



# CINDERS

AUGUST

2008



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Number 7

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

**PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS WEBSITE ADDRESS: [www.phillyNRHS.com](http://www.phillyNRHS.com)**

## Members Reminded to Make Reservations for Summer Dinner

Philadelphia Chapter members are reminded of the August 7 deadline to reservations for the 2008 Bill Wagner Summer Dinner.

For the third year in a row, the dinner will be held at the Main Street Café, 660 Lancaster Avenue in Berwyn, on Friday evening, August 15. Located just across Lancaster Avenue from SEPTA's R5 Berwyn station, cocktail hour (individual settlement) begins about 5:30 PM, with dinner served between 6:00 and 6:30 PM.

Three different appetizers are available: spinach salad with warm bacon dressing, house salad or tomato basil soup. Entrée choices are **The Main Filet, Drunken Shrimp, Chicken Saltimbucca** or **Sesame Salmon**. Chocolate Mousse will be served for dessert and coffee, tea or iced tea come with the meal. Other liquid refreshments will be available by individual settlement throughout the evening.

The cost of the meal remains at \$36 per person, and checks, payable to **Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS**, should be mailed to: Summer Dinner, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302 to arrive on or before August 7, 2008.

Members will observe that there is plentiful outbound service on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale route, but check each train to insure that it stops at Berwyn. Return trains from Berwyn to Center City leave that point at 8:08 (Train #592), 9:08 (Train #594) and 10:15 (Train #596) PM. Trains 592 and 594 run through Center City to Doylestown, while Train #596 operates to Lansdale.

Members who have not made their reservation by the time *Cinders* arrives in your mailbox should contact Dinner Chair Les Dean at 610-586-7294; advance reservations are necessary.

**FUTURE NRHS CONVENTIONS**  
**2009 – Duluth, Minnesota**  
**2010 – Scranton, Pennsylvania**

## RCT&HS Requests Strasburg Trip With FP7's for November 1

The Reading Company Technical & Historical Society has requested a trip using FP7's #902 and 903, together with SEPTA push-pull cars, for Saturday, November 1, 2008 between Philadelphia's 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station and Strasburg, Pennsylvania. The trip would be a virtual repeat of the excursion operated by Lancaster and Philadelphia Chapters on September 8, 2001.

Because negotiations were in progress at presstime, more definitive details are not available. The trip, as requested, would originate at 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station, and make an enroute passenger stop along the R5 Paoli-Thorndale line. The train would, as in 2001, operate directly into Strasburg over the Strasburg Rail Road.

RCT&HS has requested a meeting with Philadelphia Chapter officers to establish logistical support for the operation. Complete information should be available for our September issue.

**PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER'S NEXT MEETING:**  
**Friday evening, September 19, 2008, 7:30 PM**  
**Thomas Jefferson University Alumni Club**  
**1020 Locust Street, downtown Philadelphia**

## Meeting Programs Needed

As we start the 2008-2009 meeting year, Senior Vice President Bill Thomas reminds us that programs are needed for our meetings in the coming year.

Thomas Jefferson University's Medical Media Services department has a capability to provide us with almost any type of equipment we would need to put on a program, be it slide shows, video presentation, DVD presentation or Power Point presentation.

Members who may have program material or know of an interesting program which has been presented to other groups is asked to contact Bill Thomas directly at 215-545-3198, or by mail to: William Thomas, III, 201 S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Apartment 210, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5454.



**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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**AUGUST 16, 2008:** Private car excursion over most of NJ Transit's former Erie Lackawanna commuter rail lines, sponsored by the EL Dining Car Preservation Society. Two Morristown & Erie cars will be used on the excursion, which will cover the Morris & Essex, Boonton, Main and Bergen County Lines. Train will depart from the Hackettstown, NJ station at 11 AM, returning about 5 PM. A tour of historic Lackawanna Terminal at Hoboken will be featured. Fare: \$119 per person, including a light lunch and snacks. Order tickets by E-mailing the sponsor at [store@eldcps.org](mailto:store@eldcps.org).

**AUGUST 16-17:** Morristown & Erie Railway will sponsor two-day private car excursion New York to Pittsburgh and return using M&E private cars. Cars will be in consist of the **Pennsylvanian** in each direction. Lunch and dinner westbound, snacks and dinner eastbound. Cost: \$475 per person. For additional information, contact Morristown & Erie Railway at 973-267-4300, or website: [www.merail.com](http://www.merail.com).

**AUGUST 16, 23, 30, OCTOBER 5, 12, 18, 26:** Excursions Scranton to Moscow, PA and return, departing Steamtown Station 1:00 PM, returning 3:00 PM. For fares and details, contact Steamtown National Historic Site at 1-570-340-5204 (9:30 AM-4:30 PM daily) or visit website: [www.nps.gov/stea](http://www.nps.gov/stea).

**AUGUST 29-31:** Lackawanna Railfest 2008 at Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA. Tentative events include special train from Philadelphia and steam excursion to Delaware Water Gap. Numerous rail exhibits will be featured. For information, visit Steamtown website at [www.nps.gov/stea](http://www.nps.gov/stea).

**AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 1:** Electric Railroaders' Association will hold its 2008 Convention in Philadelphia. Planned activities include a Friday night movie program by NRHS Member Russ Jackson on street railways of the Delaware Valley. Other events are the annual banquet, bus tour to Rockhill Trolley Museum, PCC fantrip on SEPTA and charter train and shop tour of NJT's River Line. Convention headquarters will be the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 18<sup>th</sup> & Market Streets. For ticket form and information, contact ERA, P. O. Box 3323, New York, NY 10163-3323 (website: [www.erausa.org](http://www.erausa.org)). Order form may also be found on Page 9-10 of May-June issue of *Cinders*.

**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:** \$50.00 per person, which includes Chapter and National dues. Chapter-only dues \$17.00 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.

*Cinders* is published 11 times a year by Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, Inc. Correspondence regarding *Cinders* should be directed to the Editor at P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. If your *Cinders* is received damaged or incomplete, contact the Editor at the address shown below for replacement.

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

**SEPTEMBER 6:** Steam excursion from Jim Thorpe to Pittston, PA and return via Reading & Northern Railroad, using Pacific #425. Special train leaves Port Clinton at 9 AM, returns about 3 PM. Passengers cannot detrain at Pittston. Coach fare: \$79 per person, with lunch and beverage included. Order tickets from: Reading & Northern Railroad, P. O. Box 218, Port Clinton, PA 19549-0218, making checks payable to the railroad, or purchase online at [www.rbnrr.com/passenger](http://www.rbnrr.com/passenger). For additional information, telephone 610-562-2102 between 9 AM and 5 PM weekdays.

**SEPTEMBER 12-14:** Rail Photographer's Weekend on the Maine Eastern Railroad. Friday evening excursion, rare mileage trip Saturday, night photo session, special photo freight and other items Sunday. Price: \$199.00 per person. For complete information visit website [www.maineeasternrailroad.com](http://www.maineeasternrailroad.com).

**OCTOBER 4, 11, 19, 25:** Excursions Scranton to Tobyhanna and return, departing Steamtown Station 11:00 AM, returning 3:00 PM. For fares and details, contact Steamtown National Historic Site at 1-570-340-5204 (9:30 AM-4:30 PM daily) or visit website: [www.nps.gov/stea](http://www.nps.gov/stea).

**THROUGH DECEMBER 31:** "The Railroad Art of Ted Rose: A Retrospective" exhibit at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, featuring the watercolor paintings and photographs of the late Artist Ted Rose. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. For information, telephone 717-687-8628.

**THROUGH JANUARY 10, 2009:** "All Aboard! The 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reading Railroad" exhibit at the Historical Society of Berks County, 940 Centre Avenue, Reading, PA, sponsored by Norfolk Southern. A wide variety of photographs and artifacts from the Reading System will be on display. Hours: Tuesday through Saturday 9 AM-4 PM. Admission is free. For information, telephone 610-375-4375 (website: [www.berkshistory.org](http://www.berkshistory.org)).

**If your *Cinders* Arrives in Bad Condition**

If your *Cinders* arrives damaged, contact Editor Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or [reastwood2@comcast.net](mailto:reastwood2@comcast.net) and a replacement copy will be promptly sent to you.



# PHILADELPHIA



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.



**SEPTA  
TRANSIT**

Business is way up at SEPTA, thanks both to the rising price of gasoline and general highway congestion. The downside is that the agency is struggling with an equipment shortage, especially on Regional Rail lines which are carrying more passengers now than at any time in the past 25 years. In June Regional Rail ridership was an astounding 22 percent higher than in the year-ago month, and in Fiscal Year 2008 ended June 30 it grew by 12 percent over the previous year. Systemwide, SEPTA reports that passenger revenues were 24 percent higher in June than in the same month a year ago while "linked" ridership climbed by eight percent with 19.4 million originating trips recorded. The boost in revenues is partially due to the increased fares which went into effect last summer, but ridership growth comes *in spite of* the higher fares. For the full fiscal year passenger revenues were 4.5 percent or \$17 million above budget and 14 percent or \$48 million above the previous year. Total ridership for FY 2008 increased by 17.9 million passengers, six percent above FY 2007, and was the highest on the system in 18 years.

Subway-surface riders had two back-to-back bad days last month. Around 9:30 AM on Monday, July 21, a Kawasaki car pulled down the trolley wire near the 37<sup>th</sup> Street station, sparking a small fire in some ties. Passengers on the car had to be evacuated in the tunnel, eight of them suffering from smoke inhalation or minor injuries. All subway-surface routes were diverted to the 40<sup>th</sup> & Market subway station until the fire was extinguished, the wire repaired and the tunnel reopened just before 12 Noon..... At 3:45 the next afternoon, July 22, an inbound Route 11 car rear-ended a standing Route 13 car at the Juniper Street station, shoving it into a Route 34 car in front of it. The 13 and 34 cars were empty but nine passengers on the 11 car were taken to hospitals with minor injuries, along with two SEPTA operators. Regular service was restored within an hour.

New Routes 101 and 102 trolley schedules will be issued on August 25, improving midday service from half-hourly to 20 minutes on each route. This will follow completion of trackwork between 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal and Drexel Hill which has required single-track operation between those points effective with the June 15 timetables (see July *Cinders*).....A man talking on a cell phone was struck and killed by a Route 113 bus on the evening of July 2 as he crossed the street at the Darby loop .....Service on the Market-Frankford Line was disrupted for a short time around 8 AM on Friday, July 25, when a passenger was injured at the 30<sup>th</sup> Street subway station. Shuttle buses were operated between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Street stations.

On Wednesday, July 9, SEPTA introduced its new "Customer Connection" program at 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal. It is similar to the old "SEPTA On Site" sessions at which officials

meet passengers to receive their comments or complaints. Customer Connection is part of General Manager Joseph M. Casey's plan to improve communications between SEPTA and its riders, with recently-promoted Assistant General Manager Kim Heinle now responsible for this function. Heinle has put together a detailed business plan for customer service and advocacy, focusing on the "Four C's"—cleanliness, communications, convenience and courtesy—which all passengers should expect from SEPTA. A second Customer Connection was held at Market East station on July 23, with the next ones scheduled at 15<sup>th</sup> Street subway station on August 6 and Suburban Station on August 20. The hours are 7:30-9:30 AM.

A \$4-billion Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the five-county Philadelphia region over the next five years was announced in late June by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. During that period \$2 billion would be spent on highway projects and \$1.9 billion on transit, the bulk of which would go to SEPTA capital programs. These include various station and parking expansions; track, signal and catenary modernization; further improvements to the R5 Paoli-Malvern line and a new fare collection system. DVRPC is the authorized agency for determining which projects in this area receive Federal and State capital funding.....Pennsylvania last month resubmitted its application to the U.S. DOT for permission to place tolls on Interstate 80 across the State. In passing Act 44 last year, the Legislature contemplated that these tolls would be a major revenue source for highway and bridge repairs and for mass transit. Officials hope to begin collecting tolls on I-80 in 2010.....SEPTA has hired a former president judge of Philadelphia Traffic Court, Francis E. Kelly, to be its assistant general manager for government and public affairs. Most recently, Kelly worked as senior vice president for a lobbying and consulting firm. He "will play a major role in developing partnerships with our stakeholders in Harrisburg, Washington and the five-county Philadelphia area," said SEPTA General Manager Joseph Casey. Kelly replaces Juan Torres, who has become AGM of business services.

A recent report in the *Inquirer* revealed that SEPTA is putting aside money in a "rainy-day" fund which is not included in its annual budgets. The \$130 million surplus (\$80 million accumulated in Fiscal Year 2008 and \$50 million more in current FY 2009) is designated by SEPTA as its "service stabilization fund," which is revenue in excess of current expenses. Most of it comes from the State as part of the Act 44 funding, and is intended as a hedge against sudden future cost increases. Since the money is being held for emergencies, it is not to be used for such immediate concerns as higher pay for transit police officers (see July *Cinders*) or free transit passes for school students. The latter issue came to the fore last month when the Philadelphia School District said that an economic squeeze would force it to reduce the number of students eligible for free passes paid for by the District. SEPTA, however, has agreed to pay \$3.5 million toward administering the distribution of passes and providing security in subway stations and other locations used by students. (Cont. on P. 4)



# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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The second and last of this year's lengthy shutdowns of the Market Street elevated will take place from the evening of Friday, August 8, to early on Monday, August 25. Hopefully, this will be the last of the major closures as most construction on the \$710-million project should be completed in 2009, two years behind the original schedule. As usual, shuttle buses will operate during the shutdown between 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal and the 40<sup>th</sup> Street subway station, with regular subway-el service operating as far as the 46<sup>th</sup> Street station on weekdays. On weekends, the trains will terminate at 40<sup>th</sup> Street. The cost of the last segment of el replacement, from 63<sup>rd</sup> Street west, is now set at \$96.3 million. To exercise a contract option with builder New Flyer, SEPTA is seeking funds for an additional 20 diesel-electric hybrid buses to be delivered this year. The base order is for 100 buses, with delivery to begin this month, to be followed by 300 additional units over the next three years.



## SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL

The full-size mock-up of SEPTA's new Silverliner V MU car, completed in late May at Hyundai-Rotem's plant in Changwon, South Korea, is due to arrive in Philadelphia this month. It will be unloaded from the ship and trucked to Wayne Junction shop for inspection, then sent to Suburban Station for public display in mid-September. The first three pilot cars, to be fully assembled in South Korea, will be delivered to Philadelphia next April for testing. Car shells for the following 117 production cars will be manufactured in South Korea, then shipped to Philadelphia for final assembly in a large facility leased by Rotem on Weccacoe Street in South Philadelphia. This building is located just a mile from the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal, where the car shells will be offloaded from ships. The entire \$274-million contract includes 38 single cars with a seating capacity of 107 each and 41 married pairs with a combined seating capacity of 218. As described here earlier, the cars will feature quarter-point doors (no vestibule doors) and a 3-2, 2-2, 3-2 seating arrangement. The first production cars are due in October 2009, with the final cars to be delivered in February 2011. They are intended to replace the 53 Budd-built Silverliner II's and the 20 St. Louis-built Silverliner III's, all of which date from the 1960's, and to provide additional capacity. Before work can start on the SEPTA cars, however, Rotem must begin assembling 87 bi-level commuter cars for the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (METROLINK). Work on that order is to begin next January at the Weccacoe Street plant.

SEPTA has decided to purchase rather than lease eight Comet 1 coaches from NJ TRANSIT (see July *Cinders*), due to certain insurance issues. After some refurbishing, the cars are to be added to the consists of existing push-pull trains as

supplemental capacity, effective with the timetable change on October 26. Originally built by Pullman-Standard in 1971 for the Erie Lackawanna, the cars just recently have been retired by NJT. For \$670,000 SEPTA will gain title to the eight cars, plus another derelict car to be used for parts and \$50,000 worth of other parts.....Schedule changes will occur on August 3 with the reissuance of the R7 and R8 timetables to accommodate adjustments by NJT in its Northeast Corridor service into and out of Trenton. Then, on September 7 new timetables will be issued for the R5 West, R6, R7 and R8 lines, resulting from the near completion of work on the new "K" interlocking west of 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station. The R5 changes will see the return of half-hourly midday service on Paoli-Thorndale. Also effective on September 7 will be new late-night service from center city on Friday and Saturday evenings to Malvern (R5), Norristown (R6) and Trenton (R7).

To help meet surging demand, SEPTA is trying to press every available car into service on the Regional Rail system. In addition to the eight push-pull cars being purchased from NJT (above), seven more MU's are expected to be returned to service by early September—three from the dead line and four out of the shop.....This writer rode R5 train #4374 to center city on July 9 with a most unusual matched consist of four ex-Reading Silverliner II's #9007, 9008, 9001 and 9011..... SEPTA received its push-pull set back from AMTRAK on Monday morning, July 14, in time for use in the morning rush on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale line. The set had traveled to Altoona and Pittsburgh as part of the Railfest 2008 special (see July *Cinders*).....Have you noticed that even the ceilings of some Silverliner IV cars are now being plastered with huge colored ads? Think Nestea.

Last month was relatively uneventful on Regional Rail, but the week of July 7 was a tough one. At midday on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> the catenary wires mysteriously fell near the new "K" interlocking construction area, less than a mile west of 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station. Train service on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale, R6 Cynwyd, R7 Trenton and R8 Chestnut Hill West lines was severely delayed through the evening rush as only one or two tracks could be used in the area. (The R1 Airport, R2 Wilmington-Newark and R3 Media-Elwyn routes were not affected.) Two days later, at 6:15 AM on Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup>, a tree struck the catenary over the #1 eastbound track near Frazer, Chester County, along AMTRAK's Harrisburg mainline. Two SEPTA trains had gotten by the scene but after #1 track was taken out of service long delays ensued. Form D orders had to be verbally issued for all eastbound trains to run against the current of traffic on the #4 westbound track, which is signaled in only one direction. Harrisburg-bound #641 and #609 were held at Paoli for over an hour, while eastbound trains such as #642, 644 and 646 were held at Thorndale. SEPTA cancelled all service west of Paoli, unloading westbound passengers at that station. Amtrak's yellow catenary maintenance vehicle was dispatched to the scene around 9:30 to make repairs, but normal service was not restored until 1:30 PM. SEPTA turned back its Malvern and Thorndale trains at Paoli to maintain more or less normal service east of there.

A widespread voltage drop shut down service on AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor between New York and Philadelphia for over an hour on the afternoon of Wednesday, July 23, possibly caused by electrical storms in the area. All SEPTA service on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale, R6 Cynwyd, R7 Trenton and R8 Chestnut Hill West lines was suspended beginning around 4:30

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## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 4)

PM and continuing until power was restored at 5:45 PM, but the after-effects lasted well into the evening. Amtrak Corridor and Keystone services also were halted, not to mention NJ TRANSIT trains which depend on Amtrak electrical power. Amtrak said that it attempted to hold trains at stations to avoid stranding passengers, and was investigating the cause of the low-voltage problem. The same type of power loss has happened on the Corridor before, with the last occurrence blamed on malfunctioning substations. Fortunately, the outage did not extend south of Philadelphia, so that the R2 Wilmington-Newark and R3 Media-Elwyn services were unaffected. R1 Airport trains were idled for a time owing to a different problem, but resumed operation before the other lines.....Push-pull train #6321 **Neshaminy Limited** out of West Trenton on the morning of the 24th was halted when AEM-7 #2303 suffered a road failure. The train later resumed its run but other R3 trains behind it were delayed. On the same morning Bryn Mawr-to-Norristown #4624 broke down before leaving Bryn Mawr, backing up other R5 trains until it got moving about 50 minutes late.

The R6 Norristown Line Extension Study, which had been due for completion in June (see May-June Cinders), reportedly has been delayed until December. This is not a reincarnation of the old Schuylkill Valley Metro scheme, but proposes four alternatives: Electrification as far as Port Kennedy, diesel service between Norristown and Reading, diesel service to Reading plus electrification to Port Kennedy or simply adding more service to the existing R6 route between Norristown and center city .....Bucks County is still looking for funding to begin rail shuttle service between Quakertown and Lansdale, via the SEPTA-owned Bethlehem Line. The planned diesel service also would be extended two miles south of Lansdale to the Merck complex at West Point, via the Stony Creek branch..... SEPTA has approved a contract to remove all track materials on eight miles of the Bethlehem branch between Hilltop (Coopersburg) and Hellertown. It will receive a "good price" for the used rail, which will be relaid on an unidentified shortline. The long-out-of service right-of-way is being eyed for a rails-to-trails project (see July Cinders).

SEPTA is working on several station improvements throughout the Regional Rail system. First is the \$14-million project to restore the historic (1885) Wayne station on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale line, due to be completed in the spring of 2010. SEPTA also is working on a plan to build a new R5 station at Ambler, and is acquiring property for the project. Ambler currently is in the odd position of having a relatively-new but small southbound station opposite the commuter parking lot, while northbound trains continue to stop at the old Reading station a few hundred feet to the north across Butler Avenue. A \$6-million engineering contract has been approved for a 700-space parking garage to be constructed at Jenkintown station, along with high-level platforms, and two stations on the R8 Fox Chase Line, Ryers and Olney, will receive new high-level platforms. Engineering work also is to begin this summer for a new substation at Jenkintown (see July Cinders).

The City Planning Commission held a hearing on July 15 to hear pro and con views on the proposed American Commerce Center, a 1,500-foot-high building to be erected at 18<sup>th</sup>

& Arch Streets (see April, July Cinders). If construction of this mega-skyscraper is approved, it would become the tallest structure in the City by far and one of the tallest in the nation. Containing office space, restaurants, an upscale hotel, a movie theater and a two-block-long underground concourse, it would be linked directly to SEPTA's Suburban Station. Its next-door neighbor, the recently-opened Comcast Center (which is only 975 feet tall) already has a busy below-street-level restaurant and shopping area called the Market at Comcast Center connecting directly to the SEPTA concourse.....For three days during the week of July 14 SEPTA had to cut its R1 Airport Line service from half-hourly to hourly, in order to accommodate repair work on a Sunoco pipeline which shares the right-of-way in Southwest Philadelphia. Single-track operation was in effect.



# AMTRAK

AMTRAK last month "relaunched" its Regional service as "Northeast Regional," running between Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and points in Virginia. Amtrak said that its rebranding of the service along with other improvements should attract an additional 136,000 passengers annually. Regional service is Amtrak's busiest, having carried more than 6.8 million passengers in the last fiscal year, and in the first nine months of the current fiscal year through June 30 ridership increased 11 percent over the previous year, to 5.6 million. A new "R" logo and an advertising campaign will introduce the revamped service, which features refurbished café cars placed in the middle of the trains, stepped-up cleaning of cars and flexible consists to meet demand. One of the new ads appeared in Philadelphia newspapers in mid-July, with the tagline "The train shall set you free" and a color shot looking down the track into a brilliant sunrise. One-way coach fares from Philadelphia also are shown.

Concurrent with the introduction of Northeast Regional service came the news that AMTRAK was raising fares on the Northeast Corridor by five percent. The reasons offered were the recent labor agreements giving employees higher wages, the rising cost of diesel fuel in non-electrified territory and the "constrained capacity" which is caused by heavier demand for rail service in an era of \$4 gas prices.....On-time performance along the Northeast Corridor declined in June. Acela Express performance dropped slightly to 86.4 percent, Regional fell to 66.6 percent and Keystone Service to 86.4 percent .....The *Daily News* ran an editorial on July 8 entitled "Get on the train, Congress, Amtrak—and the environment—need help." More public transportation is vital, the editorial said, of which "Amtrak is only a small part. Yet past attempts to starve Amtrak to death illustrate the myopic policy that lies at the root of the current [energy] crisis." It points out that Presidential Candidate John McCain, who now recognizes the threat of global warming, tried to block efforts to increase funding for Amtrak when he was chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee. "If we are going to catch the train to the future, the editorial concludes, "Amtrak needs to be more of a bargain than it is now."

AMTRAK has announced that all of the recently-negotiated agreements with its unions have now been ratified (NARP). The new contracts are expected to cost Amtrak an addition \$114 million during Fiscal Year 2009.....AMTRAK is planning a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for

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## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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Washington Union Station on September 27-28. The beautifully-restored building, designed by Architect Daniel Burnham, was officially opened on October 27, 1907 to consolidate the operations of the Pennsylvania and Baltimore & Ohio Railroads (NARP).....The inspector general's office at U.S. DOT issued a report in June which states that "the benefits from high-speed rail achieving three-hour service between Boston and New York and 2-1/2-hour service between New York and Washington would exceed the expenditures [an estimated \$14 billion] required to implement it." These are the targets that were set in the Railroad Revitalization & Regulatory Reform ("4-R") Act of 1976. Today, the fastest Acela trip time from Boston to New York is 3-1/2 hours and from New York to Washington two hours and 47 minutes (NARP).

AMTRAK and its contractors successfully completed work on the new Thames River bridge in Connecticut in late June, and Regional train #66 was the first to cross it at 5:57 AM on June 28. Some additional work was needed to make the new draw span fully operational (*Trains*, NARP).....The *Daily News* on July 11 published a two-page report on the "smartest" ways to get from center city Philadelphia to downtown New York and return. It had reporters ride an AMTRAK Acela Express; SEPTA/NJ TRANSIT via Trenton; PATCO, River Line and NJT's Northeast Corridor route; three different bus lines; and by highway using a Toyota Prius hybrid and a Mazda SUV. The Acela was the fastest at two hours, 35 minutes (including waiting time) and the most expensive at \$211 round-trip, while Megabus was the slowest at five hours and 49 minutes but also the cheapest at \$13 round-trip. By the way, the round-trip via SEPTA and NJT took four hours and 22 minutes but cost only \$31.75 (including peak return fare on NJT). On August 15 the newspaper will follow this up with a page entitled "Commuting for less".....Chairman James Oberstar of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee said last month that a new \$15-billion economic stimulus package could soon be introduced in the House. The bill would include an immediate infusion of \$250 million for AMTRAK and \$4 billion for transit (NARP).

By late July AMTRAK was nearing completion of the project to replace defective concrete ties on Northeast Corridor #4 track from Trenton to Jersey Avenue in New Brunswick (see July *Cinders*). Crews will begin replacing ties on the #1 track normally used by eastbound NJ TRANSIT and certain Amtrak trains, which will take it out of service for some months and cause NJT to issue new schedules effective August 3.....AMTRAK has been experiencing an increasing number of road failures with its AEM-7 electric locomotives, some of which had been overhauled at the Wilmington shop in recent years. And the Acela Express power units are not immune.....There sometimes is a shortage of AEM-7's to handle the Philadelphia-Harrisburg Keystone Service. On July 18 this writer observed a P42 diesel hauling train #609 westbound out of Philadelphia.....On Sunday, June 29 two boys riding an all-terrain vehicle along the AMTRAK right-of-way in Chase, MD, were struck by southbound Acela Express #2255 in 125-mph territory. Miraculously, neither boy was killed but suffered serious injuries.....In the May-June issue we said that the new signal system which AMTRAK has installed on 22 miles of the Keystone Corridor east of Harrisburg is governed by operating

Rule 261. Actually, Rule 562 is in force, which incorporates the bi-directional signaling provisions of Rule 261 as well as the use of cab signals without fixed automatic block signals.



**CSX,  
NS,  
OTHER ROADS**

CSX announced last month that the insurgent group of shareholders led by the British-based TCI hedge fund apparently had elected four of its candidates to CSX's 12-man board. Ironically, on the day of this announcement TCI reported that it lost \$1 billion during the month of June, 12.5 percent of its value, and in contrast CSX said that its earnings per share rose 31 percent in the second quarter. During that period the railroad also set all-time records in revenues and operating income, up 15 percent and 17 percent respectively from the same period in 2007. On July 25 CSX said that it would immediately seat two of the TCI-backed directors, but the status of the other two candidates remained "uncertain." The election still is subject to the outcome of pending litigation between the railroad and TCI before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

With CSX's Baltimore Division dispatchers now relocated to Halethorpe, MD (see July *Cinders*), new codes have been established for some radio transmissions. The Philadelphia Subdivision between Baltimore and Philadelphia, formerly handled by the "AV" dispatcher, now is controlled by the "BE" dispatcher using radio frequency 160.23. The former CONRAIL Harrisburg and Trenton Subdivisions remain with the "NI" dispatcher at Selkirk, NY, using frequency 160.98.....Following a three-month test on NORFOLK SOUTHERN at Roanoke, VA, the first "co-generation" switcher produced by Brookville Equipment of Brookville, PA, is testing on CSX at Hagerstown, MD. BMEX 259 is a triple-genset locomotive with regenerative brakes. It is touted to perform with higher fuel efficiency and lower emissions than conventional units, providing anywhere from 700 hp to 2,100 hp depending on how many of its three Cummins diesel engines are utilized (*Railway Age*).....Last month brought the news that Philadelphia industrial icon Rohm & Haas Company will be sold to chemical giant Dow Chemical Company for \$18.8 billion. But Dow said that Rohm & Haas headquarters will remain in Philadelphia and the huge specialty chemical plant in Bridesburg, served by CONRAIL, will remain in operation.

Lower Merion Township plans to widen Belmont Avenue in West Manayunk, which will mean replacing the steel and concrete bridge which carries NS trains over the roadway. The bridge was built by the Reading Railroad in 1928 .....NS posted record revenues and net income for the second quarter, up 16 percent and 15 percent respectively versus the same period in 2007.....*Railpace* reports that a thief trying to steal copper wire from power lines above NS's abandoned Enola branch near Quarryville was electrocuted in the attempt. Apparently he did not realize that the wires are still hot, serving as part of a transmission line for high-voltage power from the Safe Harbor generating station on the Susquehanna River to AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor at Philadelphia.....With the price of diesel fuel closing in on \$5 a gallon, more and more trucking firms are switching additional loads to rail intermodal

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## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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service for the long haul. One of the biggest truckload carriers, J.B. Hunt, increased its already substantial presence on the rails by 28 percent during the second quarter, and now actually is moving more loads in intermodal service than over the highway!

New schedules will take effect August 3 for NJ TRANSIT's Northeast Corridor Line, as a result of #1 track being taken out of service for tie replacement (see above). Platform bridges will be used at Hamilton and Princeton Junction stations to enable passengers to reach the trains operating on #2 track ..... The NJT board last month approved a \$1.7-billion operating budget and a \$1.29-billion capital budget for Fiscal Year 2009 which began July 1. The State will increase its operating support to NJT by \$60 million, partly offsetting the higher costs of fuel, power and materials. Current levels of service will be maintained and no fare increases are contemplated..... On July 18 New Jersey Governor Corzine and other officials formally dedicated the renamed NJT/AMTRAK station in Trenton as the Trenton Transit Center. Work on the \$79-million project is nearing completion.

The Delaware River Port Authority announced last month that it plans a series of toll increases on its four Delaware River bridges, and fare increases on the PATCO High Speed Line. In September, round-trip tolls on the bridges would rise by \$1 from the current \$3 and increase by another \$1 in 2010. PATCO fares would rise by ten percent both times. At public hearings last month DRPA officials were berated by customers for contributing \$375 million over the past decade to economic development projects such as the Kimmel Center, Lincoln Financial Field and the Camden Aquarium. But DRPA gave assurances that the new monies would be dedicated solely to bridge repairs and PATCO improvements. June PATCO ridership of 867,000 represented a ten-percent increase over the year-ago month, while bridge traffic declined by 2.6 percent to 4.7 million.....PATCO later this year intends to release a request for proposals to rebuild its aging 121-car fleet. The original 75 cars were built by Budd in 1968-69 for the line's startup, while 46 additional cars were delivered by Canadian Vickers in 1980-81 (*Railway Age*).

Don Phillips' column in the August issue of *Trains* makes the important point that the U.S. is headed for a meltdown of its transportation infrastructure. Yet few politicians are willing to face the reality that renewing these vital arteries—highways, airways, rail and transit lines—will require trillions of dollars in investment in order to prevent the widespread decay of our transportation networks. The major villain, says Phillips, is the political mantra of “no new taxes,” even though serious tax increases will be needed to pay for the massive rebuilding that is absolutely necessary for the nation's future mobility..... U.S. DOT estimates that demand for rail freight service—measured in tonnages shipped each year—will increase 88 percent by 2035. Without a \$148-billion investment (2007 dollars) in railroad infrastructure by then, rail service will be bottlenecked in every part of the country (Mass Bay RRE).....The authoritative *Kiplinger Washington Letter* last month predicted that the U.S. will come up with “about \$3.5 trillion over a 20-year period to fix crumbling roads, bridges, dams, river locks, sewage treatment plants, schools, waterworks and much more.” *Kiplinger*

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

*(This column appears on a reasonably regular basis to provide Cinders readers with some useful as well as interesting information which has been gathered from miscellaneous sources.)*

We have some more July dates to pass along: In 1965, the last Pennsylvania Railroad Class P5a electrics were retired and the last five Class FF2 (ex-Great Northern) motors were sold for scrap.....On July 31, 1981, SEPTA/Conrail ended the ex-Reading passenger service between Philadelphia and Reading/Pottsville.....On July 24, 1984, Conrail's ex-Reading Blandon Low Grade line collapsed into a quarry under Train OIIN-3 (Roy and others).....On July 10, 1955, a fantrip was operated from Jersey City to Green Pond Junction via the High Bridge Branch and Wharton & Northern RR behind Jersey Central 4-6-0 Camelback locomotive #774, billed as the last mainline Camelback in America. The all-day outing cost riders \$5.00!! (Jersey Central Railway Historical Society).

Exactly 100 years ago, in 1908, in the offices of the Pennsylvania Railroad, there were over 10,000 telephones. Among the most important uses of telephones in railroad service were the securing of sleeping car berths and the prompt notification of consignees of the arrival of freight (*Railway Age Magazine*).....In 1924, we learn that “The Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company has applied to the Public Utility Commission for an increase in fare to 8 cents, or two tickets for 15 cents, with substitution of free transfer points for all 3-cent exchange points. Passengers who now pay 9-1/4 cents will be able to select their own route to Center City by the use of a 7-1/2 cent ticket with free transfer. The present cash fare is 7 cents, with four tickets for 25 cents. The increase will produce a net income in revenues of \$3 million.” (*Forbes Magazine*).....Earlier, on April 16, 1898, we note that “The Reading Company has given orders for a new sea-going tug to the Harlan & Hollingsworth Company. It will be on the same lines as the *Catawissa* and the *Tamaqua* and will be called the *Valley Forge*. (*The Bee Line*, RCT&HS).

In the United Kingdom, the Royal family has been trying to watch their spending. A number of years ago the expensive Royal Yacht was turned into a museum while the Bluebloods took to the skies. However, the Royal Train's cost was 6.2 million pounds, up ten percent from the previous year. In one notable trip, Prince Charles spent 19,000 pounds on a visit by the Royal Train earlier this year to the Black Swan Pub and other engagements at Penrith in northwestern England (*Wall Street Journal*).....The U. S. Army is considering making the Indiana National Guard's Camp Atterbury (Edinburg, IN) a permanent site for troop mobilization and training. The Pennsylvania Railroad once had a depot there named, of course, for its President General Atterbury (*USA Today*).....In June of 1862 the Social, Cultural & Statistical Association of Colored People of Pennsylvania collected the signatures of 369 prominent Philadelphians and petitioned the board of the City Railways Company to desegregate the horse cars. Nothing came of it until more forceful petitioning and lobbying of State officials; finally, in 1867, the State passed the Lowry Bill which forbade the Horse Car Company from excluding or segregating colored passengers (*Pennsylvania Legacies Magazine*, May, 2008 issue).

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also believes that the nation's voters are pushing for government action to get moving on the problem, which would mean that eventually the citizenry will face up to the fact that additional transportation taxes are needed.

After years of volunteer effort, Harrisburg Chapter officially opened its "Harris" tower to the public on June 7. The former PRR tower contains much of its original equipment and is located just a short walk from the AMTRAK station. The tower normally is open on Saturdays from 10 AM to 4 PM..... An interesting article appeared in the Central New York Chapter's newsletter entitled "Zombie railroads." It laments the fact that traditional railroad identities have been eliminated from most freight equipment and "trains have become a generally faceless lot." It is sad to watch a freight train roll by, the article says, because "most cars tend to just have reporting marks as there are more leasing companies and fewer railroads owning equipment. The days of boxcars bearing thought-provoking names like Wabash, Frisco, Cotton Belt and Reading are gone, replaced with the likes of FURX, DJJX, GATX, NAHX and hundreds of other unpronounceable acronyms that mean nothing to most people. It is not uncommon to have an entire train pass by without a single name-branded car in the consist. The rolling geography lesson of years past that took your imagination to far-off places is not there anymore." And the writer doesn't even mention the scourge of graffiti!

### ODDS AND ENDS (Continued from Page 7)

And the Good News Is: On May 21, West Chester Borough voted to approve a new 15-year-lease with SEPTA and an equivalent sub-lease with Four States Railway for the line used by the West Chester Railroad (West Chester Railroad Heritage Association – *Newstracks*).....There once was a railroad of sorts known as the Indiana & Illinois Southern. The narrow-gauge line was a wobbly affair and while there was a schedule, a train being on time would have been considered a miracle! On one trip Josial McConnell wanted to go to Switz City from Sullivan, but missed the train by a minute or two after the scheduled departure. The clock at the station showed that the train had left five minutes ahead and Mr. McConnell sued the railroad for \$5,000 in damages. At the trial it was proved beyond a doubt that the train McConnell missed was the previous day's train and was really 23 hours and 55 minutes late!! (*Indianapolis News* – 1925).....The iron ore traffic originating in Cuba and other foreign countries destined to iron industries in Pennsylvania are keeping up nicely. During the month of December, 610 cars were received via Port Richmond and delivered to Bethlehem Steel Company alone, and upwards of 500 cars went to other points. (February, 1911 edition of Reading Company Magazine *The Pilot* and RCT&HS *Bee Line*).

We take note that in July, 1965, Pullman-Standard delivered the last of ten coaches for the Kansas City Southern Railway. These were the last mainline cars built in the United States until Amfleet (*Railroad Statistics*).....Friends of the dormant Stewartstown Railroad are trying to revive passenger service. There are major hurdles, such as paying back bills, fixing Stewartstown depot and come up with many thousands and dollars to repair the track (*Harrisburg Rail Review*).

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