



# CINDEERS

DECEMBER 2003



IN THIS ISSUE

Philadelphia Chapter News.....	2
PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS, by Frank Tatnall.....	3
ODDS AND ENDS, by Roy L. Hudson.....	6
Extra List.....	7
Canadian National to Take Over BC Rail.....	8

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PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

National Railway Historical Society

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Philadelphia, PA 19101

**PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS WEBSITE: [www.trainweb.org/phillynrhs/](http://www.trainweb.org/phillynrhs/)**



## Seasons Greetings



*Each year at this time, the Officers and Directors of Philadelphia Chapter extend to each member and their family our Best Wishes for a Festive Holiday Season and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year. As we look forward to the Year 2004, our thoughts are no less sincere to each of you.*

*This feeling, however, is tempered by the reality that our Chapter, numbering nearly 500 members, plus more than 75 Chapter-only members, is run by an extremely small cadre of individuals, many of whom have been toiling on your behalf for years, if not decades. This small band of volunteers needs to be expanded in order that this Chapter, one of the very oldest in NRHS, might continue to provide the caliber of activities and involvement in the rail history process that each of us seek as a benefit of membership in Philadelphia Chapter.*

*It is understood that many of you, because of career commitments, health, distance, are not in a position to assist in our Chapter. However, each member must reflect on his or her own commitments and time availability to seek to provide some level of support toward the operation of the Chapter, no matter how small. This may come in the form of writing small articles of interest for this newsletter, or helping out with the mailing process. Too, we need individuals who can assist manning our table at train shows. Tasks such as those above require little time, perhaps a night or a couple of hours per month. Yet, they serve to relieve the too few who are trying to do too much.*

*Your assistance, no matter how small, will serve to strengthen Philadelphia Chapter (and NRHS) and provide us with the opportunity to expand our horizon into areas we presently are unable because we simply don't have the manpower to do it. With that thought in mind, please consult with one of the Chapter's officers who can provide ideas on how you can help. We'll help you, too!*

*The Year 2004 will bring new opportunities as well as new challenges. It is expected that NJ Transit's "River Line" light rail operation between Camden and Trenton will begin operation. We hope to have some opportunities to operate FP7's 903 and 902 during the year for everyone's enjoyment.*

*We appreciate the support of many members during the Year 2003 – help us expand during 2004 by your commitment to involvement in Philadelphia Chapter.*

*Seasons' Greetings,*

*The Officers of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS*

## PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS WEBSITE: [www.trainweb.org/phillynrhs/](http://www.trainweb.org/phillynrhs/)

**NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, INC.**  
Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

*Founded 1936, incorporated 1973 as a 501c3 non-profit corporation*

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**MEETINGS:** 7:30 PM, third Friday of each month (except second Friday in December), at Faculty Club, Second Floor, Thomas Jefferson University Alumni Hall, 1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA. Dinner (optional) at 6:15 PM (\$20.00 per person), Meeting at 7:30 PM. No meeting July or August.

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES:** \$35.00 per person, which includes Chapter and National dues. Chapter-only dues \$16.00 per person per year. Membership applications should be forwarded to: Membership Chair, P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Membership in the parent National Railway Historical Society is required to hold Chapter-only membership.

**ADDRESS CHANGES** should be sent to the Editor at Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. **PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER** and E-mail address so our Membership List is complete. We will notify the NRHS National Headquarters of the change.

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**EXCHANGE COPIES** should be sent to: R. L. Eastwood, Jr., Editor, P. O. Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353.

Please note that our December meeting is on the second Friday of the month, **December 12, 2003!**

## MEETING NOTICE:

### FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 12, 2003

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

Dinner at 6:15 PM (\$20.00 per person), Meeting at 7:30 PM  
Parking in Wills Eye Hospital garage, 9<sup>th</sup> Street above Locust  
(\$6.00 after 6 PM), Parkway garage, also 9<sup>th</sup> above Locust  
(\$5.75 after 6 PM), or Downtown Garage, Walnut Street east of  
10<sup>th</sup> (\$4.00 after 6 PM) *(Please note that some of the above  
parking prices have been adjusted and we will update them for a  
future issue of Cinders)*

Our December 12, 2003 meeting will feature an interactive slide program featuring YOU, our Chapter member. Other years, we've featured a program each autumn where members showed slides on their summer activities. This month, we'll feature a slide program on an interesting activity(ies) you took part in anytime during the year 2003. Did you, for instance, document the Frankford (EI) Swing during August on SEPTA, the construction of NJ Transit's River Line light rail between Camden and Trenton, or the 2003 NRHS Baltimore Convention? Pick out a selection of 20 slides and we'll screen them while you provide narration.

The evening begins with our usual sit-down dinner in the Faculty Club, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University, beginning at 6:15 PM, at a cost of \$20.00 per person. **DINNER RESERVATIONS ARE MANDATORY and MUST BE MADE BY TUESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 9, 2003 to Dinner Chairman Bill Gardiner at 215-632-7016.** The menu for December will feature tossed garden salad, choice of either roast turkey with cranberry relish or herb-crustad salmon with dill sauce, garlic mashed potatoes, sautéed green beans, rolls and butter.

### MEETING CANCELLATION NOTICE!

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

Dessert will be chocolate mousse pie, and beverages. You must specify when ordering whether you wish a MEAT or FISH dinner. Please call Bill Gardiner with your reservation. **NO-shows will be responsible for payment for meals ordered!** Come out, celebrate the Holiday Season with your fellow members and enjoy a nice dinner before the December 12 meeting.

Please note that all meetings in the 2003-2004 year are scheduled in the Faculty Club, on the second floor of the Alumni Hall. Join us on December 12 and show us where you've been this year!

**HELP WANTED:** Do you have an hour or two to spare? Help is needed manning tables at the December 13-14, 2003 and February 14-15, 2004 Greenberg Shows at Fort Washington Expo Center. It can be FUN! Call President Dave Kopena at 215-671-0605 if you can help out!

## 2004 Dues Bills Mailed

Dues bills for 2004 National and Chapter dues were mailed to all members during the week of November 23, according to Chapter Treasurer Rich Copeland. Dues will remain unchanged for the coming year.\*

A myriad of production difficulties delayed the bills from their intended October 1, 2003 mailing. The bills have taken on a new look, and members are urged to review the bill carefully. A courtesy return envelope has been provided with the bills, and you are urged to insure that the return portion of the bill is included with your remittance for ease in processing.

# PHILADELPHIA

# EXPRESS



## FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.



## SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL

SEPTA ran its annual "Santa Express" trains to Philadelphia's shopping district on "Black Friday," November 28. One of the specially-decorated Regional Rail trains—a push-pull set—originated at Paoli and an MU train started at Chestnut Hill West, with both operating through to Market East Station. In addition, two Market-Frankford trains ran from 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal and Frankford Transportation Center to 11<sup>th</sup> Street station, and a Broad Street subway train from Fern Rock terminated at the 8<sup>th</sup> & Market station. Santa and Mrs. Claus led a parade of costumed characters to "Santa's Court" in the Gallery shopping mall, with volunteer SEPTA employees acting as "Santa's helpers." Unfortunately, SEPTA's ongoing budget crunch forced it to cancel the holiday model train display which usually occupies the concourse level of the 1234 Market Street building at this time of year.

Another windstorm struck the Philadelphia region on Thursday, November 13, with gusts clocked at up to 60 mph. More than 47,000 Peco customers lost power, mainly as the result of tree branches falling on wires. SEPTA suffered some afternoon rush-hour delays on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale line, after a tree fell on the AMTRAK right-of-way near St. Davids station, and on the R6 Norristown Line when commercial electric wires dropped onto SEPTA's catenary near East Falls station. AMTRAK reported no serious problems on the Northeast Corridor in the Philadelphia area, but there were delays between Baltimore and Washington after trees fell on the catenary north of Bowie, MD ..... Five days later, on Tuesday, November 18, a large tree fell onto the Media-Elwyn line near Wallingford station about 4:45 PM, fouling both tracks and snapping catenary and signal wires on the #1 southbound track. Elwyn-bound train #357 was halted at the site. Shuttle buses were run between Secane and Elwyn until the tracks were reopened at 9:30 PM..... The next day train #566 headed for Doylestown was stranded at North Hills station about 4 PM, when tree branches became lodged in the pantograph of car 335, the second of four cars in the train. Twenty minutes later the train was able to proceed but was terminated at Lansdale and passengers transferred to the following train.

AMTRAK moved its mechanized track laying system (TLS) to the Philadelphia area in late October to rebuild the #1 track between "Baldwin" and "Phil" interlockings on the Northeast Corridor. As a result, SEPTA on weekdays has been running its off-peak R2 trains inbound on the #4 outbound track from "Baldwin" to "Phil" while the trackwork is in progress. When the project is completed sometime this month, it will allow an increase in the track speed on #1 from 90 to 100 mph, the same as on the #2

and #3 center tracks (Ray Cooney)..... Southbound SEPTA train #523 out of Doylestown struck and killed a trespasser at the Beulah Road crossing near New Britain at 9:27 AM on October 17. Passengers were bused between Chalfont and Doylestown and the train was released at 11:13 AM ..... AMTRAK bridge rebuilding work near Downingtown forced SEPTA to bus R5 passengers between Paoli, Thorndale and intermediate stations on several Saturdays last month.

A strange black locomotive has been seen in recent weeks running on SEPTA's wire train. It is leased WEST CHESTER RAILROAD #1803, an ex-CANADIAN PACIFIC RS18u built by Montreal in 1958.....Work continues on SEPTA's plan to separate its R8 Fox Chase Line from CSX freight trains over the 3.5 miles between "Newtown Junction" and "Cheltenham Junction" in Northeast Philadelphia. Upon completion, SEPTA will operate its R8 trains over a total of five miles of single track between "Newtown Junction" and Fox Chase station, with two passing sidings ..... Last month, SEPTA pressed on with its battle against slippery rails, running the two gel trains on lines plagued by fallen leaves (see November *Cinders*).



## SEPTA TRANSIT

SEPTA's first rebuilt PCC-II, #2320, has completed most of its testing program, and awaits the arrival of sister car #2321. The 2320 was delivered in early September, the first of 18 cars being rebuilt by Brookville Equipment of Brookville, PA, in a \$22.7-million contract..... SEPTA will operate no holiday trolleys in center city this season.....DVARP reports that Philadelphia was the seventh-largest transit market in the U.S., based on figures for the year 2002. New York was by far the largest market with 19.0 billion annual transit trips, Chicago was second with 3.7 billion, the Los Angeles area third with 2.6 billion, San Francisco-Oakland with 2.4 billion, Washington, DC area with 2.1 billion, Boston area with 1.9 billion and the Philadelphia region with 1.5 billion trips.

Chapter Member Ron DeGraw is featured in the winter issue of *Classic Trains Magazine*, with his story "Every 2-1/2 Minutes" about the amazing frequency of Philadelphia & Western service in the 1950's..... Hundreds of SEPTA employees were evacuated from the 1234 Market Street headquarters building at noontime on Friday, November 21, when noxious fumes began circulating through the ventilation system.\* The 19<sup>th</sup> Floor Control Center was not evacuated, so that there were no disruptions in service. After an investigation revealed that the building was safe, employees were allowed to return to their jobs..... On October 27 a SEPTA bus driver with 25 years' service rescued a woman from a burning house on North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Philadelphia. The *Daily News* reports that it's the

(Continued on Page 4)

## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 3)

second time this year that Joe Wilson has been called a hero. In March, he stopped his Route 39 bus in Port Richmond, broke down the door of a burning house on Huntingdon Street and pulled a man to safety.

As of mid-November, the budget stalemate between Governor Rendell and the Legislature had not been resolved, and SEPTA was still facing a \$26-million deficit in its Fiscal Year 2004 operating budget.....With Mayor Street's reelection last month over Republican Challenger Sam Katz, Street says he will pursue a "more equitable" deal for Philadelphia in its share of local matching funds for SEPTA.....On October 30, State and local officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the five-year, \$290-million project to widen U.S. highway 202 and rebuild the huge King of Prussia interchange at 202, 422 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The *Inquirer* reported that State Senator Connie Williams, during her appearance at the ceremony, said "I hope we are here in ten years to open the Schuylkill Valley Metro".....While the U.S. Senate is working on its own bill, the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee last month unveiled its proposal for renewing TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The \$375-billion House proposal would authorize \$298 billion for highways and \$69 billion for transit projects over the next six years, although the Bush Administration has asked for only \$195 billion for highways and \$49 billion for transit. The present law expired September 30 but Congress has extended it until February 29, 2004 (NARP).



# AMTRAK

As it does each year, AMTRAK beefed up Northeast Corridor service over the busy Thanksgiving holiday period. The railroad said it would add 70 trains to its NEC schedule during the week from November 25 to December 1, and it again issued a 32-page special timetable for the period. With 40,000 additional seats available and reservations required for most trains except those in Clocker and Keystone service, Amtrak promised that it would be able to accommodate just about everyone who wanted to ride between Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington. Among the 70 extra trains, 31 additional Acela Express departures were scheduled using trainsets which are normally idle. SEPTA again leased three AEM-7-powered push-pull sets to Amtrak, some or all of which were to be used on the Harrisburg line to release Amfleet coaches for north-south service. MARC also contributed a fleet of locomotives and cars to the holiday effort. Amtrak said it expected to carry more than 300,000 passengers in the Northeast alone during this busiest travel period of the year.....AMTRAK temporarily suspended sleeping car service on the **Federal** during November, in order to shift the Viewliner sleepers to longer-distance trains.

A House-Senate conference committee completed work last month on a transportation-treasury appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2004, which contains a final AMTRAK figure of \$1.225 billion. This is less than the \$1.346 billion approved by the Senate but higher than the \$900 million proposed by the Bush Administration and endorsed by the House. It is far below the

\$1.812 billion that Amtrak requested, but the \$760 million approved for operations is close to the \$768 million that Amtrak asked for. On the capital side, however, only \$465 million was included in the legislation, versus the \$1.044 billion that Amtrak President David Gunn said was needed for this year. The agreement also allows Amtrak to defer repayment of the \$100-million loan from the Department of Transportation which was arranged during the near-shutdown crisis in the summer of 2002. But the ban on new services, one of the "strings" attached to that loan, continues in effect (NARP).

AMTRAK's financial position has been helped by the more than \$200 million in working capital that the railroad carried over from the last fiscal year. Still, that evidence of good management has a downside: it allowed the conference committee to cut more from the Senate's proposal than it might otherwise have done. As former Amtrak President Thomas Downs often said, "No good deed goes unpunished" in Washington. After the committee action, Gunn said in a statement that "This number will allow us to continue to operate the national system. However, we will have to assess the impact of this funding level on our current budget over the next month or so." That impact will be particularly severe on capital projects, such as rehabilitation of the Northeast Corridor and the rebuilding of rolling stock (NARP).

The one-day strike planned by the Transport Workers Union and other AMTRAK labor organizations is still on hold (see November Cinders). At a November 14 hearing on Amtrak's request for an injunction against the strike, a Federal judge postponed a final decision. While several unions oppose the walkout, the TWU said it wanted to demonstrate opposition to the government's chronic underfunding of Amtrak. The strike originally was set for October 3 (NARP).....AMTRAK's ridership in October was very strong, increasing 11 percent over the same month in 2002.....An unidentified male trespasser was struck and killed by Train #67, the westbound **Federal**, about 4:30 AM on October 28 near Croydon, Bucks County.

President Bush's three nominees to the AMTRAK board were the subjects of a hearing on November 6 before the Senate Commerce Committee. They are Robert L. Crandall, the former CEO of American Airlines; Louis S. Thompson, a former Federal Railroad Administration official; and Floyd Hall, a retired retail executive. All three supported a nationwide rail passenger system and said that the U.S. can afford it (NARP).....AMTRAK plans to operate a chartered train from Harrisburg to New York on December 12 for the annual weekend sponsored by the politically-connected Pennsylvania Society.....AMTRAK will change the system for honoring certain discounts, such as AAA and NARP, on the **Auto Train** starting January 6, so that they apply to the rail fare rather than to the vehicle itself (NARP) .....A former AMTRAK SDP40F locomotive, retired by Amtrak and traded to the Santa Fe Railway in 1984, has been saved from the scrapper. The big six-axle unit, #644, was one of 18 SDP40F's swapped to the Santa Fe for a number of CF7 and SSB1200 switchers. Its last incarnation was as BURLINGTON NORTHERN & SANTA FE SDF40-2 #6976. It was recently retired and now will go to the Northwest Rail Museum in Portland, OR (*Trains*).

(Continued on Page 5)

# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 4)



CSX  
NS  
OTHER ROADS

Despite a management shakeup, CSX service remains at "unacceptable levels" while "costs are still high". These recent quotes from Chairman & CEO Michael J. Ward indicate the depth of the continuing problems on CSX's vast rail system (see September, October *Cinders*). Chief Operating Officer Alan F. Crown was forced into early retirement, after which Ward assumed direct responsibility for railroad operations. A "lack of discipline and focus" on operating performance became obvious from a review of key efficiency measurements in the third quarter of 2003, such as system velocity (down 6.6 percent from the year-ago period), average terminal dwell time for cars (up eight percent) and costly reworks (up 100 percent). For the third quarter CSX Corp. posted a consolidated operating loss of \$98 million, reflecting a one-time charge of \$212 million for increased occupational and personal injury liabilities, compared with operating income of \$276 million in the third quarter of last year. Without the special charge, CSX's rail and intermodal operations alone would have reported operating income of \$213 million, still below the \$227 million during the year-ago period (*Traffic World*).

"We were very unhappy with our performance," Ward told financial analysts at a meeting in late October. "We had a lack of network fluidity and discipline" in following the operating plan. "Running a poor railroad did cost us some money." In a letter to employees, Ward said that revenue had increased by two percent from last year's third quarter, but "we need to improve operations to drive a lower cost structure, increase productivity and better meet customer commitments. Every employee must be held accountable..." He then outlined a three-phase effort for turning the railroad around: improving operations, sustaining the improvements and "taking our service to new levels." On the day he wrote the letter, "less than two-thirds of our trains originated and arrived on time." His conclusion: "We still have a lot of work to do." On November 10, CSX announced that it will cut between 800 and 1,000 non-union jobs over the next six months, reducing management layers from 11 to no more than eight (*Traffic World*, *Bull Sheet*).

NORFOLK SOUTHERN ran several experimental intermodal trains over AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor in October and November, between North Jersey and Washington, DC (see November *Cinders*). At least one of the trains, southbound 25A on Saturday, November 1, ran during daylight hours through Philadelphia. It was powered by ex-CONRAIL GP40-2's #3032, 3030 and 3031, which are equipped with the Amtrak-mandated Locomotive Speed Limiter devices, and consisted of 31 container or trailer-carrying flatcars. The pair of trains, 25A and 26A, operated between Croxton terminal in North Jersey and Atlanta, GA, carrying mostly United Parcel Service traffic. Permanent operation of the trains will depend on further negotiations with the customer and with Amtrak for higher permissible speeds and longer consists (Ray Cooney).....NS has announced

that out of 4,317 non-union employees eligible for its voluntary separation program (see November *Cinders*), a total of 553 were approved for the separation. Of these, 314 were also able to take advantage of the company's retirement plan. Four top executives accepted the retirement package, including Senior Vice President-Planning James W. McClellan (who spoke before the NRHS directors at their meeting in Harrisburg last year).

NJ TRANSIT's long-delayed light rail line between Camden and Trenton will finally open to the public next February 15, it was announced last month. NJT said that it would use the name "River Line," in recognition of the fact that the 34-mile route closely follows the Delaware River through 19 riverside municipalities. Operating on new trackage along the right-of-way of CONRAIL's Bordentown secondary track (CR retains the right to run freight trains in late-night hours), the line is expected to cost \$1.1 billion, almost triple the originally estimated figure. It will be run by the same consortium that built it, using 20 diesel-powered vehicles supplied by Bombardier, one of the consortium members. Trains are to operate every 15 minutes during rush hour and 30 minutes at other times, between 6 AM and 10 PM. Initially, the fare will be a bargain \$1.10 over the entire route, with the Tweeter Center and New Jersey State Aquarium in Camden and the Sovereign Bank Arena in Trenton expected to generate considerable business for the line. It also will reach the NJT-AMTRAK Northeast Corridor station in Trenton. A 50,000-square-foot building in Camden will serve as headquarters, with facilities for car maintenance, crews and training as well as a control and dispatching center (*Inquirer*, *Trains*).

CSX raised some eyebrows last month when it was disclosed that the company had purchased \$1 million worth of tickets to the 2005 Super Bowl football game, to be played in CSX's headquarters city of Jacksonville, FL. Earlier the same week, CSX announced the layoff of 800 to 1,000 employees (see above) over the next six months (*Trains*).....EMD last month prepared to ship from its London (Ont.) plant the first two of 75 SD70MAC locomotives ordered by CSX. To be numbered in the 4701 series, these units represent a breakthrough for EMD, because in recent years CSX has taken delivery of mostly General Electric road locomotives (*Trains*).....Three more K9 police dogs at CSX Intermodal's terminal in Kearny, NJ have been outfitted with bulletproof vests, thanks to a fund-raising effort by CSX employees. Each vest costs about \$600 (*Bull Sheet*).....Arnold Havens, CSX's senior vice president for government affairs, has been nominated by President Bush for the position of general counsel in the Treasury Department. That department is headed by Havens' old boss, former CSX CEO John Snow (*Weekly Rail Review*).....After repairing some washouts, WILMINGTON & WESTERN has restored limited weekend service between Greenbank station at Marshallton, DE, and the nearby Brandywine Springs Park. Much of the W&W's line, however, was devastated by the unprecedented flooding of Red Clay Creek on September 15 (see October *Cinders*). An effort will be made to restore service as far as Hercules, which is feasible because the Greenbank-Hercules section of the railroad has two intact steel bridges constructed after the previous flood in September 1999 (*Railfan & Railroad*).

An \$800,000 restoration project began last month at the historic ex-Reading station in Quakertown. The *Inquirer* in its October 27 editions carried a three-quarter-page article—with photos—on the project. The article included an interview with

(Continued on Page 7)

## ODDS AND ENDS.....by Roy L. Hudson

*(This column will appear from time to time to provide Cinders readers with some hopefully useful information which has been gathered from miscellaneous sources)*

Our cinema buff has reported that the movie *The Station Agent* (90 minutes) is playing at "Art Houses" and does include train scenes. There are shots taken on NJT at Hoboken and also views of Susquehanna and Morristown & Erie freights in the vicinity of the agent's station at Newfoundland, NJ (Sam James).....Recently, the Dow Components were listed and show our favorite "transportations" with price and annual dividend. They are: BNSF (\$29.51 - 60 cents); NS (\$18.72 - 32 cents); UP (\$57.82 - 92 cents) and CSX (\$29.74 - 40 cents). The best dividend yield is from BNSF (*Wall Street Journal*)....."Dream-on Department": "Reading Transit was forced to resume trolley service on the abandoned Stoney Creek Line due failure of buses to handle traffic properly last winter. Buses were also replaced on the Temple Division, thus proving the indispensability of the trolley in the present day traffic picture" (April, 1936 NRHS *Bulletin*).....Amtrak's International between Chicago and Toronto is at risk. It has the biggest decline in ridership of the 22 routes on the passenger railroad's Western Region for Fiscal Year 2003. Consideration is being given to terminating the trains at Port Huron, MI (Detroit *News.com*).

During November, Alaska Railroad President Pat Gamble said, "the company is considering the possibility of an eastward rail access to Delta Junction (a highway intersection). This would require 80 miles of new railroad and could prove the first steep toward linking Alaska to Canada and eventually the lower 48 states (Fairbanks *Daily News-Miner*).....More dollars for VIA: The Canadian government will spend C\$700 million on the passenger train operator over the next five years, in addition to its annual subsidy (Ericks Rail News - internet).....From Hawaii, comes word that a Governor's task force has OK'd a \$2.6-billion light rail system for Oahu; the City Council there then called for a study of a proposal that would connect West Oahu to downtown Honolulu. If built, this would be the first time that Hawaiians could ride the rails in more than 50 years, not counting tourist trains (Honolulu *Advertiser* - internet).....The Federal Railroad Administration wants reflective material placed on all U.S. freight cars. The agency stated "about one quarter of all highway-rail crossing accidents involve a motor vehicle striking a train (UTU *News*).

We just saw a terrific article on E. Hunter Harrison and his Canadian National Railway Company (CN Rail). It is perhaps the best freight railroad (of the six or so large railroads) in North America. It just bought back some \$655 million worth of its own shares and cash flow is at record levels. It is the only line to serve both oceans and the Gulf of Mexico. Today it hauls more freight than it did a decade ago and is more profitable now even though it has 800 fewer locomotives and 22,000 less freight cars. CN stock sells for around \$60 per share compared to just \$10 when first listed in 1995. Best of all, its most important operating ratio was only 60% in the third quarter, a number that none of the other large roads come even close to (New York *Times*).....Trucking companies now take in (2002) more than 81 percent of the nation's \$571 billion freight monies. The other 19 percent goes to rail, water and air.....On September 10, 2003, a Smyrna, DE man was struck by a Norfolk Southern freight train traveling at 15 mph. Police charged the individual with operating (a lawn tractor) while under the influence! (Wilmington Chapter).

From the "Hard to Believe Department", we learn that "every night, 32,000 persons on average are asleep in Pullman berths on railroads in the United States (NRHS *Bulletin*, April, 1940).....In December, we are, of course, reminded of the "Day that will live in infamy" (Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941); but on a much lesser scale, what about October 28, 1963, 40 years ago, when demolition was begun on one of New York City's most famous landmarks - Pennsylvania Station.....Speaking of New York, have you heard of "Limo-Liner"? It is a fancy new bus that wants Acela and airline first class business between New York and Boston. The buses have parlor car type-seats (28) and make the run in "about" four hours. There is an attendant that passes out snacks and pillows between the Hilton Hotel terminals in the two cities. Fare is \$69 compared to Amtrak's \$99 plus and air \$200 plus (*U. S. News & World Report*).....Ralph Graham was arrested recently in DeKalb County, IL for criminal trespass on Union Pacific property. Who's he? Graham, a drifter, was discovered riding the second trailing unit on a UP freight train, because he kept sounding the horn! (C. P. Huntington *Gondola Gazette*).

Amtrak has upgraded meal service for sleeping car passengers on Trains 40 and 41, *Three Rivers*. They block off four tables in the dinette, add real linen, flowers, china and silverplate. Food is supposedly the same as first class passengers on Acela would receive - maybe not as good as a full dining car, but a big improvement over the previous food service (Joe Heffron, Harrisburg Chapter).....Speaking of dining cars, here's to the *Good Old Days*: Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS (that's us!) celebrated its first anniversary on March 4, 1937. A Pennsylvania Railroad diner was spotted in Broad Street Station for the occasion and tables were arranged so that 50 people could be seated. Over 100 were served in shifts enjoying PRR's excellent cuisine. Afterward, some members boarded Philadelphia Rapid Transit single-truck Birney car #5 for a trip to the PRR facilities at 46<sup>th</sup> & Parkside for inspection purposes. The Pennsy's Raymond Loewystyled K-4s Pacific 4-6-2 #3768 was spotted in pristine condition to be admired (NRHS *Bulletin*).....While talking PRR, we note that former PRR K4s #1361, which is at Steamtown, now has a projected Fall, 2004 completion date, barring any surprises. It has now been in the shop for seven years! The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI recently purchased ex-PRR GG1 #4909. Knowing that operation, it will be gleaming shortly!

**Not Quite on the Mark:** The new Delaware River (now Benjamin Franklin) Bridge high-speed transit line (new PATCO) was officially opened to the public on Sunday, June 7, 1936. The Vice-Chairman of the Joint Commission predicted that within a few years, the bridge would have a direct rail connection to eight South Jersey counties below Camden, while asserting the belief that the bus "will vanish as an interstate carrier" (NRHS *Bulletin*, July, 1946).....On November 9 the Surface Transportation Board held a public hearing in Quarryville, PA on a proposed "Enola Branch" abandonment by NS. The old PRR Atglen & Susquehanna line has been without tracks for many years.....Philadelphia Rapid Transit has placed an order with St. Louis Car Company for 20 PCC-type cars for use on Route 53 (NRHS *Bulletin*, January, 1938).....Amtrak's E60 electric motors are virtually history. We understand that 600, 604, 609 and 610 were stenciled with marks MLMX and were delivered to NS at Wilmington, while it may be that the 603 will wind up at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg.

**DECEMBER 13-14:** Greenberg's Train, Toy & Hobby Show at Fort Washington Expo Center, Fort Washington, PA, 10 AM-4 PM both days. Admission: Adults \$7.00 (good both days), children 11 and under are free (new policy). Philadelphia Chapter will be represented at this show with a table.



**DECEMBER 13-14, 20-21, 26-31, JANUARY 2-4, 2004:** Holiday garden railway display at Morris Arboretum, 100 Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia. G-scale exhibit features seven trains and three trolley lines amid miniature historic buildings. Hours: 10 AM-4 PM. Admission: \$8 adults, \$6 seniors, \$3 children (3-12). For information, telephone 215-247-5777.

**DECEMBER 13, 2003 THROUGH APRIL 19, 2004:** "Pageant of Locomotives: Photography from North American Railroad Fairs" display at Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg. Included are events from the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia to the 1948-1949 Chicago Railroad Fair. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. For information, see previous item.

**DECEMBER 20:** "North Pole Express" excursion operated by Mystic Valley Railway Society aboard chartered Providence & Worcester train. Two trips (1 and 4 PM) are offered, departing P&W's offices at 75 Hammond St., Worcester, MA. Train features reserved seating, lunch counter dining car, observation car. Fare: \$20 per person round-trip. For details, contact: Mystic Valley Railway Society, P. O. Box 365486, Hyde Park, MA 02136-0009. Additional information by telephone from 617-361-4445 or website [www.mysticvalleyps.org](http://www.mysticvalleyps.org).

**JANUARY 3-4, 10-11, 2004:** Open house at Cheltenham Hills Model Railroad Club (HO scale) in former Reading Ogontz station, 8000 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA, 12 Noon- 4 PM. Admission free but donations requested. For information, telephone 215-635-9747, or website [www.cheltenhammrrc.org](http://www.cheltenhammrrc.org).

**JANUARY 3-4, 10-11:** Open house at Abington Model Railroad Club (HO scale), 2066 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Pike, Richboro, PA, 1-4 PM. For information, telephone 215-598-7720.

**JANUARY 3-4, 10-11, 17-18:** Schuylkill Valley Model Railroad Club open house (HO scale), 400 South Main Street (rear entrance), Phoenixville, PA, 1-5 PM. For information, telephone 215-935-1126.

**JANUARY 10-11, 23-25:** GATSMELines Model Railroad Club open house (HO scale) at Prospect & Madison Avenues, Fort Washington, PA, 12 Noon-4 PM (except 7-9 PM on Friday, January 23). For information, telephone 215-646-2033 (Thursday evenings).

**FEBRUARY 14-15:** Greenberg's Train, Toy & Hobby Show at Fort Washington Expo Center, Virginia Drive, Fort Washington, PA, 10 AM-4 PM both days. Admission: \$7 adults (good for both days), children 11 and under free. Philadelphia Chapter expects to be represented with a sales and membership table.

**FEBRUARY 14-22:** "Great American Snowtrain" featuring rides on Amtrak Acela Express, Capitol Limited and Empire Builder. Visits to Mall of America (Minnesota) and Izaak Walton Inn (Montana). Fares start at \$1,400 per person double occupancy (coach). For complete itinerary contact: Mystic Valley Railway Society, P. O. Box 365486, Hyde Park, MA 02136-0009. For information, telephone 617-361-4445 or website [www.mysticvalleyps.org](http://www.mysticvalleyps.org).

## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 5)

Richard Mindler, co-founder and president of the Quakertown Train Station Historical Society, which in 1996 leased the 101-year-old building from SEPTA. The Society has received a substantial grant from U.S. DOT from its transportation enhancement fund for the restoration, as well as grants from PennDOT and other agencies and \$100,000 in private donations. Mindler hopes that the station one day will serve a revived passenger line to Lansdale and Norristown, which a Bucks county agency is hoping to develop independently of SEPTA (see November *Cinders*). Currently, PENN EASTERN RAIL serves local industries in Quakertown over the old Reading Bethlehem branch, connecting with CSX at Telford.

The B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore has received a \$500,000 Federal grant to assist in rebuilding the roof of its roundhouse and display hall, which collapsed under the weight of a record snowfall last February (*Weekly Rail Review*)..... NJ TRANSIT has begun the first class in its new "Transit Academy" educational program, which is aimed at preparing high school students for possible careers in the transportation field. The class is made up of 24 seniors and juniors recommended by their schools' guidance counselors. The program includes the pairing of students with NJT professionals for mentoring, as well as field trips to NJT facilities and the Federal Transit Administration in

Washington (*Weekly Rail Review*).....Don Phillips' column in the December issue of *Trains Magazine* highlights a painful fact: railroads no longer can be relied upon as the all-weather form of transportation. This has been demonstrated by numerous shutdowns of passenger and freight lines this year, due to heavy snows, downed trees and insufficient workers to deal with emergencies. Phillips also points the finger at our litigious society, which influences rail managers' decisions on whether to run under adverse conditions. The thinking is, if something bad happens the railroad or agency may be sued by riders or berated by politicians.

Happy Holidays to Everyone!

*Frank*

## Chalfont Train Show Ends After 18 Years

After 18 years, beginning as the Abington Police Train Show and later as the Chalfont Police PBA Train Show, this annual event has made its last run. Chapter Member Paul Myers, who with his wife Donna were the prime organizers, has retired after giving nearly two decades to arranging a train show which drew many local citizens in its Abington and Doylestown venues.

Philadelphia Chapter had been an annual participant for many years, and we appreciate the opportunity to have taken part.

# BC Rail to be Taken Over by Canadian National

On November 25 the government of Canada's British Columbia Province announced that it had accepted the offer of the Canadian National Railway to become the operator of provincially-owned British Columbia Railway (BC Rail).

While many items, particularly those dealing with employees and their labor agreements, are still under negotiation, it is expected that the main deal will be closed in early 2004. Integration of BC Rail operations into those of CN is expected to gradually take place over the next three years.

CN will pay the provincial government C\$1 billion in cash to acquire the outstanding shares of BC Rail, Ltd., along with the right to operate over BC Rail's roadbed for a period of 60 years, with a renewable option for another 30 years. The roadbed and right-of-way will continue to be owned by the province, with CN assuming responsibility for rail transportation and infrastructure maintenance.

All of the motive power and rolling stock of BC Rail will be transferred to Canadian National.

CN will create a new BC North Division, based in Prince George, to oversee operation of the new territory. It will invest C\$1 million to establish a modern wheel system shop at BC Rail's Prince George shop complex, and, upon completion will

move CN's western Canada wheel work, maintenance and locomotive work to the Prince George location. This will mesh with CN's existing route from Jasper, AB to Prince Rupert, BC, route of VIA Rail Canada's Skeena, as well as export traffic through the Prince Rupert harbor.

BC Rail, of course, discontinued its famed "Cariboo Dayliner" Budd RDC passenger service in October, 2002. CN and BC Rail will be jointly calling for proposals from third parties who may be interested in operating tourist trains between Vancouver, Whistler and the BC North, according to the BC Rail press release.

While not specifically outlined in the November release, it has been speculated that BC Rail's shop operations at Squamish, BC will be closed and consolidated into the Prince George facility. It appears that the British Columbia provincial government will provide some 71 acres of BC Rail land at Squamish to the town for a downtown revitalization.

BC Rail has an employee complement of approximately 1,500 at this time, and it is expected that that number will be reduced to about 950 by the time the CN takeover is complete in 2007. There are about 250 employees eligible for early retirement, and another 115 are inactive, thus minimizing the impact on BC Rail's active employees.

Not included in the transaction is BC Rail's Port Subdivision in the Vancouver area. A separate proposal is being developed on this operation, which should also occur during 2004. BC Rail's headquarters building in North Vancouver will be maintained during the transition period, with employees ultimately transferred to Prince George.

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