



CINDERS



JANUARY 2000

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Volume 61 Newsletter of the Number 1

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

National Railway Historical Society Inc.

Post Office Box 7302

Philadelphia, Pa. 19101

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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 (\$19.00 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, JANUARY 21, 2000

Eakins Lounge, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University,
1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA (three blocks south of
Market East Station)

Dinner at 6:15 PM (\$19.00 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 January 21, 2000 meeting features a narrated slide lecture by Richard W. Jahn, Managing Editor, Flags, Diamonds and Statues, the official publication of the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society, on the LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD. Senior officers of the Chapter do not recall any program dealing exclusively with the Lehigh Valley at our Chapter in recent memory, so this will be an unusual opportunity to see the "Route of the Black Diamond".



The evening begins with our usual sit-down dinner in the Eakins Lounge, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University, beginning at 6:15 PM, at a cost of \$19.00 per person.

DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY TUESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 2000 to Dinner Chairman Bill Gardiner at 215-632-7016. This is a **STRICT** deadline, and you **MUST** specify when ordering if you desire a fish dinner. **PLEASE CALL BILL GARDINER** to make this reservation!

Looking ahead, our program on February 18, 2000 will be the Annual Ray Muller Slide Contest. Plan to be on hand on Friday, January 21, 2000 as Richard Jahn takes us for a ride on the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

Winners Announced in Chapter Drawing

Chapter Member Donald Wright, Sr., of Philadelphia was the grand prize winner of the Crusader trainset in the drawing held during the Fort Washington Greenberg Show on December 12. The trainset, donated by Boscov's Department Stores, was valued at \$999.

Other winners were: Chapter Member Alfred Gaus (Amtrak Explore America ticket), Lancaster Chapter Member Mary Shenk (railroad book of her choice) and Chapter Member Rich Bernhardt (video of his choice).

The Chapter wishes to thank everyone who bought chances in the annual fund-raising raffle, the proceeds of which go to improvements and maintenance of the Chapter's ex-Reading FP7 locomotive.

MEETING CANCELLATION ALERT!

In the event of snow, sleet or freezing rain on a Philadelphia Chapter meeting night, Chapter officers will make a decision as to whether to hold the scheduled meeting. If in doubt, members should call 215-947-5769 after 12 Noon on meeting day for a recorded advisory.

JANUARY 15-16, 2000: Cheltenham Hills Model Railroad Club HO-scale open house at 8000 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA, 12 Noon-4 PM both days. Admission by donation. For information, telephone 215-635-9747.

JANUARY 22-23: GATSMET Lines HO and HO_{N3} model railroad open house in basement of New Horizons Montessori School, Prospect & Madison Avenues, Fort Washington, PA, 12 Noon-4 PM both days. Admission by donation. For information, telephone 215-646-2033 Thursday evenings.

JANUARY 28: Railroad Film Night at National Canal Museum, Two Rivers Landing auditorium, Easton, PA, beginning at 7:30 PM. Movies of Pennsylvania and New York Central Railroads will be shown by NRHS Media Director Mitchell Dakelman. Donation of \$5 per person requested. For information, telephone 610-559-6613.

FEBRUARY 19: EastRAIL 2000 multi-media railroad slide programs at Warren Hills Regional High School, Washington, NJ. Admission: \$10 per person in advance by mail, \$12 at door. Event is co-sponsored by Friends of New Jersey Railroad & Transportation Museum and United Railroad Historical Society. Order tickets from: URHS, P. O. Box 711, Clark, NJ 07066, making checks payable to "United Railroad Historical Society" and enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope. For information, telephone 732-671-9644 evenings.

FEBRUARY 26: Annual "Snow Train to Vermont" excursion sponsored by Massachusetts Bay RRE will operate from Boston to Brattleboro, Bellow Falls and return via Amtrak chartered train. Train leaves Boston (South Station) 7:40 AM, returns about 9 PM. Fares: \$70 adults, \$40 children (12 and under). Optional covered bridge tour, sleigh/hay ride or Green Mountain Railroad excursion at additional cost. Order tickets from: Mass Bay RRE, Inc., P. O. Box 4245, Andover, MA 01810-0814, enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope. For further information, telephone 978-470-2066.

MARCH 4-5: Greenberg's Great Train & Collectible Toy Show at Pennsauken, NJ (South Jersey Expo Center), 11 AM-5 PM Saturday, 11 AM-4 PM Sunday. Admission: \$5 adults, \$2 children (6-12). For information, telephone 410-795-7447. Philadelphia Chapter will be represented with an information and sales table, and members interested in volunteering are asked to call Sales Chair Dave Kopena at 215-441-8092.

MARCH 5: 14th annual Railroad Show & Collectors Market at Zombo Temple, 3rd & Division Streets, Harrisburg, PA, 9 AM-3 PM, sponsored by Harrisburg Chapter NRHS. Donation at door: \$4 adults, children under 12 free. For information, telephone 717-232-3545.

MARCH 12: Tentative date for Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS excursion using SEPTA "yellowbird" Airport cars, covering various Regional Rail lines. For information when available, send #10 self-addressed, stamped envelope to Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302.

MARCH 18: 19th annual Canal History & Technology Symposium at William E. Simon Center, Lafayette College, Easton, PA, sponsored by National Canal Museum. Subjects include the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company, the Molly Maguire trials and the Mauch Chunk Switchback Railroad. For information, telephone 610-559-6613.

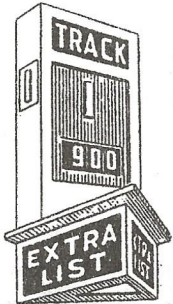
MARCH 19: Rare mileage excursion from West Chester to 30th Street Station, Philadelphia, sponsored by West Chester Railroad, PRR Technical & Historical Society and Railfan & Railroad Magazine. Diesel-powered WCRR train with ex-Reading and SEPTA open-window coaches leaves Market Street station, West Chester, at 9 AM. Photo stop is planned at Clifton-Aldan and train will lay over at 30th Street. Food will be available on the train. Fare: \$40 per person. Order tickets from: West Chester Railroad, P. O. Box 35, Yorklyn, DE 19736, making checks or money orders payable to "WCRR." For further information, telephone 610-430-2233.

APRIL 20: "Railroads Along New Jersey's Delaware & Raritan Canal" lecture by Capt. Bill McKelvey at National Canal Museum, Two Rivers Landing auditorium, Easton, PA, beginning at 7:30 PM. Admission free. For information, telephone 610-559-6613.

MAY 24-30: Chesapeake Bay-Bermuda cruise adventure aboard luxury vessel Crown Dynasty, sponsored by Lancaster Chapter NRHS. Cruise departs from Port of Baltimore on Wednesday afternoon, May 24. Features include optional tour of Bermuda and railroad presentations at sea. Special NRHS cruise prices range from \$744 to \$1,094 per person. Deposit required. For information and trip brochure, write: Lancaster Chapter NRHS, 72 Stuart Run Road, Quarryville, PA 17566 (telephone 717-786-4932 or 717-299-6405).

ASSISTANCE NEEDED AT NATIONAL OFFICE

During the month of January (or early February), there is a need to move furniture at the National Office on the 12th floor of the Robert Morris Building at 17th & Arch Streets. While a definite date has not yet been established, we are looking at Saturday, January 22, 2000, according to NRHS Senior Vice President Larry Eastwood. The project, which involves relocating the Bulletin and Office Manager Lynn Burshtin's work stations, would involve several hours of effort. Volunteers would be fed and transportation expenses reimbursed where necessary. Contact Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or Office Manager Lynn Burshtin at 215-557-6606 for further information.





Yet another Thanksgiving season has come and gone and this was one for the record books. A maximum effort got virtually every car not in the Capstone overhaul program or the HHL test set out on the road. Most of the commuter rail authorities with whom Amtrak partners came through, too. And, Amtrak did a better job of getting cars where riders were.

As a result, while capacity was down and ridership up, there were less standees than in 1998. It was, of course, a transitional year, with cars and locomotives in three different schemes, including the first Acela locomotives. Along the Northeast Corridor, at least, the weather cooperated, too.

No matter how knowledgeable I may be about Amtrak operations, I could not possibly do the analysis without the help of various individuals inside and outside Amtrak. As always, their assistance is sincerely appreciated. With the above in mind, let's step back to the two big days of Thanksgiving 1999. The turkey is in the oven, 30th Street is filling up and the sun is just rising.

The Northeast Corridor is the grandest show of all. I was somewhat mobility challenged this year, awaiting arthroscopic knee surgery (since taken place), but I did 30th Street on Wednesday, November 24 and Newark on Sunday, November 28. On both days, it was good to see old friends again, with Wednesday also producing exceptionally warm weather.

In the motive power area, all 11 E60 electrics were seen on one day or the other, and 46 of the 52 AEM-7's that survive were out and running. In fact the only six "meatballs" which did not operate were the six in the remanufacturing program (901, 905, 916, 918, 920 and 924). Three of the AEM-7's have been repainted into the Acela gray (with blue roof), but as yet without emblems.

These early examples are the 907, 914 and 934. Generally, all trains over ten cars were double-headed, which usually meant the unreserved Boston/Springfield trains.

Six schedule revisions were issued to reflect last-minute adjustments to the internal planning for the holidays, as equipment needs and availability became clear. For schedule purposes, only Wednesday's planned Train 2094 (Philadelphia-New York) did not operate.

On Wednesday, Maryland's MARC was able to provide nine older coaches and then, later, two complete trainsets of newer cars and locomotives. Connecticut DOT provided two three-car sets of rebuilt SPV's (or Constitution Liners), one of which ran in Empire Service in New York. A surprise was three Virginia Railway Express "Boise Budd" cars (V307, 310 and 312) which made a Clocker round-trip. SEPTA was unable to provide any cars Wednesday due to its rebuilding program for Silverliner IV interiors.

A set of cars off the Pennsylvanian normally spends all day in Philadelphia, but was borrowed for Clocker duty on both Wednesday and Sunday (which brought a few Horizon coaches to New York's Penn Station).

Sunday, of course, provided some breathing room for the commuter partners. From north to south, Boston's MBTA provided a six-car, one-unit set for the Boston-New Haven turn (Trains 2163-2074). Again, the two ConnDOT C-Liner equipment sets were out. Two eight-car NJ Transit Arrow II MU consists were operated on Trains 2195, 2145, 2048 and 2080. Unusually, the lavatories were locked (a warning was provided in Amtrak's Holiday timetable). Two SEPTA trainsets were used, with no lavatories (and no timetable warning!). One ran on Trains 643-654, and on the return (Sunday evening) trip, passengers transferred at 30th Street to the reserve Pennsylvanian consist for the trip to New York (a rare electric run to and from Harrisburg.)

MARC continued to be Amtrak's most useful ally, providing both AEM-7's and 34 coaches, both newer and older versions, some of which made it as far as Boston. Finally, the three VRE cars, released for service after repair of an electrical problem, were used for an on-time Train 173 from Philadelphia to Washington, when pantograph problems delayed regular 173.

The big E60 electrics, meanwhile, operated on Clockers and Intercity trains between Philadelphia and New York only.

High utilization was not limited to locomotives alone, as Amtrak used virtually every Amfleet and Clocker car not actually in the Capstone rebuilding program at Bear (four Amclubs, 11 coaches and one business class coach). Four "test cars" instrumented for use with HHL #651 were not used (they were out with the 651 on the previous weekend, however).

One train, #142 on Wednesday, I believe, carried over 1,000 passengers out of New York, a pretty impressive feat, standees notwithstanding. Of course, for the Corridor, this was the last Thanksgiving session of its kind. By next year, maybe all 20 of the Acela Express trainsets will be in service, reducing the need for borrowed cars (or providing additional deployment options). It's also possible that Amtrak's "Clydesdales"

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ON THE SCENE (Continued from Page 3)

(the E60's) may have been displaced by the 15 new HHL's. So, there's never a dull moment. From my perspective, the intensive use of equipment provided an excellent opportunity to observe and record the NEC fleet at this time. This included the 40-odd Capstone cars, some of which had not yet been restriped.

New York State Empire Service, as mentioned, borrowed three ConDOT cars and the one operable Turbo set made a second midday round-trip to Albany on Wednesday. Clocker coach 7608 actually made a trip on the Corridor on Sunday on Train 647, but generally, all Empire Service "clocker" and Amfleet cars are kept together in a separate pool. All locomotives in Empire Service are the dual-mode GE P32DM's except that F40's #273 and 278 were used on Trains 63-64 between Albany and Toronto since VIA won't yet accept the GE's into Toronto.

Intercity Thanksgiving action found the new Heartland Flyer holding to its normal three cars and a cab-baggage unit. Intercity also operates North Carolina's Piedmont, made up of North Carolina-owned cars and assigned baggage car 1129.

Otherwise, Intercity's action was centered on Chicago. On Sunday, 21 extra cars and four borrowed Metra gallery cars were operated. Most trains are now reserved, so passenger loadings can be controlled to meet the available capacity. The two interesting trains are the two "school trains" to Quincy and Carbondale. The Illinois Zephyr went out with eight cars, including the four borrowed Metra cars. The Carbondale train was "bulked up" from the usual four cars with six Amfleet II coaches to Champaign (for Illini travel), where the cars were returned to Chicago on northbound Train 392. The Illini equipment interfaces with the Pennsylvanian at Chicago and, in turn, lays over a day at Philadelphia (because of freight delays, the train is often too late arriving to make the turn to the westbound train).

Bear shops, meanwhile, was overhauling two of Intercity's cafe and two dinette cars (all Amfleet), but virtually every other car was pressed into service. The only assigned cafes are those on the Illini/Pennsylvanian. Most Chicago area trains rate an Amdinette or Horizon dinette to provide table seating and business class service in the coach portion.

In Amtrak West Thanksgiving notes, an extra Horizon fleet trainset of seven cars, including two cafes ran as an advance section of the morning train from Portland to Seattle in the Pacific Northwest, returning to Portland in the late afternoon. F40 389 provided the power. The "Las Vegas" Talgo set did not operate, but the four other sets did, and then some. Two trains on the Eugene line were assigned 13 cars as per usual, but one was bulked up to a record 19 units with the addition of three spare cars and the borrowing of three cars from the train on the Seattle-Bellingham run. Power was two F59's and two cars ran "fin-to-fin" amidship. This left the Bellingham train with nine cars and a 12-car train (with full dining service) to Vancouver, BC.

Emeryville, meanwhile, sends out ten California Car trainsets on the Capitols and San Joaquins. On Sunday, eight were made up of five cars and two with six, or 52 cars in all-- every "Cal" car they had. Each set had a control coach and dinette, six sets had baggage coaches and the remaining cars were coaches.

Los Angeles was a disappointment. Normally, six Horizon/Amfleet sets and two California/Superliners operate, but Sunday saw a mix of seven and one. A total of 45 low-level and seven bi-level cars were used with five spare California cars and two spare Horizon cars in reserve. F40 #369 mingled with an otherwise all F59 fleet.

All 53 Amtrak trains that had been scheduled to be operating at Midnight on December 31 were held as briefly as possible at the most convenient station, just prior to Midnight, while host railroads were checking out their computers, signals, etc., for Y2K compliance. Amtrak was to provide free food and beverages as well as issuing special souvenir whistles to passengers and, in extreme cases, provide alternative bus service. At the same time, Amtrak was scheduling extra staff at the Consolidated National Operations Center at Wilmington, DE.

The fifth Talgo trainset, in the Nevada state colors of blue and silver, has been officially announced as going into Los Angeles-Las Vegas service in September 2000. Union Pacific was requiring a \$28 million payment toward construction of 20 miles of second track and state aid was to help build a station near "the Strip." Running time between the two points will be 5-1/2 hours, with one stop in Montclair, CA. The train will leave LA at 9:00 AM and leave Las Vegas at 4:00 PM. Formal and informal dining service will be available along with deluxe business class service.

Two Heritage cars of interest have recently been released from Beech Grove. Just when you thought you'd never live to see the day, ex-Northern Pacific diner 8507 (Budd, 1957-58) was released December 1. Originally built for the North Coast Limited, this is the prototype of 25 diner rebuilds and has been breaking in on the Crescent. After a delay of almost a year, another dorm car was released on December 17. Car 2523 was 2994-Pine Lodge. This leaves only 2524, to be converted from 10-6 sleeper 2892-Pacific Command.

Lee Bullock has moved from President of the Intercity SBU to become Vice President-Freight Railroad Affairs, a portfolio which has taken on more significance due to the problems Amtrak has been having with the Conrail-CSX/NS transition. His replacement in Chicago is the highly-regarded Ed Walker. Numerous other Amtrak personnel changes were announced during November.

A special train operated from Milwaukee, WI to Washington, DC to convey the National Christmas tree (via the Capitol Limited route). Consist included P42 #77, club-conference car 9800, Viewliner sleeper 62022-Mountain View, Am lounge II 28001, and office car 10001-Beech Grove.

The Kentucky Cardinal began service to Jeffersonville, IN on December 17. Pending the signing of an expected express contract, the train consists of several MHC's, a Superliner sleeper and an El Capitan coach equipped with vending machines downstairs (39952 and 39953). Southbound Train 850 leaves Chicago at 8:10 PM CT daily, arriving Jeffersonville, IN at 8:40 AM, ET. Northbound, Train 851 leaves Jeffersonville at 10:25 PM, ET, arriving Chicago at 10:05 AM, CT. Dining car service is available on the days the train is a part of Trains 50-51, Cardinal between Chicago and Indianapolis.

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ON THE SCENE (Continued from Page 4)

On December 10, Amtrak dedicated a new mail and express facility in its hub city of Chicago. The \$3 million facility accommodates eight cars on two tracks and seven truck docks, all enclosed from weather.

In a couple of motive power notes, F40's 311 and 403 have been released for service on the Winter Park ski train out of Denver this winter season. They went to Denver on December 8. The eighth rebuilt F40 (#457) for Canadian American was released from Beech Grove on December 10. It is the former F40 #367.

The ninth AmLounge II rebuilt with an enclosed smoking room (and named) is 28022-South Bend Club.

Because of budget cuts and the resulting cutback in Capstone rebuilds, at least 11 standard Amcoaches and up to four "ADA" (21600-series) Amcoaches will continue in service in the old red, white and blue striping. Amtrak had hoped to schedule cars for overhauls at the same time as the mandatory four-year brake and truck work, but a cutback in FY 2000 overhauls from 120 to 77 ruled this out (about 50 food service cars soldier on, too, but this was because those overhauls were stopped pending the finalization of the new Bistro design). The 1999 Capstone program was believed to total out at eight business class and 30 coach class cars. By mid-November, FY 2000 cars were emerging, and these are expected to include 55 coach class, 11 business class and 11 food service (bistro or cafe) cars.

The latest Capstone cars released from Bear shop are 82028 (ex-21607, 11/24/99); 82029 (ex-21608, 12/02/99); and 82030 (ex-21009, 12/03/99). Also released during December was 81505 (ex-44927). Bear is busy, also refurbishing food service cars for Intercity use, releasing them to Concept 2000 standards. At Thanksgiving, there were two Amcafes (43010 and 43027) and two Amdinettes (48220 and 48230). As noted elsewhere, the fifth "Michigan Metro" to be refurbished (44554) was running on the Northeast Corridor prior to being returned to Chicago. (As a note, NEC did lend two cars to Intercity for use on the Carolinian, however.)

Recapping the Acela repaints, at Thanksgiving, the three AEM-7's had been repainted, as mentioned previously. Amfleet cars renumbered for Acela service as of that date were business class cars 81000-81002 and 81500-81504 (eight cars) and coach class cars 82000-82028 and 82500-82502 (32 cars), for a total of 40. Many of the early examples have since been restriped into the Acela colors, and of course, recent examples are routinely emerging that way.

The rush-hour Clockers are apparently gaining ridership east of Trenton, but a memo from the Product Line Manager explained that only 43 Amfleet cars are available for the four rush-hour trains (which will become Acela Commuter trains next year. Train numbers, departure times and consists are: Train 622, 5:38 AM, 12 cars; Train 624, 6:15 AM, 13 cars; Train 628, 7:05 AM, ten cars, and Train 640, 7:50 AM, eight cars. Southbound, Train 653, 4:45 PM, ten cars; Train 627, 5:15 PM, ten cars; Train 629, 5:42 PM, 12 cars, and Train 633, 6:06 PM, 11 cars. Trains 640 and 653 are Harrisburg trains, but not all cars go through.

On Saturday, December 4, an Amfleet Army-Navy special ran Washington-Philadelphia for government and military dignitaries, who watched Navy win this year's classic. The train was heavy with food service cars, and one car was marked with an "X" on its roof to facilitate aerial recognition. Train 846 operated with NEC P42's 105 and 103, and Amfleet cars 48224, 44724, 48240, 44707, 48241, 21702, 20233, 44704 (all for Navy), Amcafe 20047 (carrying the trophy), and cars 20235, 20030, 20046, 20231, 44714 and 20928 (Army).

An annual Christmas shoppers special was operated on Saturday, December 18 between Boston and New York. This year's train was hauled by F40 #228 to New Haven, then AEM-7 #925, and consisted of one Amcafe and seven Amcoaches.

A new frequency converter costing \$140 million is to be built at the Peco Energy Richmond facility adjacent to the Delair bridge. This will be the largest facility of its kind, converting current frequency from 60Hz (commercial) to the railroad standard of 25 Hz. It will replace a PRR facility nearly 60 years old and will assure the provision of sufficient additional power to meet Amtrak's future needs.

On December 29, the catenary was energized into Boston's South Station. On December 21, Acela Express power units 2004 and 2005 were delivered to Washington as things slowly progress.

VIA Rail Canada has announced a revised Canadian schedule effective January 16. Although the days of the week are unchanged, the train will now arrive in Toronto at 8:45 AM, and depart at 10:00 PM. In Toronto, the trains will connect with a restored overnight train to and from Montreal. Named the Enterprise, the train will consist of at least five cars (and three more westbound for commuters between Kingston and Toronto). Coach passengers will be able to order from a selection of snacks and beverages served at the seat (and, blankets and pillows will be available, too). Sleeping car passengers are entitled to a continental breakfast in the Park-series sleeper-observation.

The reason VIA restored this train is partly grounded in operational convenience. The Toronto maintenance facility no longer does major work, so cars from the Canadian must cycle up to Montreal anyway. Hence, the new train meets operational needs without lengthening (and slowing) another train. This May, equipment which would otherwise lay over at Halifax will operate once a week up to Sydney, Nova Scotia (running north on Tuesday and back on Wednesday) as the Bras D'Or, with complimentary meals and a two-hour stop at Port Hawkesbury, NS.

VIA was also scheduled to operate several party trains out of major cities in Canada to celebrate the millennium, returning soon after the beginning of the New Year. The Toronto train was set to run to Niagara Falls and the Montreal train to Coteau, for example.

Virginia Railway Express double-deck car V602 was seen testing while MARC is also receiving its new cars. In appearance, these new cars are similar to the new Long Island cars, with different doors to accommodate low-level platforms.

Delivery (not acceptance) dates for SEPTA's new Market-Frankford M4 cars span these years: Cars 1001-1012 came in 1997, 1013-1112 in 1998, and 1113-1220 in 1999. At a small private ceremony, cars 1219-1220 were delivered on December 8, 1999, completing the order.

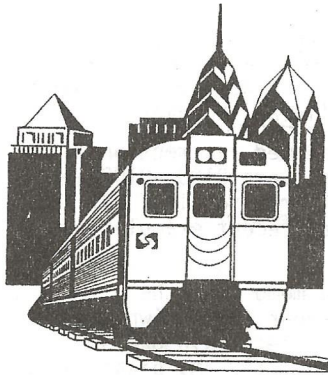
PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

On December 11 SEPTA relocated its Railroad Division control center from the Mellon Bank Building to the 19th floor of SEPTA headquarters, 1234 Market Street. This brings all of SEPTA's rail and transit control personnel together for the first time. Within the next two years, the center will be upgraded with state-of-the-art software, providing computer-aided train routing and dispatching, large-screen displays of train locations and online documentation of actual operations. Harmon Industries has received a \$4-million contract from SEPTA to design the new system.

SEPTA issued special timetables on several lines to provide additional service for Thursday afternoon, December 23. Saturday service was operated on all lines December 24, Christmas Eve, and a bare-bones schedule on Christmas Day. On New Year's Eve Saturday service was operated with Sunday schedules on New Year's Day, plus special "millennium celebration" service. This included all-night operations on many Regional Rail Lines (as well as the Broad Street and Market-Frankford Lines). But all trains were halted at stations at approximately ten minutes before midnight on New Year's Eve, just in case the "Y2K" computer bug struck in spite of the exhaustive precautions. A fleet of 25 buses was standing by in case of a power failure, but there were no outages and the trains began rolling again soon after midnight.



That fiber optic train mentioned in our December column finished up its cable-laying project on the Media-Elwyn line last month, then moved to the Neshaminy Line where, operating at night, it trenched four miles north of Jenkintown. Late in December, GP38 NREX 2001 was at Wayne Junction awaiting reassignment.....SEPTA's bridge over the Schuylkill at 30th Street Station was one of eight river spans illuminated during the millennium celebration on New Year's Eve.....Work continues on stabilizing the huge concrete arch bridge at Manayunk, built by the Pennsy in 1917.

Early last month, Stratford station was literally jacked up onto steel girders and rolled 50 feet away from the AMTRAK mainline, as part of a \$4.3-million restoration of the 123-year-old building and its platforms. Temporary stairs and shelters have been added on the eastbound side.....The effort to restore the 1885-vintage Wayne station got a shot in the arm last month, with announcement of an \$80,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission and an expected matching grant from SEPTA. Work on the station's exterior is already underway, with the latest grants bringing the restoration fund to \$293,000, according to the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association.

NEW HOPE & IVYLAND has received limited trackage rights from SEPTA between 16th Street Junction and Wayne Junction in North Philadelphia. This is part of a plan by which NH&I would operate six-car mail trains from Amtrak's 30th Street Station to a point on the NH&I in Bucks County. The trains would be received from Amtrak at North Philadelphia, then run via SEPTA and CSX trackage rights to Warminster.....SEPTA is advertising its R1 Airport rail service in the "Official Visitors Guide" issued by the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau.....The Inquirer in its December 20 edition carried a lengthy article on Feasterville-based United Products Company. It told of the company's plans to rebuild and lease out 58 Jersey Arrow commuter cars, which it recently purchased from NJ TRANSIT for \$1.4 million. Under a \$15-million contract, United is currently supplying materials for the interior rehab of SEPTA's 231 Silverliner IV MU cars.

SEPTA last month became embroiled in perhaps the worst scandal in its 30-year-history. On December 14, a Common Pleas Court jury in Philadelphia awarded \$51 million to a seven-year-old boy and his mother, the result of a 1996 accident in which the boy's foot was torn off by a defective SEPTA escalator at the Cecil B. Moore station on the Broad Street subway. SEPTA was cited for negligence in its failure to properly inspect and maintain the escalator, with \$25 million in damages awarded for the boy's injury and an additional \$25 million for violation of his civil rights.

SEPTA

SERIOUS ABOUT CHANGE.

The latter charge was allowed by Judge Frederica Massiah-Jackson after it was found that SEPTA had failed to provide numerous documents relative to the case, in spite of demands to do so from the plaintiff's lawyer. After the judge ordered that the files be produced, several SEPTA employees hauled cartons of documents to court. The judge ruled that the civil rights charge was justified because key documents showed that SEPTA officials knew that the escalator was hazardous but simply ignored the problem. The jury added another \$1 million for the boy's mother.

The next week Judge Massiah-Jackson tacked on a whopping \$1 million fine for contempt of court because, she said, in failing to produce the necessary files "SEPTA hindered justice and impeded the judicial process." One of the more damaging documents was a memo from Robert M. Allman, who at the time of the incident was SEPTA's director of system safety. In the memo Allman reported that "critical physical evidence was withheld, making it "hard to justify an objective investigation." He said that another investigator complained that the facts laid out in his reports were changed "several times" by other officials. Allman further stated that he disagreed with the final report on the incident and that he signed it "under verbal protest."

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Adding to the jury's anger was a countersuit filed by SEPTA against the mother, which charged that she was responsible for the accident. The suit was withdrawn after investigation revealed that SEPTA employees allegedly had planted a white shoelace at the scene in an attempt to prove that the boy's loose shoelace had caught in the escalator. But it was shown in court that the victim was wearing sneakers with black shoelaces, and they were tied. SEPTA officials later admitted that they routinely file countersuits against personal injury claimants, a tactic which the plaintiff's lawyer said is clearly intended to intimidate low-income claimants into settling out of court.

SEPTA vowed to appeal the jury verdict, and likely will succeed in reducing the personal injury award to \$250,000, the maximum to which state agencies are subject under state law. But the civil rights award is not subject to the \$250,000 cap. SEPTA is self-insured, which means that judgments of this magnitude could have a serious impact on its budget if not reduced on appeal.

Both General Manager John K. Leary, Jr. and General Counsel G. Roger Bowers were called to testify in the hearing on the contempt of court citation. Leary conceded under questioning that the affair called into question the integrity of SEPTA's top management. "This is very serious," he said. "I think it's possible people could lose their jobs if they deliberately withheld documents." For his part, Bowers claimed that he had not seen the final report, even though he and Leary were shown as receiving copies. He told the judge that the failure to turn over relevant materials was the result of "bureaucratic bungling." To this, the judge said that "the correct label is 'contempt of court'."

After the jury decision, SEPTA Board Chairman Pasquale T. Deon announced that the board had appointed a blue-ribbon panel to look into the entire matter and find out what went wrong. Members of the panel are retired U. S. District Judge Edward N. Cahn, retired State Superior Court Judge D. Donald Jamieson and former Temple University Law School Dean Carl E. Singley. "We want to really find out what happened," Deon said, "why the files weren't there, what occurred from beginning to end, how it was handled, who knew about it and when they knew...We'll let the chips fall where they may." This was interpreted to mean that some employees--perhaps including high-level officials--could be disciplined or even fired. In an effort to stem the tide of public criticism, SEPTA lost no time in hiring an outside consultant to inspect all of SEPTA's escalators for safety. The firm reported that out of 35 operable escalators it found defects in only two.

The Daily News and influential State Representative Dwight Evans of Philadelphia quickly called for the ouster of General Manager Leary himself. In a blistering editorial, the newspaper declared that if the accident "that cost (the boy) his foot three years ago was preventable, Leary is responsible." The editorial reproduced a front page from last May when, in response to mounting criticism concerning inoperable escalators on the Broad Street and Market-Frankford Lines, Leary was pictured wrench-in-hand saying "I'll fix 'em." But both Mayor Rendell and the Inquirer defended Leary. "The problem didn't happen overnight," the editorial read. "So it is extremely unfair...to demand that Mr. Leary be fired--as if that will clean up a system's culture that was in place long before his arrival."

In the longer term, this calamity could affect more than SEPTA's balance sheet and its credibility. It could result in a major change of direction in the management style of this vast and cumbersome organization.

Another recent embarrassment for SEPTA, first revealed in a Daily News report in late November, was the improper "lick 'em and stick 'em" bus inspections carried on by supervisors at the Comly depot in Northeast Philadelphia. The newspaper charged that supervisors were applying inspection stickers to buses even though they failed to meet state safety standards. SEPTA management confirmed the report, taking 39 inspected vehicles out of service for bad brakes and other defects and reinspecting all 1,273 buses in its fleet.

Although General Manager Leary criticized the newspaper for its "grossly distorted" reports, he admitted that the buses "were in fact being improperly inspected." Under state law, fleet operators with 15 or more vehicles are permitted to conduct their own safety inspections, as long as their mechanics are certified by PennDOT to perform the work. In November, State police fined SEPTA \$1,300 after nabbing four Comly supervisors for improperly stickering 14 buses. Then, last month, PennDOT suspended for six months SEPTA's authority to conduct bus inspections at the Comly depot. "We do not plan to appeal this decision," Leary said. "This is an isolated incident and an exception to our every rule."

After considerable delay, the SEPTA board last month approved a \$3.6-million consulting contract with STV, Inc. for planning the Girard Light Rail Project. SEPTA should decide this month on awarding a contract for 12 articulated light rail vehicles as part of the program.....On December 8, well behind schedule, the last of 220 new cars for the Market-Frankford Line were delivered to SEPTA. The married pair is numbered 1219-1220. The cars were assembled by ADtranz at its Elmira (NY) plant, which will be closed in the spring. The closure, one of six worldwide, is part of the effort by parent company DaimlerChrysler to make ADtranz a profitable subsidiary.

In a strongly-worded statement issued in November, SEPTA officials urged the Federal Railroad Administration not to impose any regulations on its proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro light rail line, which would utilize NORFOLK SOUTHERN's ex-Reading right-of-way between Norristown and Reading. Previously, NS had said that Federal safety regulations were a major reason why it would not allow a SEPTA transit line to share its right-of-way.....On December 26 SEPTA returned several bus routes to Chestnut Street between Broad and 6th Streets in center city Philadelphia, after work was completed to convert the failed transitway to a wider street for normal traffic.

In November SEPTA reported an operating surplus after subsidies of \$78,000, on total passenger revenues of \$27.1 million, which was 2.9 percent below budget. Operating expenses were on budget at \$69.2 million.....The recently-enacted 0.38-percent across-the-board cut in Federal spending for Fiscal Year 2000 will result in a reduction of about \$250,000 in capital grants to SEPTA. All such cuts are to be repaid in

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FY 2001.....In December, SEPTA said that all of its 440 computer systems were in compliance for the year 2000, and its major vendors such as Peco also claimed 100-percent readiness. The next worry, however, is how these systems will react to February 29, the first time in 400 years that leap year has fallen in a year ending in "00."

On January 24 SEPTA will begin distributing Metro Philadelphia, a tabloid-size newspaper oriented toward transit riders. Produced under a no-cost-to-SEPTA contract, the 24-page publication will resemble a full-fledged newspaper containing national, regional and local news, sports and features, with Page 9 always reserved for SEPTA news. About 110,000 copies of the free paper will be published five days a week, supported by advertising revenues. Well-known former Inquirer Columnist Clark DeLeon has been hired by Metro as a feature writer.....SEPTA's contract with Independence Blue Cross to provide medical benefits coverage for active and retired employees will cost \$194 million a year.....A 20-year-old man was killed December 17 in an apparently random shooting aboard a Route 15 bus at 25th & Girard Avenue. Earlier the same day, a 15-year-old boy was shot and wounded on a Route 26 bus in Germantown.



As the witching hour approached on December 31, all AMTRAK trains operating on the major freight railroads were stopped in their tracks. This was arranged in advance with the host railroads in the event that the dreaded "Y2K" computer bug managed to infect the signaling and dispatching systems. But no major glitches were reported.....AMTRAK reported that more than 560,000 passengers rode its trains during the November 23-29 Thanksgiving period, a seven-percent increase in ridership over 1998. Revenues for the period exceeded \$26.5 million.

AMTRAK last month completed most of the platform reconstruction at Wilmington station, once again allowing through movements on track #3. The temporary high platform on track #1 remains in service.....AMTRAK's steel-and-stone viaduct in Wilmington has been added to the National Register of Historic Places, the Wilmington News Journal reports. Called a "working work of art," the viaduct was completed by the Pennsy in 1908 as part of a massive grade-crossing elimination project (Roy Soukup).....Last month AMTRAK broke ground for a \$140-million frequency converter at Peco's Richmond station in Port Richmond. The new facility, which replaces an obsolete 60-year-old machine, will be used to convert commercial electric power to the unique 12,000-volt, 25-Hertz frequency needed for Northeast Corridor operations. Amtrak seemingly has abandoned a 1970's plan to change the entire Corridor to commercial frequency.



Both CSX and NORFOLK SOUTHERN stand to lose substantial traffic if the proposed merger of BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE and CANADIAN NATIONAL is approved. The surprise announcement on December 20 said the two carriers planned to become North American Railways, Inc., by mid-2001, with headquarters in Montreal. However, in view of the pain inflicted on the shipping public by the recent joining of UNION PACIFIC and Southern Pacific and the split-up of CONRAIL, the creation of a gigantic, 50,000-mile transcontinental railroad is far from assured. But if NAR becomes a reality, a good deal of international traffic could be diverted away from the U.S. East Coast.

Meanwhile, back on the CONRAIL front, CSX and NS continue to fight to restore service to the level enjoyed by customers before the takeover. Major chemical shippers, in particular, have been vociferous in demanding action. One shipper representative, in comparing the Conrail situation with UP's struggle, said "I wouldn't use the term 'meltdown' here. This is different. UP had Houston as an epicenter, but there's no epicenter here. It's in different places and it moves around, so in a way it's wider spread." The National Industrial Transportation League and other shipper groups have finally succeeded in getting the two railroads to sit down in an open forum, at which all parties can address service issues. The forum is set for January 11 at the Philadelphia Marriott Hotel (Traffic World).

NJ TRANSIT has received the go-ahead from the Federal Railroad Administration to build its Camden-Trenton light rail line on CONRAIL's Bordentown secondary track, based on a previous agreement not to operate the passenger and freight services at the same time. Construction should begin later this winter. Reportedly, NJT will order 20 diesel-electric railcars from ADtranz for the service.....A new 18-page "Southern New Jersey Transit Guide" has been published by the Cross County Connection Transportation Management Association in Marlton (telephone 856-596-8228).....CSX reported third quarter net income of \$123 million on revenues of \$2.9 billion, up from net income of \$78 million on revenues of \$2.4 billion in 1998, reflecting its acquisition of a large segment of CONRAIL. NS meanwhile reported net income of \$19 million during the quarter compared with \$151 million in 1998. Its revenues increased from \$1.05 billion to \$1.5 billion.

Henry W. Large, longtime Pennsylvania Railroad official who retired in 1970 as executive vice president of Penn Central, died December 9 at age 94.....George Krambles, well-known for his transit expertise and former executive director of the CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY, died November 24 at 84.....KaImbach Publishing has announced that subscribers to Vintage Rails Magazine, which ceased publication last year, will receive copies of KaImbach's new Classic Trains Magazine to fill out their subscriptions.....Pennsylvania has a new website (www.parailways.com) aimed at visitors interested in the State's tourist railroads and museums (Railpace).....The Academy of Industrial Training at Lester, PA has had its ex-CONRAIL GP38-2 #8054 renumbered to NS 5266. But CR SW1500 #9558, now owned by CSX, has not yet been renumbered.

"YELLOWBIRD" FANTRIP PLANNED FOR MARCH 12

A farewell trip for SEPTA's "Yellowbird" Silverliners is being planned for Sunday, March 12, sponsored by Philadelphia Chapter NRHS. The cars are set to be re-imaged by SEPTA this year, eliminating the unique yellow Airport paint scheme. Watch the February issue of Cinders for details on the schedule and fares.