month voted to sharply boost highway spending to \$173 billion over the next six years, as part of the pending reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). The proposal provides no increased funding for mass transit, but does allow states to use some highway funds for intercity rail projects. Under this bill, the government would spend 20 percent more on highways than

(Continued on Page 7)



PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 6)

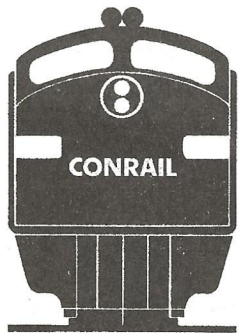
called for in last year's balanced budget agreement and 45 percent above the funding level of the six-year ISTE bill passed in 1991 (NARP).....SEPTA has prepared a series of "How to Ride" guides for individual Philadelphia neighborhoods, showing residents how to find their way to suburban job locations via mass transit..... Bucks County officials have been told of SEPTA's plans to revamp its bus routes and service levels in the county, to better serve the shifting population and increase ridership. It is likely that the sparsely-patronized Newtown Shuttle will be eliminated or rerouted.....Chicago's CTA last month unveiled an "L" train fully "wrapped" in exterior advertising for the Illinois Lottery. The idea is similar to the wrapped ad buses operated by SEPTA, but thus far SEPTA has not discussed a similar treatment for subway-el trains.



Amtrak with a goal of raising annual ridership from 635,000 in 1997 to 715,000 this year. Part of this strategy is to further capitalize on the existing through service between Harrisburg and New York. To upgrade segments of under-maintained track on the Harrisburg line, Amtrak this month will begin a \$5.8-million program to install 80,000 wood ties and perform other repair work. In 1997, 40,000 ties were installed, most of them on the eastern sections of the 102-mile route. Amtrak is studying a proposal to privatize the service (see February Cinders), but appears to be in no hurry to approve it.....Meanwhile, PennDOT is still dickering over the price for seven sets of diesel multiple-unit equipment to be supplied by ADtranz for the Philadelphia-Harrisburg service.....Harrisburg Chapter reports that AMTRAK has installed two "Quik-Trak" automated ticket vending machines in the Harrisburg station.

With AMTRAK's Fiscal Year 1999 budget still being kicked around in Congress, Traffic World reports that the General Accounting Office has sent up new distress signals about the future of the railroad. "Amtrak is in a very precarious financial position," the watchdog agency warned the House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, casting doubt on Amtrak's ability to wean itself from Federal operating subsidies by 2002 as Congress has directed.....The important Railroad Subcommittee of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee has a new chairman, Bob Franks of New Jersey, who replaces the resigned Susan Molinari of New York (NARP).....Greyhound Lines has donated \$100,000 to the Great American Station Foundation to help preserve and improve rail passenger stations across the U.S. (NARP).

AMTRAK has been running a radio ad campaign for its Metroliner service, emphasizing that the train is a great way to relax or get work done while traveling on the Northeast Corridor. Among well-known passengers cited are Novelist Tom Clancy, Film Critic Gene Shalit and New York Sports Columnist Mike Lupica.....New Northeast spring-summer timetables are due on April 5, and the National timetables on May 17 (NARP).....The Inquirer on March 2 carried a front-page article about Delaware Senator Joseph Biden, who commutes daily by Metroliner between his home near Wilmington and the Capitol in Washington. He's been making the 80-minute commute for more than 20 years, and understandably is one of Amtrak's strongest supporters in Congress.....AMTRAK's colorful 104-page Travel Planner for 1998 is available at the 30th Street Station information booth.



In spite of its uncertain future, CONRAIL operations and traffic levels have been good this winter, aided by the unusually mild weather. With the exception of the January ice storm in Upper New York State and eastern Canada, and some late-season snow in the Midwest, it's been a good year so far around the system.....CONRAIL has announced that it achieved an all-time low operating ratio of 78.0 in 1997, excluding certain unusual items, versus 79.7 in 1996. This is the ratio of operating expenses to revenues, the reduction of which has been a major goal of management.....As previously announced, Bethlehem Steel was scheduled to shut down its coke plant in Bethlehem on March 31, although it had received a number of offers to take over the operation.

CONRAIL reports that its economic development specialists in Pennsylvania helped attract 1,750 new jobs and \$358 million in private capital investment to the State in 1997. These efforts on 21 separate projects also helped retain 685 jobs the State otherwise would have lost. Across its 12-state network, Conrail and its partners helped attract or retain 7,200 jobs and generate more than \$1.2 billion in capital investment during the year..... CONRAIL has sold another ex-Erie Lackawanna SD45-2 locomotive to the READING & NORTHERN. The 6656 (ex-EL 3671) presumably will become CSMX 2, following Conrail 6660 which is now CSMX 1 on the RBM&N.....A lonely caboose, CONRAIL bay-window #21268, spends most of its time parked on a spur in Florence, NJ. It is used by the local freight crew to shove its train down the mile-long siding to serve an industrial park (Bill Vigrass).

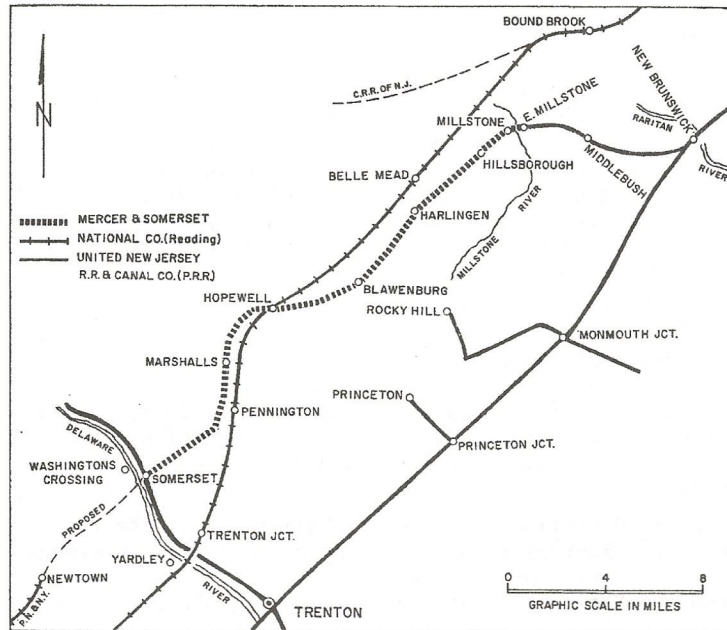
The United Transportation Union has been warring with its rival, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. In January UTU petitioned the National Mediation Board to declare that conductors, engineers and brakemen should be considered as one operating craft, and sought a representational election on the UNION PACIFIC. But the BLE complained to parent AFL-CIO that the UTU was violating a rule against raiding another union's membership, and last month an AFL-CIO umpire ruled in favor of the BLE. UTU promised an appeal and said it would continue with its effort in this latest factional dispute among rail labor.....Trains Magazine is now available on audio cassettes for the blind (Bert Pennypacker).....Pennsylvania may soon have an auto license plate that features Grif Teller's rendering of a Pennsy K4 locomotive.....The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania has shipped ex-AMTRAK E44A electric locomotive #502 to CONRAIL's Juniata shop in Altoona for cosmetic restoration. The 1963 unit is ex-Pennsy-Penn Central-Conrail #4465 (Harrisburg Chapter).

Under pressure from some members of Congress, the Surface Transportation Board has scheduled hearings for early April on the issues of "open access" and enhanced rail competition. Open access legislation, which would require railroads to open their lines to any qualified competitor, is being pushed by several shipper groups but is strongly opposed by the rail industry.....DELAWARE VALLEY RAILWAY last year completed the up-grading of 11 miles of its ex-Pennsy Octoraro branch through Kennett Square, raising the track speed from ten mph (Class I) to 25 mph (Class II). DV is anticipating increased traffic from the Lukens Steel plant in Coatesville, once Bethlehem Steel acquires it and boosts production of steel plate.

Mercer & Somerset Was Area's First Rail Casualty

(This is another in a series of articles recounting the life and death of certain ill-conceived or ill-fated shortlines in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Previous entries include the Delaware River & Lancaster (February 1995) and the Quakertown & Eastern (February 1998).

Among the many small, forgotten railroads of the Delaware Valley, the Mercer & Somerset was probably the first to expire. Named for the two counties it touches, the M&S extended 22.5 miles from Somerset Junction, on the Delaware River near Washington Crossing, to East Millstone, NJ. It was incorporated in 1870 for no



Map by Frank Weer, *National Railway Bulletin*

would have had the effect of creating a through route for the Philadelphia & Reading Railway between Philadelphia and New York, a development offensive to the interests of the Pennsy. In what was soon dubbed the "Frog War," the big road dispatched two trainloads of hired "enforcers" whose job it was to prevent the Bound Brook crews from inserting crossing frogs in the M&S track. This large band of heavies quickly dispatched the trackmen, forcing Bound Brook management to appeal to the State for protection. In an era when the railroads were largely a law unto themselves, the Governor nonetheless called out the militia, under whose armed protection the frogs were inserted and the Bound Brook road was able to begin service. Ironically, it was the Mercer that suffered an early death, while the Bound Brook became the Reading's New York branch and today survives as a key link in the Conrail system.

In 1879, the little road defaulted on its mortgage payments and was sold to the bondholders for \$50,000 at a public auction in Trenton. The following year the PRR terminated its lease and operations ceased, there being insufficient business even for the one daily train then in service. In 1881 the rails were lifted and by 1923 all of the right-of-way had been returned to the State or to the abutting property owners.

Today, 117 years after abandonment, little evidence remains of the Mercer & Somerset, a railroad that never should have existed. A local highway is built on the railroad bed from Somerset towards Pennington, and the stone bridge abutments in the Millstone River at East Millstone still may be seen.

Information for the above was drawn from Carl Wieland's article published in *National Railway Bulletin* Issue #4 for 1978, *Poor's Railroad Manuals* and the *Official Guide*.

specific purpose other than to block competing railroads and was initially backed by officers of the United New Jersey Railroad & Canal Company, then the dominant transportation system in the State. But a year later the UNJRR&C was leased to the Pennsylvania Railroad, which thus inherited by lease the dubious M&S project then under construction.

On February 23, 1874 the Mercer & Somerset was formally opened over its entire length, the first through train leaving Trenton at 7:50 AM and arriving in New Brunswick at 9:50 AM. The route followed was via the PRR-controlled Belvidere Delaware Railroad to Somerset Junction, the M&S through Hopewell to East Millstone, then the Pennsy's Millstone & New Brunswick Railroad to New Brunswick, a total distance of 38.5 miles. But the line touched only a few small towns and farms, with little immediate prospects for local traffic. Obviously it was much faster to travel between Trenton and New Brunswick on the mainline through Princeton Junction, with a running time of about 45 minutes for the 26-mile trip.

The M&S did enjoy the national spotlight for a brief time in 1874, when the rival Delaware & Bound Brook Railroad attempted to complete its line between Yardley, PA and Bound Brook, NJ via Hopewell. This

Dick Lane Films Featured in New PRR Video

Chapter Member Dick Lane spent many days in the 1950's and early 1960's with his Super-8 movie camera, documenting Pennsylvania Railroad and PRSL operations in the Philadelphia and South Jersey areas. Now the best of his films have been released on a video entitled "Pennsy Steam & Electric Years 1955-1964, Volume II," which includes such scenes as a PRR E6 and train racing to Cape May at 75 mph--photographed from a speeding automobile!

The all-color video, with maps, graphics and narration, was produced by BCB Productions, associated with Digital Image Works, and is available by mail for \$34.95 per copy (plus \$2.10 sales tax for Pennsylvania residents and \$4 for postage and handling). Major credit cards are accepted. Orders may be placed by mail to: BCB Productions, 395 Font Road, Downingtown, PA 19335-1572. A toll-free telephone number (800-541-4489) is also available as is the web site www.diwks.com.

A longtime resident and member of PRRT&HS as well as NRHS, Dick now lives in Kennebunk, ME. He is the current president of the 470 Railroad Club, the largest rail enthusiast group in the State of Maine.

CSX, NS Still Face Problems in Conrail Takeover

With the filing of final briefs at the Surface Transportation Board in February, it became evident that CSX and Norfolk Southern still have a few boulders on the track in their \$10.2-billion takeover of the 11,000-mile Conrail system. The three-person STB is scheduled to hear oral arguments on June 4, then vote on the application June 8. The written decision would be issued July 23, effective in 30 days on the probable "control date" of August 22. For planning purposes, CSX and NS are using September 1 as the "closing date" on which they would assume actual operation of their newly-acquired lines, but this date could slip to late fall.

While two major unions, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the United Transportation Union, have signed on in return for labor protection guarantees, a covey of prominent opponents are still rattling their sabres. Most of them, including the States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, appear to be angling for concessions rather than trying to thwart the merger completely. Ohio in particular is concerned about increased rail traffic through sections of Cleveland and its suburbs, and is talking tough on that issue. The U. S. Department of Transportation, in a 44-page brief, argued that while the transaction would increase rail competition in the Northeast and improve productivity, it should be approved only if numerous safety, service and labor protective concerns are adequately addressed by the carriers. DOT suggested that the STB take steps to retain jurisdiction for five years in the "commercial implementation" of its decision, fearing the competitive impact of the merger in certain areas. The STB staff has submitted the required Draft Environmental Impact Statement covering the acquisition, with a final EIS due in May.

A number of shippers, including associations representing the chemical, plastics and fertilizer industries, continue to press their case for special protection where "captive" shippers might be created through the loss of Conrail as an independent railroad. Others seek protection against the possibility that CSX and NS might attempt to recoup the huge cost of their 1997 bidding war by increasing freight rates. But both applicants are resisting any restrictions on their ability to add their acquisition costs in calculating "revenue adequacy" for rate-setting purposes, contending that to do so would "reregulate" them apart from the rest of the industry. Both roads, in fact, deny that they paid an "excessive amount" for Conrail, or that they paid more than what "they believed it was worth."

The powerful National Industrial Transportation League earlier had given its conditional approval to the takeover, provided that CSX and NS have their labor implementing agreements in place before the closing date, and that their vital computer linkages with Conrail are up and running. However, Traffic World reports that the NITL, in concert with other interested parties, continues to flog the issue of the "acquisition premium." NITL said that the cost of the purchase--largely paid through additional debt--is "large enough to materially affect both carriers' need for revenue compared to their revenue need pre-transaction, as well as the (STB's) calculation of revenue adequacy and its...threshold for the determination of maximum reasonable rates."

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 7)

Representative Joseph McDade of Scranton, the godfather of Steamtown's rebirth, has announced that he will retire from Congress at the end of his present term. The veteran lawmaker has obtained over \$66 million in Federal grants for the Steamtown National Historic Site (Mass May RRE).....A retired UNION PACIFIC caboose has been donated to the Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown, courtesy of Montgomery County resident and ex-UP Chairman Drew Lewis.....The B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore says that CSX may allow it to resume the operation of excursion trains this year, using MARC equipment to such points as Cumberland, MD, Williamsburg, VA and even to Philadelphia!.....The Bull Sheet reports that CSX rostered 2777 locomotives at the start of 1998 with 21 different paint schemes. The most common, of course, is the current blue with yellow nose.....
 ...U.S. railroads managed to set a new record for ton-miles of freight handled during 1997. At 1,372.6 billion, this was an increase of 0.9 percent over the previous record in 1996. The 17,755,379 carloads of freight handled fell short of the record set in 1995 by 0.3 percent (Railway Age).

Brochure Mailed for Syracuse Convention

The official brochure and order form for the 1998 "Empire Heritage Rails" NRHS convention in Syracuse, NY was mailed in mid-March to all pre-registrants and others who requested it. The convention is scheduled for July 8-12 with a pre-convention diesel excursion from Syracuse to Scranton, PA and return on July 6-7.



Major events of the convention, sponsored by the Central New York Chapter, include a steam trip behind Susquehanna's Chinese-built 2-8-2 from Syracuse to Binghamton, NY and return; an excursion at Steamtown; shorter excursions on Tioga Central Railroad, Adirondack Scenic Railway and Finger Lakes Railway; an OnTrack RDC trip; a cruise on Skaneateles Lake; a railroadians show; the annual banquet with Walter Rich, CEO of Delaware Otsego Corp. as featured speaker; the annual members meeting and numerous "non-railfan" activities. The convention hotel is the Hotel Syracuse-Radisson Plaza in downtown Syracuse.

Chapter members are urged to make early reservations for this interesting convention just 250 miles from Philadelphia. Correspondence should be addressed to Central New York Chapter NRHS, P. O. Box 229, Marcellus, NY 13108 (telephone 315-488-8208, E-mail cnynrhs@aol.com or check the Chapter's web page address at www.rrhistorical.com/cnynrhs).

EXTRA LIST (Continued from Page 5)

JULY 3-5: Reading Railroad Days at Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, 9 AM-7 PM Friday and Saturday, 11 AM-7 PM Sunday. Huge operating railroad provided by Reading Company Technical & Historical Society, oral history presentations, tours of Reading equipment, video programs will be featured. Regular admission charges apply.

JULY 8-12: "Empire Heritage Rails" NRHS national convention at Syracuse, NY, sponsored by Central New York Chapter. Featured events include excursions on Tioga Scenic Railway, Finger Lakes Railway, Adirondack Scenic Railway and Saturday feature trip on Susquehanna Railway from Syracuse to Binghamton, NY and return behind steam locomotive #142. A two-day diesel pre-convention special will run from Syracuse to Scranton, PA for visit to Steamtown, via Susquehanna and St. Lawrence & Hudson. Annual banquet will hear Walter Rich, chairman of Delaware Otsego/Susquehanna Railway, as main speaker. Annual members meeting will also be held, and numerous non-railroad activities have been scheduled. Registration fee is \$20. Full convention brochure and order form will be sent to those who have pre-registered or who have requested the form. For information, write: Central New York Chapter NRHS, P. O. Box 229, Marcellus, NY 13108-0229 (FAX 315-487-2849 or E-Mail to CNYNRHS@aol.com). The Chapter's web site may be visited at www.rrhistorical.com/cnynrhs.

JULY 25: 7th annual "Rail to the Fair" special Amtrak train from Philadelphia to Harrington and Frankford, DE and return, sponsored by Delaware Transit Corp. and DeLDOT. Train leaves 30th Street Station at 9, Claymont 9:21, Wilmington 9:43, Newark 10:01 AM, arriving Delaware State Fair at Harrington 12:35 PM via Conrail's Delmarva secondary track, then will continue to Frankford via Indian River secondary track. Train will return to 30th Street about 8:45 PM. Ticket prices range from \$67.50 Philadelphia-Frankford to \$22.50 Harrington-Frankford. Reduced fares for children ten and under. For tickets and other information, contact Doug Andrews at DTC (telephone 302-577-3278 extension 3451) or Christine Hoffman (302-577-3278, extension 3412).

ON THE SCENE (Continued from Page 4)

With the start of the Wall Street, Reading restored a third car, which ran through April, 1950 leaving Reading Terminal at 10 AM and returning at 6:12 PM. The two streamliners would undergo various changes, most prominent being the April, 1995 elimination of the Crusader's midday round-trip. The Saturday lunchtime return was rescheduled to a dinner return between April, 1959 and the end of full dining service a year later.

Refreshment or limited cafe service was continued until the RDC era in October, 1966, using cars 2060 and 1189, modified from their configuration in the days when they served on the Schuylkill and King Coal. When the RDC's ran, service was provided by RDC-2 #9165 and RDC-3 #9166, ex-Boston & Maine cars with a refreshment area built into the former baggage and mail sections. Briefly, one car was scheduled to provide refreshment service between Reading and Philadelphia one last time.

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