

# CYNWDERS

OCTOBER 2003



IN THIS ISSUE

Stormy Threesome Batters Region.....	1
Philadelphia Chapter News.....	2
Extra List.....	3
PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS, by Frank Tatnall.....	4
SEPTA Railroad Division Conducts Preparedness Drill.....	7

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PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

National Railway Historical Society

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## Stormy Threesome Batters Region Wind, Floods, Tropical Storm Snarl Rails, Roads

by Frank Tatnall

The nine-day period between Monday, September 15 and Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> brought a trio of destructive weather events to southeastern Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> a surprise storm deluged the Brandywine Valley and nearby sections of southern Chester County, as well as northern Delaware, with up to eight inches of rain. The resulting runoff was far more devastating than that caused by the memorable Hurricane Floyd in September 1999. Many residents of Downingtown woke that Monday morning to find their homes inundated by the fast-rising waters of Brandywine Creek, and Amtrak and SEPTA services on the Harrisburg mainline were disrupted for a time. Among other communities suffering massive flood damage were Kennett Square and Avondale, where the Red Clay and White Clay Creeks respectively surged over their banks, and high water at Chadds Ford forced the closure of the Brandywine River Museum.

One of the major victims of the Monday flood was the Wilmington & Western Railroad, which saw nearly five miles of its line in the Red Clay Valley totally destroyed. Six wooden bridges were washed out and much of the track along the creek was scoured of its ballast or left suspended in air. Railroad officials said that the damage was far worse than that of Floyd, which cost more than \$2.5 million to repair including construction of two new steel bridges. It was reported that Red Clay Creek in this storm reached a height six feet higher than during the 1999 flood! Another victim of the September 15 deluge was the SEPTA-owned Octoraro branch, now operated by Morrissetown & Erie, extending for 26 miles from Chadds Ford Junction to Nottingham, PA. Red Clay Creek carved a 40-foot-long washout just west of Kennett Square, which was expected to be repaired so that M&E can resume service to customers at Avondale and Nottingham. A number of freight cars were left stranded at those locations.

While all of this was going on, millions of people along the East Coast were warily watching the progress of a huge hurricane named Isabel, then churning its way across the Atlantic Ocean toward the United States. After some speculation that the

Category 2 hurricane might make landfall as far north as Chesapeake Bay—which would have been catastrophic for the Philadelphia area—Isabel finally slammed ashore September 18 on the Outer Banks of North Carolina and made its way northward through Virginia, Maryland, western Pennsylvania and on into Canada, sparing this area the brunt of its fury. Actually, Philadelphia received less than an inch of rain from the downgraded tropical storm but wind gusts of up to 70 mph toppled hundreds of trees throughout the region, halting some rail service, blocking roads and knocking down power lines. With more than 1.3 million customers in the Greater Philadelphia region without electric power, Peco, Connectiv, PSE&G and other utilities struggled to replace downed wires and restore service. In spite of these efforts, many thousands were still in the dark on Sunday—two days after the storm had passed.

Disruption of rail service was widespread. In this area, SEPTA and Amtrak were mobilized for a possible emergency. With many trees down on the Harrisburg line, SEPTA's R5 Paoli-Thorndale service as well as all of Amtrak's trains to Harrisburg and beyond were suspended for the entire day while the tracks were cleared and overhead wires repaired. A total of 90 R5 trains were cancelled. For a time, R5 service was also suspended between Lansdale and Doylestown as falling trees took out both catenary and signal power. The R6 Cynwyd line was blocked by downed trees, and a tree had to be removed from the track at the R8 Chestnut Hill West station. The Doylestown Line was reopened by 11 AM, in time for Train 546 to proceed north out of Lansdale, but Cynwyd service was annulled for the entire day. It was 7 PM before Amtrak had cleared its Harrisburg line as far as Downingtown, and SEPTA train 581 leaving Suburban Station at 8:15 PM was to be the first train through to Downingtown. But more tree branches were found lodged in the catenary west of Frazer, so 581 and all later trains that evening were cancelled. Full service was finally restored the next morning. Even SEPTA's transit service was affected, as the Route 100 Norristown High Speed Line had to cope with fallen tree branches and the Route 101 trolleys to Media could not get past some trees blocking the track. Buses were substituted on the 101 during the day on Friday.

(Continued on Page 7)

## 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.

## MEETING NOTICE

### FRIDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 17, 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  
November Cinders)*

Our October 17, 2003 meeting will feature a narrated slide program produced by Motor Bus Society Member Thomas Jones, entitled **Railroad-Owned Bus Companies in the 1920-1950 Era**. Narrated by Chapter Member Samuel James, this 140-slide presentation will cover motor coaches operated by the railroads throughout the United States. You might be surprised by the large number of railroads who had motor coach subsidiaries. This should be an interesting program on a little-recorded aspect of railroad operations.

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, OCTOBER 14, 2003 to Dinner Chairman Bill Gardiner at 215-632-7016.** The menu had not been received by presstime, but the meal always includes a salad, entrée, dessert and beverage. You **must specify when ordering** whether you wish a **MEAT** or **FISH** dinner. Please call **Bill Gardiner** with your reservation. **N0-shows will be responsible for payment for meals ordered!**

Please note that all meetings in the 2002-2003 year are scheduled in the Faculty Club, on the second floor of the Alumni Hall. Looking forward, our November 21, 2003 will feature another Railroad Slide Auction, where members may sell slides. Complete rules will appear in November *Cinders*.

## WALTER A. ZACKON

### September 12, 2003

Longtime NRHS member Walter A. Zackon, of Cherry Hill, NJ, passed away on September 12, 2003 at the age of 87. Walter joined NRHS in 1940 and for more than 60 years had maintained memberships in both Philadelphia and West Jersey Chapters. He held any number of positions in the Society and was a past president of Philadelphia Chapter.

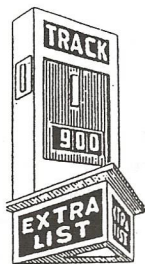
Born in Philadelphia, Walter's family moved to Collingswood, NJ when he was young, and he resided there until moving to Cadbury a number of years ago because of declining health.

Walt was a 1938 graduate of Temple University and worked for many years in the traffic department of Westinghouse Electric. He also served in the United States Army in World War II.

Until his failing health and vision prevented it, Walt was a regular attendee at Philadelphia Chapter meetings, and had a keen mind with a very sharp attention to details, and would not hesitate to correct guest lecturers when they gave a wrong locomotive number or date. His encyclopedic knowledge was respected by the rail historians who knew him.

Walter is survived by his brother, Dr. Paul Zackon, of Boca Raton, FL and several nephews and nieces. There was no formal funeral service. Walter was regularly visited by members Mike and Lynn Burshtin and Bill Vigrass, who provided him with companionship and rail literature in his later years. Walt's legacy to our organization is that each of us learned from his vast knowledge of the rail transportation industry.

**Philadelphia Chapter NRHS**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Wednesday evening, October 15, 2003, 7:00-8:30 PM**  
**NRHS National Office, 100 N. 17<sup>th</sup> St., 12 Floor**



OCTOBER 11, 2003: "Flaming Foliage Express" from Harrisburg to Renovo, PA and return via Norfolk Southern's ex-Pennsylvania Buffalo Line, sponsored by Harrisburg Chapter NRHS. Special Amtrak train powered by Juniata Terminal's former PRR E8's leaves Harrisburg station at 7:30 AM, returning about 8 PM, with four-hour layover in Renovo for the Pennsylvania State Flaming Foliage Festival. Passengers may remain on the train for an additional ten-mile ride to Keating, where the train will be turned. Coach fare: \$90 per person. Order tickets from: Harrisburg NRHS Ticket Agent, P. O. Box 141, Boiling Springs, PA 17007-0141, making checks payable to "Harrisburg Chapter NRHS" and enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope. For information, telephone 717-232-6221 and leave a message.

Box 151, Alexandria, VA 22313-0151, for pickup at trainside. For information, telephone 703-273-8440, or visit website [www.dcnrhs.org](http://www.dcnrhs.org).

OCTOBER 13: Columbus Day excursion from Scranton to Tobyhanna, PA and return, sponsored by Steamtown National Historic Site. During three-hour layover passengers may visit restored Lackawanna Railroad station and gift shop, now operated by Pocono Mountains Chapter NRHS, or participate in nature walk. Train leaves Scranton at 11 AM, Tobyhanna at 3 PM, returning to Scranton about 4 PM. Fare: \$25.00 per person in coach, \$50 first class. For tickets and information, see Steamtown item above.

OCTOBER 16: "A Postcard History of the Wyoming Valley Region of Pennsylvania" slide lecture by F. Charles Petrillo and Charles Kumpas, at National Canal Museum, Two Rivers Landing Auditorium, 30 Centre Square, Easton, PA, starting at 7:30 PM. Admission is free. For information, telephone 610-559-6613.

OCTOBER 11: "Autumn Leaves Special" excursion from Hagerstown to Cumberland and Oakland, MD and return via CSX, sponsored by Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum and Hagerstown Chapter NRHS. MARC-equipped train leaves Hagerstown 7:30 AM, returns 8:30 PM. Fares: \$80 adults, \$75 seniors, \$50 children (ten percent discount applies to orders received prior to August 31). Order tickets from: HRM, P. O. Box 2858, Hagerstown, MD 21741-2858. For information, telephone 301-739-4665.

OCTOBER 25: Repeat of October 11 excursion from Scranton to East Stroudsburg and Delaware Water Gap, PA over ex-DL&W mainline, sponsored by Steamtown National Historic Site. For information, see October 11 Steamtown item.

OCTOBER 11: Diesel or steam-powered excursion from Scranton to East Stroudsburg and Delaware Water Gap, PA and return over 64 miles of former Delaware, Lackawanna & Western mainline, sponsored by Steamtown National Historic Site. Special train leaves Steamtown station, Scranton at 9 AM, arriving East Stroudsburg at 11:45 AM where passengers have the opportunity for a three-hour layover. The train will continue through Delaware Water Gap to be turned at Portland, leaving East Stroudsburg at 2:45 PM for arrival in Scranton about 6 PM. Fares: \$75 adults, \$70 seniors, \$50 children, \$100 first class aboard private car **Lehigh Valley 353** or lounge car. For reservations and information, telephone toll-free at 888-693-9391, or visit website [www.nps.gov/stea](http://www.nps.gov/stea).

NOVEMBER 1: Special excursion on Cape May Seashore Lines showcasing Lehigh Valley-painted F7 locomotives, sponsored by West Jersey Chapter NRHS. Train leaves Fairgrounds station, Cape May Court House, NJ, at 10:05 AM, returning at 4 PM. A night photo special will leave at 5 PM, returning about 8 PM. Fares: Day trip \$20 per person, night trip \$12, combination ticket \$30. Order tickets from: Cape May Seashore Trip, c/o Dave Homer, 338 North Stanwick Road, Moorestown, NJ 08057-3630, enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope and making checks payable to "West Jersey Chapter NRHS." For information, telephone 856-866-0391 between 6 and 10 PM, or visit CMSL website: [www.cmslrr.com](http://www.cmslrr.com).

OCTOBER 11, 18: "Fall Foliage Specials" on Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern from Port Clinton to Jim Thorpe, PA and return, via Tamaqua and Hometown bridge. Diesel-powered train with open-window coaches leaves Port Clinton at 9 AM both days, returning about 6:30 PM, with four-hour layover in historic Jim Thorpe. A photo runby enroute also will be scheduled. Fare: \$29 per person. Order tickets from: Reading & Northern Railroad, P. O. Box 218, Port Clinton, PA 19549-0218, making checks payable to "Reading & Northern."

NOVEMBER 1: Rare mileage excursion White River Jct. to Wells River, VT and return over ex-Boston & Maine trackage, sponsored by Mass Bay RRE. Train leaves White River Junction 10:30 AM, returns approximately 5:00 PM. Very rare trip will include photo opportunities. Fare: \$39 per person, by advance reservation only. For information and tickets, contact: Mass Bay RRE, P. O. Box 4245-BV, Andover, MA 01810-0814. More detailed information (box lunches, Boston bus connections, etc.) by telephoning 978-470-2066 or website [www.massbayrre.org](http://www.massbayrre.org).

OCTOBER 12: "Autumn Colors Express" from Washington, DC to Harpers Ferry and Martinsburg, WV and return, sponsored by Washington, DC Chapter NRHS. Diesel-powered MARC train leaves Washington Union Station at 8:30 AM, arriving historic Harpers Ferry at 11:35 AM and Martinsburg at 12:15 PM, returning to Washington at 5:45 PM. The westbound trip will operate via CSX's freight-only Old Main Line, while the return trip to Washington be over the more direct Metropolitan Subdivision. Fares: \$59 adults, \$49 children, \$199 first class in heavyweight lounge car **Dover Harbor**. Order tickets from: Washington, DC Chapter NRHS, Autumn Colors Special, P. O.

NOVEMBER 8-9: Trains & Troops Weekend at Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, including exhibits, re-enactments, memorabilia and presentations on the role American railroads have played in the nation's defense. Recreated troop trains will operate on the Strasburg Rail Road. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. A dance featuring nostalgic music of the World War II era will be held in the Rolling Stock Hall from 7 to 10 PM on Saturday, November 8. Admission to dance: \$20 per person, or \$30 for combination ticket to dance and museum admission both days. For tickets and information, telephone 717-687-8628, extension 3008.

(Continued on Page 8)

# PHILADELPHIA



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.



## SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL

During September Regional Rail suffered through an unprecedented series of blockages caused by fallen trees, mostly on AMTRAK's Harrisburg line over which the R5 Paoli-Thorndale service operates. As described elsewhere in this issue, the Harrisburg line was hammered by the winds of Hurricane Isabel on Friday, September 19 and the follow-up storm of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. But before that Main Line riders found their service disrupted on the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> when a tree fell onto the catenary near St. Davids station, blocking three of the four tracks. Outbound service was suspended until noon. And on the eve of the Hurricane's arrival, at 3:30 PM on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup>, another tree collapsed onto the tracks near Merion station, slowing the evening rush-hour service. It is obvious that more cutting back of trees along the right-of-way needs to be done to avoid similar service outages in the future.

SEPTA has revised some schedules and plans to reissue most of its Regional Rail timetables effective with the time change on October 26, assuming that the ongoing budget crisis will not force additional service cuts. As matters stood at *Cinders'* presstime, the only reductions built into the new schedules are: (1) a continuation of the cuts made last spring in express and other services for the Rail Power Project catenary work in center city; (2) an increase in off-peak headways on the R8 Chestnut Hill West Line from half-hourly to hourly, and from hourly to 90 minutes on Sunday to permit a reduction in crews; (3) the turning of certain midday R1 Airport trains at Roberts yard in North Philadelphia instead of at Glenside (some R5 Lansdale trains will make stops at Elkins Park and Melrose Park to take up the slack there); and (4) reduced turn times for off-peak R2 trains at Warminster, which improves efficiency and eliminates the need for meets at Willow Grove siding. On the other side of the coin, SEPTA is responding to riders' demands by restoring the R6 Schuylkill Valley Flyer express service on the R6 Norristown Line, which had been discontinued last spring for the Rail Power Project. In addition, the R6 Cynwyd trains will continue to terminate at Suburban Station, an arrangement which became effective with the new timetable on September 8.

SEPTA last month placed in service its new cab signal system between the "Neshaminy" and "Wood" interlockings on the R3 West Trenton line. This entails removal of all wayside signals in this five-mile zone except at the interlockings themselves, and permits trains to operate in either direction on either track. It extends the bidirectional cab signal territory already installed between Jenkintown and "Neshaminy." SEPTA also is working to replace all 42 miles of former Reading catenary wire between

Jenkintown and West Trenton, and over the past three years has completed 24 miles. Currently, wire train crews are working between Woodbourne and Yardley.....Another West Trenton line project is the upcoming repair of the Mill Creek bridge near Woodbourne yard, to begin this month..... Editor Larry Eastwood has produced a four-page historical sketch of SEPTA's R3 West Trenton line for distribution to passengers. Chapter members who wish a copy should contact Larry..

Meanwhile, the four-month catenary replacement project continues at night on the Mainline between Fern Rock and Jenkintown (see September *Cinders*).....On September 2 SEPTA opened its expanded parking lot at Elm Street station in Norristown (see August *Cinders*), which required the demolition of the old Matlack bulk materials facility adjacent to the station. The project resulted in the creation of 70 additional parking spaces, and the extension of both tracks north of the platform to allow for the overnight storage of additional Silverliner cars..... AMTRAK last month began a three-month project to upgrade the #1 track on the Northeast Corridor in Bucks County, requiring SEPTA to operate its outbound R7 Trenton trains on the #2 track from "Holmes" interlocking in Philadelphia to "Grundy" interlocking at Bristol or "Morris" interlocking at Morrisville. This increases the running time for these trains because Amtrak provides only one platform extension to the #2 track at each of the six affected stations, which greatly slows passenger loading and unloading, and Amtrak trains usually have preference on #2. The reason for the upgrading of #1 track is to increase train speeds to 110-125 mph from the present 100 mph in this area.

DVARP reports that a study has been completed regarding the feasibility of providing a one-seat ride for commuters between Philadelphia and New York, which would replace the current SEPTA-NJ TRANSIT connecting service at Trenton. Part of a Regional Rail Improvement Study sponsored by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the study concluded that running through trains is operationally feasible. By eliminating the present inconvenient change of trains at Trenton, and with fares substantially lower than AMTRAK's, the new service should be attractive in spite of the longer travel times.. NJT would provide the equipment for the trains, which could begin running in 2006 when NJT plans to take over AMTRAK's Clocker service.....SEPTA reports that 60 percent of its railroad passengers now use TrailPasses, 20 percent buy tickets, ten percent pay cash, three percent are seniors and seven percent are "others".....The SEPTA board last month commended Railroad Division Manager Andy Andrzejewski and several other employees for operating an additional R7 train out of Trenton early in the morning of August 15, to accommodate passengers stranded by the massive power failure in New York City the previous day. NJ TRANSIT ran a special train to take commuters home, but it arrived at Trenton after the last scheduled SEPTA train, #780, had departed at 12:06 AM, so the SEPTA people put together an extra train to connect with the NJT special.

(Continued on Page 5)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 4)



SEPTA TRANSIT

SEPTA has decided to postpone for another month the major service cuts and fare increases proposed last spring to fill a \$41-million shortfall in its \$875-million operating budget for the current year. At the urging of the SEPTA staff, the board at its September 25 meeting voted to delay the action at least until its next meeting on October 23. The hope continues to be that when Governor Rendell and the Legislature adopt a final budget for the State's 2003-2004 fiscal year, it will provide enough funding to sharply reduce or eliminate SEPTA's deficit. SEPTA has already accumulated a \$7.2 million operating deficit during the first two months of Fiscal Year 2004.....SEPTA reports a \$282,000 operating surplus after subsidies for FY 2003, which ended June 30. This was the sixth year out of the last seven in which SEPTA was able to report a surplus.....SEPTA officials say that the agency faces a \$50-million deficit in Fiscal Year 2005, even if it gets all it needs for this year. A long-term change in its funding base and an annual adjustment for inflation will be needed to avoid this grim scenario. Adding to the problem will be negotiations for a new contract with SEPTA's largest union, Transport Workers Local 234.

Fifty percent of SEPTA's capital funding comes from the Federal government. The same funding level has been proposed for Fiscal Year 2004 as in 2003, but at the start of the new fiscal year on October 1 Congress had not completed action on a transportation appropriations bill. As a result, Congress enacted a continuing resolution, which maintains all government operations at the 2003 level for another month. As for the reauthorization of TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century which expired September 30, Congress passed a five-month extension of the present law. TEA-21 now provides the guidelines for all highway and transit spending. A major obstacle to approving a new TEA is the argument by many states that they receive less in Federal funding for roads and transit than they pay in gas taxes. These "donor" states complain about other states such as Pennsylvania, which receives on average \$1.23 in funding for every \$1 contributed in taxes.

SEPTA's average daily ridership of 679,000 for the first two months of Fiscal Year 2004 was slightly below budget but four percent higher than in the year-ago period. Regional Rail was the worst performer, falling five percent below budget but still one percent higher than last year. City Transit ridership was four percent above last year, even though the Market-Frankford Line lost three percent of its riders during the nine-day "Frankford Swing" in August, when the new Frankford Transportation Center was opened. SEPTA's overall passenger revenues for the first two months of \$49.7 million were one percent below budget and one percent below the year-ago period.....September 30 marked the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SEPTA's takeover of Philadelphia Transportation Company in 1968. Since then, Philadelphia's population has declined by 22 percent but City Transit Division ridership is off 36 percent.

The first of SEPTA's 18 rebuilt "PCC-II" cars arrived from Brookville Equipment on September 9. Dressed in PTC-style green and cream paint, #2320 with a "Hello Philadelphia" destination sign was placed on public display September 17 at Elmwood depot in Southwest Philadelphia. It is currently running tests at night on the Island Avenue section of Route 36. The car, former PTC/SEPTA #2750 originally built by St. Louis in 1947, still looks very much like a true PCC except for the long "hump" on the roof which contains the air conditioning and other auxiliary equipment. SEPTA's former project manager, Chapter Member Michael Burshtin, saw to it that numerous historical touches were applied to the car beyond the paint scheme, such as silver wings on the headlight, the style of numbers, the winged emblems with "SEPTA" lettering instead of "PTC," and the original Art-Deco "bullseye" lights in the interior. But with its many new features, including air conditioning, center-door wheelchair lift, operator's console, stainless-steel upholstered seats, passenger stop request system and Brookville-designed trucks and suspension, Michael calls it "an LRV in disguise." Total cost of remanufacturing the 18 cars is expected to be \$22.7 million.

Car 2320 is numbered in the series above the last PCC's acquired by SEPTA, the 19 Pullman-built cars (#2300-2318) purchased from Toronto in 1975. The 2320 was the first PCC shipped by SEPTA to Brookville, on February 25, 2002. It was followed by 20 other cars, three of them to be used for spare parts. Plans are to display the 2320 at the 40<sup>th</sup> Street subway-surface portal on October 16, during Try Transit Week. Service on the rebuilt Route 15 Girard Avenue light rail line should begin sometime next year, after track and wayside work is completed and renovations are made to the Callowhill depot in West Philadelphia, where the PCC's will be based. (SEPTA has given up on its plan to purchase the former Acme warehouse on Upland Way and convert it into a new carshop, because of the high cost involved.)

No decision will be made on resumption of trackless trolley service until the SEPTA staff submits a recommendation to the board. A major stumbling block is the need to replace the existing 24-year-old fleet of coaches at an estimated cost of \$45 million, in order to continue operation of the five existing trackless routes .....A Route 13 trolley derailed on the curve at 42<sup>nd</sup> & Spruce Streets in the early morning of September 22, knocking down a traffic light and crashing into an apartment building. The operator and five passengers were injured slightly. The car was following the so-called diversion route while the subway-surface tunnel was closed for overnight construction work .....Two somewhat humorous ads designed to encourage senior citizens to ride SEPTA have been airing on local radio stations.....DVARP reports that SEPTA has issued a request for proposals to conduct an independent audit of the agency's management, as now required periodically by State law. The first such audit, completed in 1997 by Phoenix Management Services, was critical of many phases of SEPTA's performance, which it says have been corrected.....The SEPTA board last month awarded a \$140-million contract to tear down the Market Street el from 46<sup>th</sup> Street to 60<sup>th</sup> Street in West Philadelphia and erect a sleek new single-pillar structure.. The award was made to Market Street Constructors, a consortium made up of Neshaminy Constructors of Bucks County and a California firm, even though a Federal lawsuit has been filed against SEPTA by Conti Enterprises of South Plainfield, NJ. Conti claims that it submitted a lower bid and that SEPTA improperly contacted Neshaminy during the bid process.

(Continued on Page 6)

## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 5)



# AMTRAK

The Senate last month failed to consider the 2004 transportation/treasury appropriations bill, making it more likely that transportation funding will be lumped into an omnibus spending bill covering many departments in the Federal government. AMTRAK supporters hope that such a bill will preserve at least the \$1.346 billion approved last month by the Senate Appropriations Committee, which is still \$366 million less than Amtrak requested for Fiscal Year 2004. That is money that will have to be stripped out of Amtrak's capital program for the year. Amtrak wants to spend \$1.8 billion on returning the railroad to a "state of good repair" over the next five years (NARP).....The U.S. General Accounting Office estimates that the cost of liquidating AMTRAK would be as much as \$44 billion in obligations to the many secured and unsecured creditors, including the Federal government .....While AMTRAK officials talk about the crisis in funding for intercity rail passenger service, they also point to a "freight railroad crisis" looming on the horizon, due to the lack of adequate capital investment being made by the industry.

Six unions representing AMTRAK workers threatened a one-day strike on October 3, to protest the failure of Congress to grant Amtrak's full funding request as well as its chronic underfunding. But the railroad's largest labor organization, the Transportation Communications Union which represents half of all Amtrak's hourly-rated employees, later said that it would oppose such an action as counter-productive, and Amtrak said it would seek an injunction against any unlawful work stoppage (NARP) .....The Bush Administration has nominated Robert Crandall, former CEO of American Airlines, to the AMTRAK board, replacing Chairman John Robert Smith whose term has expired. Also nominated to the board were former U.S. DOT Official Louis Thompson and Retailing Executive Floyd Hall, a prominent Republican Party fundraiser (*Weekly Rail Review*).

AMTRAK suffered a one-hour power outage on the Northeast Corridor in North Jersey during the afternoon rush-hour of September 17. Three of the four tracks lost power near Edison, delaying many Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT trains (*Trains*).....AMTRAK reportedly is shopping for new switching locomotives to replace its aging stable of GP7's, GP9's and SSB1200's. The leading candidate is said to be the 1,500-hp GP15D, manufactured by MotivePower, Inc. and marketed by General Motors (*Trains*).....AMTRAK has begun a campaign to eliminate unneeded structures, such as the long-abandoned ex-Pennsy roundhouse near the Wilmington shop which has been demolished .....The Cardinal will again become a New York-Chicago train rather than Washington-Chicago, effective with the timetable change on October 26. This will ensure that the consist will retain its single-level cars, and it will remain on a tri-weekly schedule (Elbert Simon).

AMTRAK began a major advertising campaign last month in six cities to promote its "back to basics" pricing strategy. The campaign was expanded to 70 cities nationwide by late September. New low coach fares to its most popular destinations will be specified, rather than as percentage discounts from standard

fares. Most of the effort will be concentrated on newspaper advertising, and a typical ad was spotted in the Philadelphia *Daily News* on September 15. Advertising coach fares such as \$86 to Atlanta, \$39 to Pittsburgh and \$72 to Chicago, the ad was headlined "Couples rarely argue over directions...The dining car is straight ahead." On September 8 Amtrak launched an Internet-only discount of five percent off the best available fares (other than sleepers), which can be combined with other discounts such as those available to seniors. (Go to [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com).) Amtrak also is offering free companion tickets anywhere on the system when a passenger belonging to its Guest Rewards program completes two round-trips on the Acela Express or four one-way trips on Acela through December 22 (NARP, *Trains*).



## CSX NS OTHER ROADS

Chief Operating Officer Alan F. Crown retired from CSX last month after 37 years of service. Whether his retirement was the result of CSX's declining operating efficiency (see September *Cinders*) is not known, but CEO Michael J. Ward immediately assumed Crown's responsibilities. Under Ward, CSX will place a "much tighter focus on the operations plan," said a spokesman for the railroad (*Traffic World*).....Earlier, Ward announced that Frederick J. Favorite had been named to the new position of senior vice president-performance improvement (*Railway Age*).....The memorial service for the late CONRAIL CEO L. Stanley Crane will be held in the First Presbyterian Church, 21<sup>st</sup> & Walnut Streets, beginning at 11 AM on Saturday, October 18.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN plans to inaugurate a faster North Jersey-Atlanta intermodal service in mid-October, operating via AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor (see September *Cinders*). Southbound train 25A and northbound 26A will run once or twice per week, primarily for United Parcel Service, with the trains continuing to operate over the slower route via Hagerstown, MD on less-critical days. On Amtrak, the train will be restricted to 50 mph and a maximum length of 2,400 feet. Assigned power will be former CONRAIL GP40-2 locomotives in the 3000-series, which are equipped with the Locomotive Speed Limiter devices for Corridor service. The units must have their horns modified to allow passage through 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station in Philadelphia .....NS says that Juniata shop at Altoona will complete the painting of 200 locomotives this year bearing NS's modified emblem, which incorporates the outline of the head of the familiar Thoroughbred superimposed on the five slanted lines. We'll reproduce it in this column next month (*Railway Age*).

Chapter Member Loretta Treese was a featured presenter at the Friends of the Railroad Museum's annual Members Day at Strasburg on September 27. Loretta, who is the archivist for Bryn Mawr College, is the author of the recently-released book *Railroads of Pennsylvania: Fragments of the Past in the Keystone Landscape*, which is available at local bookstores.....Also on September 27 DeDOT and AMTRAK sponsored their annual Delaware Transportation Festival at the Wilmington station. But this year the NRHS-owned ex-Reading FP7 locomotives were not on display, due to a space problem at the station.....JUNIATA TERMINAL last month released GP38 #7750 from its

(Continued on Page 8)

## Stormy Threesome Batters Region

(Continued from Page 1)

Disruptions on the Harrisburg line were only a side issue with Amtrak, which also experienced problems with its Northeast Corridor service in the wake of Isabel. As a precaution, all Amtrak trains south of Washington were suspended beginning Wednesday evening the 17<sup>th</sup> and both Virginia Railway Express and MARC did not operate on Thursday and Friday, during which period the Federal government shut down its offices in Washington and the surrounding areas. The **Capitol Limited**, **Lake Shore Limited**, **Three Rivers** and other trains operating between the East Coast and the Midwest were also cancelled on those days. On the electrified Northeast Corridor Amtrak operated near normal service on Thursday, but with several trains cancelled between New York and Washington.

On Friday, high winds blew several trees onto the tracks between Philadelphia and Baltimore, forcing Amtrak to cancel some early trains but by late morning normal service had been restored and continued through Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup>. The **Crescent** to New Orleans resumed operation on Saturday, but most east-west trains including the **Capitol Limited** did not start up until Sunday. Service through Richmond, VA, which was hard hit by the storm, remained suspended over the weekend due to a lack of commercial electric power in southern Virginia. Finally, on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the **Auto Train** and the Silver Service to Florida, as well as the Washington-Richmond trains, resumed operation.

For the most part, NJ Transit's rail lines escaped the wrath of Isabel, even the Atlantic City Line. On Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> NJT managed to operate all of its commuter rail, light rail and bus services on their regular schedules, with scattered delays. The agency continued to cross-honor tickets with PATCO, PATH and the Hudson River ferries.

Freight service also was severely impacted by Isabel's high winds and torrential rain, especially south and west of Washington. Downed power lines, mud-clogged culverts and trees fouling tracks were a headache on many lines in Virginia and North Carolina. CSX halted operations in parts of those states while Norfolk Southern held trains and otherwise curtailed operations in areas affected by the monster storm. On Monday NS reported that its operations had returned to normal, although commercial power outages were still a problem in eastern Virginia. CSX continued to endure power outages, but it was again running both passenger and freight trains on its mainlines after conducting helicopter and hi-rail inspections over the weekend. Both railroads brought in hundreds of back-up generators to operate switches, signals, crossing gates and flashers. MARC and VRE were back in business, while warning passengers of delays due to continuing power outages along CSX lines in Maryland and Virginia.

The last of the violent triumvirate of September storms struck the Washington-Philadelphia-New Jersey corridor on Tuesday morning the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Thought to be an offshoot of Isabel, this storm pounced on weary residents, businesses and transportation agencies, producing downpours, hurricane-force winds and even small tornadoes which touched down in Narberth and near Trenton and Flemington, NJ. In the Philadelphia area, Havertown, Wynnewood and Narberth suffered tremendous damage, particularly the result of large trees falling on homes, automobiles and streets, the havoc far exceeding that of Hurricane Isabel just a few days earlier. A tree fell on SEPTA R5 train 503 just as it was leaving Wynnewood station about 7:30 AM. There were no injuries and passengers were bused to their destinations,

but all SEPTA service on the Paoli-Thorndale line was halted while Amtrak wire-train crews worked to clear the debris and repair the catenary. (Amtrak's diesel-powered trains were delayed but were able to get by the scene.) The four-car SEPTA train was towed back to Overbrook shop by a diesel switcher, with the lead car suffering only minor pantograph damage. Inbound R5 service was resumed about 11 AM but the first outbound train did not run until after 3 PM.

On Tuesday morning, Amtrak's Corridor trains were running with two-hour delays caused by trees fouling the tracks south of Wilmington and water over the rails near Landover, MD. But within a few hours the trees were cleared, the water had receded and two of the three tracks at Landover were opened so that full Amtrak and MARC service could be restored. In addition to the Wynnewood problem, Amtrak reported that downed trees in other locations along its Harrisburg line were creating further delays, but service was back to normal by late that afternoon.

Forecasters warn, however, that the 2003 hurricane season is not yet over, and next year could be even worse.

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## SEPTA Railroad Division Conducts Emergency Preparedness Drill

SEPTA'S Railroad Division, in cooperation with New Hope & Ivyland Railroad and various Bucks County emergency responders, conducted a simulated emergency preparedness drill at the Street Road (PA Route 132) highway grade crossing in Warminster Township on Sunday, September 21.

Regional Rail conducts these drills with various local fire companies, ambulance corps and emergency management personnel from time to time in an effort to evaluate its own passenger train emergency preparedness plan, while familiarizing various emergency responders with its passenger rolling stock.

The special SEPTA train consisted of Bombardier push-pull cab car 2405, coach 2505 and RL1 diesel locomotive 60. New Hope and Ivyland Railroad sent GE C30-7 7087, GATX tank car 51075 and borrowed SEPTA flat car SPAX 2201. The purpose of the training exercise was to simulate a serious collision between the passenger train and a freight train carrying hazardous materials.

The drill commenced at 9 AM, with fire companies and emergency medical personnel responding from Warminster, Warrington, Southampton, Ivyland and Newtown. A medivac helicopter was part of the drill and "patients", all wearing red tee shirts marked "VICTIM", were staged and evacuated by the seriousness of their "injuries" to nearby Warminster General Hospital.

Various simulations included a chemical spill (acetone) from a tank, locomotive fuel ignited along the right-of-way, and two fatalities and 28 injuries. The medical responders broke into the two coaches by removing the emergency windows and taking "casualties" out on stretchers through the windows, as well as rescuing crew members from both locomotives.

Lasting until 11:30 AM, the drill was followed by a lunch hosted by Warminster Fire Department and a debriefing and critique session to evaluate the ability of SEPTA as well as local emergency personnel to respond and react to the emergency.

# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 6)

North Philadelphia shop, freshly painted in Pennsy-style tuscan red. The ex-CONRAIL unit is believed to be former NORFOLK SOUTHERN #2889, recently purchased by Juniata Terminal, where Chapter Member Eric Levin serves as chief mechanical officer. Three locomotives sold by Juniata Terminal to the PATAPSCO & BACK RIVERS RAILROAD at Sparrows Point, MD, were recently wrecked in a collision at NS's Bay View yard.

United Transportation Union President Byron A. Boyd, former President Charles L. Little and two other union officials have been charged in a Federal indictment with accepting bribes from attorneys doing business with the UTU. If convicted of these charges, as well as for racketeering, mail fraud and conspiracy, the defendants could face long prison terms and heavy fines (*Traffic World*).....The leaders of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees have decided to pursue merger discussion with the Teamsters Union. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers already plans to merge with the Teamsters, pending ratification of the agreement by BLE members later this year (*Weekly Rail Review*).....There are now 622,000 former railroad workers drawing pensions from the Railroad Retirement Fund, and 222,000 active employees paying into the fund. Last year, Congress reduced the minimum retirement age for railroad workers from 62 to 60.....General Motors reportedly is again trying to sell its Electro-Motive Division. Greenbrier Equity Group is believed to have formed a partnership

which is offering \$1 billion for EMD (*Trains*).....The old Pennsy Newtown Square branch bridge over Baltimore Pike in Lansdowne has been demolished. The last portion of the branch was abandoned in 1981 (PRRT&HS).....Under pressure from the Operation Lifesaver organization, Levi Strauss has pulled a TV commercial which showed a woman riding a horse on railroad tracks, then coming out of a tunnel and jumping over an approaching train. The ad "trivializes the dangerous, illegal and all-too-often tragic activity of playing on railroad tracks," OL said (*Bull Sheet*).

## Extra List (Continued from Page 3)

NOVEMBER 9: Subways, Railways & Stations: A Mostly Underground Tour of Philadelphia. This 2-1/2 hour walking expedition will cover the history of all transit and rail lines and stations from 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station to the old Reading Terminal, as well as Penn Center and Center City's underground concourse system. Outing includes a ride on a SEPTA LRV. The tour is sponsored by Center City District's new *Walk Philadelphia* tour program. Cost: \$20 per person. For further information and tour schedule, contact Paula at 215-625-9255.

THROUGH DECEMBER 7: "On the Road to Paradise: A History of the Strasburg Rail Road," display of photos and artifacts from America's oldest shortline, at Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. For information, telephone 717-687-8628.

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