

# 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary -- 1936 - 2011



# CINDERS

MARCH 2011



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Volume 72

Number 3

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)**

## MEETING CANCELLATION NOTICE

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

## Notice of Annual Meeting & Election

Notice is hereby given of election of Chapter officers for the year 2011-2012, to be held at the Annual Meeting of Philadelphia Chapter, National Railway Historical Society on Friday evening, March 18, 2011, at the Thomas Jefferson University Alumni Hall, 1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, beginning at 7:30 PM.

Any member in good standing who is interested in service as President, Senior Vice President, Vice President & Treasurer, Secretary or National Director, may be nominated from the floor at the February 18 or March 18 meeting, or by placing your name in nomination by writing, before March 1, 2010 to: Mr. Daniel J. Murray, Chairman, Nominating Committee, Philadelphia Chapter NRHS, 745 Sunflower Avenue, Langhorne, PA 19047-3747.

## Winter Woes Bedevil Transit Riders

SEPTA and its passengers struggled through some very unpleasant weather in January, the chilliest in the Philadelphia area since 1994. Average temperatures during the month were three degrees below normal. But early February saw a dramatic improvement in the weather, the unexpected thaw giving SEPTA people a chance to catch up on a sizeable backlog in equipment repairs. During January a riled-up Mother Nature had blasted the Northeast with snowstorms every few days, starting on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup>, then again on Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup>, Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> and Friday the 21<sup>st</sup> (see February *Cinders*). Topping off the assault was the double-dip storm of Tuesday and Wednesday, January 25-26, which piled up an official total of 15.1 inches at International Airport—the 11<sup>th</sup> biggest snowfall in the City's history. A smaller

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## Meeting Notice

### FRIDAY EVENING, MARCH 18, 2011

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  
(\$9.00 after 5 PM). There is a new underground garage directly  
across from the Jefferson Alumni Hall (entrance on 11<sup>th</sup> Street just  
above Locust) which is very handy. *(Please note that we are in the  
process of updating the garages and prices and this will be  
completed during the fall months.)*

Our meeting on Friday, March 18, 2011 will feature another in our continuing series of Railroadiana Auctions. The meeting will be held in Room 139 on the ground floor of the Jefferson Alumni Hall. Registration for the auction will begin at **7:00 PM**, with no business meeting conducted. Rules for the auction will be found on Page 2 of this issue. The auctioneer's gavel sounds at **7:30 PM**, and the auction will continue until approximately 9:00 PM, at which time all unsold material will be returned to the sellers. The Chapter again has much donated material to be offered for sale, and as a result, members are urged to try and limit the amount of items they are offering for sale.

The evening begins with our usual optional sit-down dinner in the Eakins Lounge, ground floor, Jefferson Alumni Hall, beginning at 6:15 PM, at a cost of \$20.00 per person. **DINNER RESERVATIONS ARE MANDATORY and MUST BE MADE BY TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 15, 2011 to National Director Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769**. The menu for the March 18 dinner had not been finalized by Jefferson's Catering Department by the deadline for this issue of *Cinders*. The entrée choices will be put on Larry Eastwood's answering machine on Saturday, March 12, 2011. The Chapter needs to meet a minimum guarantee of 18 meals in order to provide a meeting room for members. Come out for dinner before our meeting. It's an enjoyable full-course meal, plus informal conversation, all priced at an affordable \$20.00 per person.



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 Thomas Jefferson University Alumni Hall, 1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA. Check at Security Desk in Lobby for exact dinner and meeting room location. Dinner (optional) at 6:15 PM (\$20.00 per person), Meeting at 7:30 PM. No meeting July or August.

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES:** \$54.00 per person, which includes Chapter and National dues. Chapter-only dues \$18.00 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.

Individuals interested in supporting Philadelphia Chapter and its local rail preservation activities may become a part of Philadelphia Railfriends. This non-membership category is available for an annual contribution of \$25.00. Forward remittance, payable to "Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS" to the Chapter's P. O. Box above, indicating it is for "Philadelphia Railfriends".

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

If your *Cinders* is received damaged or incomplete, please contact the Editor at the address above to receive a replacement copy. Requests may also be made by telephone to 215-947-5769, or by E-mail to [reastwood2@comcast.net](mailto:reastwood2@comcast.net).

## Have You Ordered Your Banquet Tickets?

Tickets for Philadelphia Chapter's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet have been selling. The most recent update was as of the Chapter's February 18 meeting, when 43 of the 100 tickets were already spoken for. Don't miss out on this milestone event!!

Scheduled for 6:00 PM on Saturday, April 9, the banquet will be held at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant, 1201 Filbert Street, downtown Philadelphia. Ticket orders must be received by the Chapter on or before Friday, April 1, 2011, and availability is subject to the capacity of the banquet room.

The featured banquet speaker will be Rob McGonigal, Editor of *Classic Trains* Magazine. Rob is a Philadelphia Chapter member and a native of Glenside, Montgomery County. The Banquet Order Form will be found on Page 9 of February *Cinders*.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!! Regarding our Dinner/Meeting at Thomas Jefferson University

Philadelphia Chapter has been notified by the Catering Manager at Thomas Jefferson University that the Faculty Club we have been having dinner and meetings in for several years is no longer available to us because it is going to be converted into a computer laboratory.

For our March, May and June, 2011 meetings, our optional dinner will be in the Eakins Lounge, on the first floor of the Alumni Hall. Our March meeting will be in Room 139 on the ground floor, and our May and June meetings will be in Room 207 of the Alumni Hall. We will post a notice with the Security Officer as you enter the building for your convenience. Please look for it. Please remember, there will be **NO MEETING** in April due to the Banquet.

### PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS 2011 RAILRODIANA AUCTION RULES

The following rules will apply to our 2011 Railrodiana Auction:

1. Minimum bid on any one lot is \$2; increments in bidding will be in multiples of 50 cents, please.
2. Each seller is limited to a **MAXIMUM** of eight (8) lots of material. You will be assigned a seller number at registration and given forms to identify each lot to be sold. Each item must be listed separately on the form. **EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO ROTATE LOTS, GIVING EQUAL EXPOSURE.**
3. Each **BUYER** will be given a **BIDDER NUMBER**. In an effort to speed the auction, payment on all items will not be made until the **END** of the auction, or until the bidder is finished bidding on lots. Settlement for items sold **SHOULD BE MADE** at the end of the evening providing sufficient cash is on hand. Chapter officers are in control of the auction, and reserve the right to reject any material offered for sale not considered in the best interest of the bidders. The Chapter retains 20 percent of sale proceeds.

### HUCKSTERING OF RAILRODIANA ON THE SIDE IN THE AUCTION ROOM IS DISCOURAGED WHILE THE AUCTION IS IN PROGRESS!

We urge you to dig through your attics and come up with some material for sale, and fill your wallet so you may also bid!! Contribution of lots of material to the Chapter are always welcome as a means of raising additional funds for Chapter projects.

Don't miss Philadelphia Chapter's Railrodiana Auction, Friday evening, March 18, 2011. Bring a friend along to enjoy this fun evening! Add some needed items to your railrodiana collection!!

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

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



# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.



**SEPTA  
TRANSIT**

SEPTA has decided to move forward with its long-delayed plan to develop a new state-of-the-art fare collection system. In late January the SEPTA board approved an agreement with the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp. to borrow \$175 million for the so-called "smart card" project, which would provide a system in which riders "swipe" credit cards or other fare instruments rather than use the present passes, tokens and transfers. The plan could include the much-criticized "one-way" fare system on Regional Rail, but that is still under consideration. The U.S. DOT earlier had denied SEPTA's application for a \$30-million grant to pay for the first phase of what is officially known as the "New Payment Technology" project (see September, December *Cinders*). The low-interest PIDC loan will allow SEPTA to award a contract later this year to begin developing the smart-card system. At the same meeting the SEPTA board approved the issuance of up to \$250 million in revenue bonds to partially fund the purchase of the 120 new Silverliner V MU cars currently under construction (see February *Cinders*). The bonds also will provide \$23 million of the \$27.2-million cost to renovate the Wayne Junction Regional Rail station.

The Commonwealth Foundation, a conservative think tank in Harrisburg, is at it again. In a long list of recommendations to Governor Corbett, the group repeats its proposal that SEPTA and other mass transit agencies in the State be forced to seek bids from private contractors to operate some of their services. The same organization made the same suggestion a year ago, but it never was considered by the Legislature.....SEPTA this year is offering its one-day Independence Pass for the Philadelphia Flower Show, set for the Pennsylvania Convention Center March 6-13. The pass costs \$11 per person or \$28 for a family, and is in lieu of the special "Bouquet Pass" of years before .....The NBC10 early-morning TV newscast originated in SEPTA's control Center on Wednesday, January 5. News Anchor Terry Ruggles did another of his broadcasts away from the Channel 10 studios, giving viewers a tour of the "high-tech heaven," as he called the SEPTA facility, which oversees all of SEPTA's operations. Control Center Chief Ron Hopkins led the two-hour tour..... Because Congress has been unable to agree on a new surface transportation bill, efforts are being made to pass yet another extension of the expired SAFETEA law to fund highway and transit projects. The latest extension would be until the end of the current fiscal year on September 30. President Obama has proposed to replacing SAFETEA with a six-year, \$556-billion Federal program to fund transportation improvements—highway, rail and transit—over the next six years. Meanwhile, the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, headed by Republican Representative John Mica of Florida, is traveling around the country to take public testimony on what should be in the new surface transportation bill. This is the committee that will write the legislation.

SEPTA's trolley and bus lines experienced numerous problems during the snow and ice storms in January and early February. Perhaps the most difficult was the storm on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 25-26, which dumped 15.1 inches of snow on the City and even produced some flashes of lightning and claps of thunder. A snow emergency was declared for the period, as road conditions throughout the region became hazardous. SEPTA tried to keep most bus lines running on Wednesday but halted all bus service effective at 11 PM, when a Control Center manager said "we knew we were falling apart at the seams." Over 150 vehicles became stuck during the evening—along with their drivers—and had to be towed. Some passengers decided to remain on board overnight and at least stay warm! The Market-Frankford Line and Broad Street subway continued to run rail service through the early hours of Thursday the 27th, in place of the usual Nite Owl buses. The City tried to recover on Thursday, but many workers elected to stay home for the day and Philadelphia schools as well as many in the suburbs were closed. Regional Rail soldiered on both Wednesday and Thursday, but most trains ran late and there were numerous annulments (see below).

By dawn on Thursday morning the region was virtually shut down. Highways and streets were treacherous but got better as the day wore on. SEPTA gradually began phasing its buses back into operation, although dozens of routes were still out of service in late afternoon. Trolley routes were running, with delays, except for Route 15 Girard Avenue which was suspended. (By afternoon buses were substituting for trolleys on Route 15.) Market-Frankford and Broad Street trains were making all stops and the Norristown High Speed Line offered only local service at 15-minute intervals. Over the 48-hour period more than 800 flights were cancelled into and out of International Airport, stranding thousands of passengers. As it did on Wednesday, PATCO operated a snow schedule on Thursday morning, meaning that all trains ran as locals. NJ TRANSIT, which also had suspended bus service in South Jersey, began resuming operations around 10 AM Thursday. River Line light rail between Camden and Trenton was running on a Sunday schedule but for a time was suspended between the Walter Rand Center and the waterfront due to snow-packed streets. During the morning NJT's Atlantic City trains were turning back at Cherry Hill because the Delair bridge over the Delaware River was stuck in the open position.

Philadelphia escaped yet another snowstorm on Wednesday, February 2, but some freezing rain that morning deposited up to a half-inch of ice in the suburbs. Service was suspended that morning on the Route 101-102 Media and Sharon Hill trolley lines, until cars with ice-cutting shoes were run over both lines. Close to 175,000 homes and businesses lost electric service because ice brought down power lines in the suburban counties, but the City itself was little affected .....The day before, on Tuesday, several accidents delayed transit service. Around 11 AM Route 10 car #9093, moving at low speed, struck the rear of Route 34 car #9043 at

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# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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Juniper Street station. Several slight injuries were reported and eight other trolleys were held in the tunnel until service resumed at 11:55 AM. Shortly before 2 PM the same day a fire broke out in a storage shed at the Girard Avenue station of the Broad Street subway, putting out considerable smoke. The blaze was quickly extinguished but the line was shut down until almost 7 PM, stranding thousands of riders. SEPTA dispatched dozens of shuttle buses to pick them up at nearby stations where their trains had been stopped. Then, about 4:45 PM a Route 17 bus collided with a school bus at 19<sup>th</sup> & Moore Streets, injuring ten riders on the SEPTA bus and the one child on the school bus..... We earlier neglected to report an incident which occurred last November 29. A 21-year-old man was killed that afternoon when he jumped in front of a westbound Market-Frankford train at the 34<sup>th</sup> Street station, forcing service to be temporarily suspended between 30<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Streets. Shuttle buses carried passengers between those stations.



## SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL

As of mid-February SEPTA had a total of eight Silverliner V cars on the property. The three original "pilot" cars, #701 and married pair #801-802, resumed revenue service on Monday, January 31, while the first three production cars, #703 and 803-804, began road testing. Another married set, #805-806, was received from Hyundai-Rotem on February 18. Starting Monday, February 21, SEPTA rolled out a five-car train consisting of 701-801-802-803-804 which for the first week at least was assigned to a regular Lansdale-Bryn Mawr turn in the morning and Elwyn-Norristown in the afternoon. Four more cars should arrive by late March, according to a press report, and the whereabouts of #702, which was sent to Canada last year for climate testing, is not known as this is written. Unless the pace of deliveries is speeded up, it is unlikely that more than 50 of the 120 new cars could be in revenue service by the end of this year. Hyundai-Rotem originally committed to delivering nine cars per month..... With production of the Silverliner V's lagging well behind schedule and a chronic shortage of serviceable cars, SEPTA may be taking another look at leasing some of NJ TRANSIT's stored Comet coaches and one or more ALP-44 locomotives. The only ALP-44 currently on the SEPTA roster is #2308..... High-level platforms have been installed at the historic ex-Pennsy Allen Lane station on the Chestnut Hill West Line, and the distinctive wooden pedestrian overpass has been rebuilt. Only the curved iron girders and some timbers remain, but the replacement roof and sidings were styled to resemble the original. The wooden inbound shelter was taken down and rebuilt on top of the high-level platform..... The new northbound high-level platform at Ambler station is in service, complementing the southbound high-level platform completed a year earlier.

The last of the "weekly snowstorms" struck the Philadelphia region on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, January 25-26. With the Regional Rail car fleet already stretched thin, many trains were shorted cars and delays were rampant, especially on Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> when the City was virtually shut down. On Wednesday, during a lull in the two-headed storm, service ran reasonably well, with just 15 trains reported short of cars. But the next day, in the wake of the storm, the Weather Service reported an official 15.1 inches at International Airport, and Regional Rail became a disaster area. A total of 386 trains out of a scheduled total of 739 ran late—40 percent of them by more than 20 minutes—and 63 trains were annulled. Fortunately, many businesses and schools in the region were closed and thousands of commuters decided to stay at home. Things got better on Friday the 28<sup>th</sup>, with only 262 trains late and seven annulled, but one of the annulments was push-pull #6374 **Pennypack Limited** to West Trenton. AEM-7 #2304 could not muster the power to pull its train up the hill after emerging from the tunnel, and had to back up to Market East Station where passengers were transferred. More than 20 trains were shorted cars just during the morning rush. The equipment shortages were confined to the 292-car electric MU fleet but passengers on board the push-pull trains also experienced delays, usually due to locomotive problems. By the third week of February, thanks in part to good weather, the service crunch had eased as several ailing cars were returned to service.

What everyone hoped was the final storm of the winter struck the area on Wednesday morning, February 2. But instead of snow this event turned out to be mostly freezing rain, which laid down a hazardous coating of ice in the northern suburbs. And to make matters worse ice coated the trolley wires on several Regional Rail lines, so SEPTA dispatched two "ice-cutting" trains to clear the wires. Unfortunately, the ice eventually forced down their pantographs, causing the four-car train on the Fox Chase Line (#216-269-223-207) near Cheltenham to lose power and the three-car train (#9012-230-206) on the Warminster Line to stall north of Willow Grove. All lines experienced delays that morning, with 194 trains reported late and 49 other trains annulled, including seven on the Trenton line due to an AMTRAK power failure. That same afternoon catenary wires came down on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor west of Morrisville and on the Harrisburg mainline west of Paoli, delaying numerous Amtrak and SEPTA trains.

Some Paoli-Thorndale riders were treated to an unusual experience on Tuesday, February 8, when push-pull trains #9526 and #9561 **Great Valley Flyer** ran with doubleheaded locomotives. AEM-7's 2303 and 2306 powered the trains because the first unit had traction power but no head-end-power and the second unit had HEP but no traction power! Both locomotives had failed the day before, #2303 on train #6321 **Neshaminy Limited** out of West Trenton and #2306 on express #9538 from Thorndale. The **Limited** did get going and made it to town a half-hour late but #9538 had to be annulled. New Chapter Member Max Shein captured a photo of the doubleheaded **Flyer** #9561 racing through Narberth on Tuesday afternoon. The pair of AEM-7's stayed together the rest of the week and on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> they were still powering #9561 when the throttle on #2303 got stuck in reverse at Paoli and its train had to be annulled for the rest of the run to Thorndale. Passengers were transferred to #9559 and AMTRAK #651.

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# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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The moderate snowfall on Tuesday morning, February 22, created relatively few problems for Regional Rail, with 77 trains reporting minor weather-related delays..... Early on Monday, February 21, catenary wires fell on top of stored trains on all four tracks in West Trenton yard, as well as over part of the CSX #2 main track. Four rush-hour trains had to be annulled because their equipment was trapped and numerous other trains departed late. Repairs were completed before the afternoon rush.....In a bizarre incident at Market East Station on Thursday, February 24, overhead power was lost on tracks #3 and 4 for a few minutes around 5:10 PM. The cause? Inflated balloons were fouling the wires! Power was restored but around 6 PM another balloon shot the line. At least ten trains were delayed because a child lost control of his or her balloons ..... Gusty winds on Saturday morning, February 19, caused some delays on the Fox Chase, Warminster and West Trenton lines as trees and branches were blown onto the rights-of-way. A roof at North Philadelphia station was damaged.....The new Sunday service to and from Wilmington is to begin on March 6 to accommodate passengers attending the Philadelphia Flower Show at the Convention Center (see January *Cinders*). This is one week ahead of the general timetable change on March 13.

SEPTA's Planning Department, which last July engineered the "rebranding" of Regional Rail service, has backed away from one of the key elements of that effort. In addition to eliminating the "R" route designations, the planning people also insisted on going to a generic blue-gray color for all timetables, thereby making it harder for riders accustomed to color-coded folders to select the desired issue. As we said here in September's column, some riders lamented the loss of the color-coding, and evidently the sentiments of those unhappy customers became loud enough to force SEPTA to alter the timetable design. It was announced last month that effective with the March 13 reissue each of the 13 individual timetables will sport a distinctive color stripe across the top of the front panel—but not the same color as before. For example, the former R5 timetables were printed in blue, but the new folders will have a green stripe for Paoli-Thorndale and a brown stripe for Lansdale-Doylestown issues. The next step will be to produce new, more readable plastic destination signs for the trains, with white lettering on a charcoal black background instead of the current blue-gray hue.



**NORTHEAST  
REGIONAL**

**AMTRAK**

The next few weeks and months could determine AMTRAK's future for some time to come. With the new Republican-controlled House of Representatives bent on fulfilling campaign promises to slash the Federal deficit, many government activities already have been targeted for funding cuts—Amtrak being one of them. On February 19 the House passed a \$1.2-trillion budget (H.R. 1) for the balance of the current fiscal year, which would cut \$61 billion in discretionary spending from the President's budget. This reduction would have to be accomplished in the remaining seven months of FY 2011. For the first five months the government has been operating under a so-called continuing resolution which authorizes spending at the FY 2010 level, but that authority will expire on March 4. If a new budget is not approved by then or another extension passed, a partial shutdown of the Federal government could result. Assuming the

House bill is approved intact by the Senate—which is unlikely—Amtrak's funding would be reduced by \$152 million in this fiscal year, from the 2010 level of \$1.565 billion to \$1.413 billion. Amtrak said that a cut of that magnitude would force the layoff of 1,600 employees, including 400 mechanics, and end most of the heavy overhauls of cars and locomotives. But earlier the House rejected a much more draconian measure to cut \$447 million from Amtrak's FY 2011 appropriation, as 60 Republicans joined Democrats to defeat the effort. Amtrak had requested \$2.2 billion and President Obama budgeted \$1.6 billion for the current fiscal year (NARP).

When President Obama submitted his proposed budget last month for Fiscal Year 2012 beginning this October 1, he did not ask for a direct appropriation to AMTRAK. Instead, he seemed intent on shielding Amtrak from the usual political wrangling in Congress by giving the Federal Railroad Administration the authority to dole out funding for the railroad. In Obama's plan an expanded Transportation Trust Fund would replace the present Highway Trust Fund as a mechanism for providing money to highways, transit and now intercity passenger railroads. This could be a favorable development as long as there is a rail-friendly Administration in power, but could be problematic if a future President became hostile to Amtrak. The FY 2012 budget plan includes \$8 billion for all intercity passenger rail, including Amtrak, with half of it for high-speed network development and the other half for preserving the existing intercity rail system. The plan also calls for establishing a \$30-billion "national infrastructure bank" that would combine public and private money to build or improve all modes of transportation and create about 5.4 million construction jobs and ten million more jobs in the broader economy (NARP, *Trains*).

The \$8 billion contained in President Obama's Fiscal Year 2012 budget is regarded as a down payment on a total of \$53 billion to be spent on high-speed rail and related services over the next six years. Vice President Biden announced the plan during an event at 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station on February 8, a week before the budget was officially sent to Congress. In his State of the Union message on January 25 Obama had said his goal is to make high-speed rail accessible to 80 percent of Americans within 25 years. But many in Congress disagree, including the chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Republican John Mica of Florida, who said, "Rather than focusing on the Northeast Corridor, the most congested corridor in the nation and the only corridor owned by the Federal government, the Administration continues to squander limited taxpayer dollars on marginal projects." But Mica later joined a bipartisan effort to save the \$2.4 billion in Federal funding already awarded to his home state for a proposed high-speed rail line between Orlando and Tampa, which newly-elected Republican governor Rick Scott had rejected.

AMTRAK in late January released the first of four locomotives to be decked out in a retro paint scheme, in honor of the railroad's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. General Electric P42 #145 is resplendent in the late-'80's-early '90's "Phase III" livery of a red, white and blue band running the length of the unit and around the nose, plus the original Amtrak lettering on the sides and the years "1971" and "2011." It made its first revenue run on the **Capitol Limited** leaving Chicago for Washington on January 30. At *Cinders'* presstime, #145 had not been reported as seen in the Philadelphia area. The next unit to receive the Phase III paint scheme will be P40 #822, and other locomotives will get the Phase I, Phase II and Phase IV schemes (*Amtrak Ink*).....

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# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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In its annual funding request sent to Congress last month, AMTRAK is asking for \$2.22 billion for operating and capital support in Fiscal Year 2012 beginning October 1. Part of the money would be used to purchase 40 new Acela coaches, with two cars to be added to each of the existing six-car trains. This would increase seating capacity by 130 per train and help eliminate the sellouts that often occur. The Acelas carried more than 3.2 million passengers during the last fiscal year.

AMTRAK also is seeking \$50 million to begin preliminary design and engineering work on its "Gateway Project," as announced last month, for two new tunnels under the Hudson River to New York City. The Gateway Project, estimated to cost \$13.5 billion over the next ten years, is the successor to NJ TRANSIT's failed "Access to the Region's Core" (ARC) scheme which New Jersey Governor Christie killed last October for fear of cost overruns (see November, December *Cinders*). As pointed out by Amtrak President Joseph Boardman, a major difference in the two projects is that Amtrak's tunnels would be directed to Penn Station and the planned Moynihan station adjacent to it, rather than into a dead-end, deep-cavern station beneath 34<sup>th</sup> Street as envisioned in the earlier plan. Unlike ARC, the proposed tunnels could be used both by Amtrak and NJT trains, effectively doubling the capacity of the existing 100-year-old tunnels. The new project also would include replacement of the 1910-vintage Portal bridge over the Hackensack River east of Newark.

Philadelphia's 30<sup>th</sup> Street is "America's finest railroad station." Or so *Trains* declared in an interesting article by Kevin Keefe in the March issue of the magazine. While offering several other candidates for the title, Keefe concluded that for all-around merit this "grand monument" takes the crown. Now the second-busiest station in the AMTRAK system, 30<sup>th</sup> Street was completed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1934 although parts of the vast structure had been opened to the public in earlier years ..... In a recent press release AMTRAK points out that the Federal government has invested \$36 billion in the railroad over the past 40 years, compared with \$421 billion in aviation and at least a trillion dollars in highways over the same period of time ..... The FRA has announced a \$750,000 grant to Pennsylvania to study the feasibility of expanding AMTRAK's Keystone Corridor via the NORFOLK SOUTHERN mainline from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh. Dedicated passenger tracks and possible electrification will be examined (NARP).....AMTRAK carried 2.1 million people in January, a 4.6-percent increase over January 2010 and the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive month of ridership increases ..... Representative Darrell Issa of California, the new Republican chairman of the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee, reportedly wants AMTRAK Chairman Thomas Carper and General Counsel Eleanor Acheson dismissed. The two officials have been accused of unlawfully interfering with Amtrak's former inspector general in his investigations of waste and fraud at the railroad (Tranorders.com).

AMTRAK had some very difficult days during the storms of late January and early February, not just in the Northeast but in the Midwest and mountain states as well. On Monday, January 24, the Northeast was hit by an arctic blast of cold air, with the mercury falling to six degrees in New York City that morning. Because of the frigid weather Amtrak was forced to reduce speeds on the Northeast Corridor. When HHP-8 #661

became disabled at Princeton Junction, its train #181 was terminated around 7 AM, causing delays to a number of Amtrak and NJT trains of up to 30 minutes. Passengers were transferred to trains #79 and 183. Empire Service had to be suspended during the day between New York City and Albany. The winter weather generally was taking a toll on AMTRAK's electric locomotive fleet, with numerous failures of the 49 aging AEM-7's and 13 newer HHP-8's (see February *Cinders*). This resulted in delays as some trains had to wait for available motive power and, in a few cases, diesels were substituted under the wires north of Washington. But *Trains* reported that the 199 active General Electric-built P42 diesels also were failing at an alarming rate—a few even catching fire—with almost a quarter of the fleet sidelined for repairs in mid-February. This has resulted in seriously delayed train departures or road failures throughout the system. The first of 70 new ACS-64 electrics are due to start arriving in early 2013.

The heavy snowfall of Tuesday-Wednesday January 25-26 brought numerous delays to Corridor service, especially on the "day after," Thursday the 27th. Once again, AMTRAK cancelled service between New York, Boston and Springfield, but gradually began resuming operations later that morning with Regional train #93 and Acela Express #2163 the first trains out of Boston. Passengers traveling between New York, Philadelphia and Washington experienced some delays but service improved during the day. Signal power was lost over a 20-mile stretch in Maryland early that morning, delaying six trains. The next day, Friday, HHP-8 #664 shut down with train #170 near New Brunswick, NJ, and the train was terminated. Its passengers were transferred to following train #170. On Sunday morning, January 30, train #150 was terminated at Wilmington because of air pressure problems in AEM-7 #916. Passengers transferred to train #160. The next day another train, #180 with HHP-8 #658, was terminated at Wilmington due to air leaks on two of the coaches. Passengers boarded following train #130.

The snow and ice storm that struck the Philadelphia area on Wednesday morning, February 2, caused some grief for Northeast Corridor customers. Service between Trenton and New York was halted for a time around 6 AM when traction and signal power failed. Full power was restored by 9 AM but delays of 30-45 minutes to AMTRAK, SEPTA and NJT trains continued. The storm was worse to the north and east, forcing some cancellations between New York and Boston and New York and Albany. Service along the Corridor was back to normal the next day. A bizarre incident occurred on February 3 when Regional train #111 collided with a bald eagle in flight near Aberdeen, MD. According to a press report the bird was surprised by the train as it was dining on a deer carcass that had been killed by an earlier train. When #111 arrived at Washington the eagle was found impaled on the front of the locomotive (*Trains*, NARP, Trainorders.com).



**CSX, NS,  
OTHER ROADS.**

Railway Age Magazine's "Railroader of the Year" for 2010, NORFOLK SOUTHERN CEO Wick Moorman, gave a lengthy interview in the magazine's January issue. In addition to sounding very upbeat about the future of the freight railroad

(Continued on Page 7)



# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 6)

industry, he called the ex-Pennsy, ex-CONRAIL, now-NS locomotive shop at Altoona "an absolute jewel." He said that it is "a great advantage to our company to have the capabilities and the workforce that we do in Altoona." Moorman also joked that "my mother apparently dropped me when I was very young. I landed on my head and when she picked me up, the only difference was that my brain was slightly addled and I loved trains. I was always interested in the railroad business and always kind of a railfan, if you will."

As advertised, the 59-car Ringling Bros. Red Unit circus train arrived in South Philadelphia on February 15 via CSX, and departed on the 21<sup>st</sup> for Newark, NJ, also via CSX. The new "Fully Charged" show played at the Wells Fargo (formerly Wachovia) Center February 16-20.....Federal Express is now using NS to move less-than-truckload traffic between Chicago and Harrisburg, Chicago and Atlanta and Harrisburg-Atlanta. Until recently, FedEx was a holdout against rail intermodal service, which has been used for decades by United Parcel Service and the Postal Service (*Trains*).....The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last month that CSX can challenge in court a special tax in Alabama on railroad fuel. CSX maintains that discriminatory taxes against railroads are prohibited by the Railroad Revitalization & Regulatory Reform Act of 1976, commonly known as the "4R Act" (*Trains*).....The new chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, John Mica of Florida, told the *Journal of Commerce* in January that he hopes to push several measures to help shift more freight traffic from highway to rail—a goal similar to that stated by President Obama.

NJ TRANSIT Executive Director James Weinstein last month expressed support for AMTRAK's "Gateway Project," which would build two new rail tunnels under the Hudson River (see above). Weinstein said the new tunnels linking North Jersey with Penn Station in Manhattan would allow NJT to run 13 additional trains each hour as compared with the limited capacity in Amtrak's existing 100-year-old tunnels. But, he said, the new tunnels obviously would be shared with Amtrak and would not give NJT as much added capacity as the cancelled ARC project would have.....NJT has named Kevin O'Connor as its new vice president & general manager of rail operations. He joined NJT in 2002 after 20 years with AMTRAK.....NJT has approved a \$22-million contract to equip all of its buses to provide real-time information to customers with smart phones. These "smart buses" will transmit information so that riders can get reports on where their buses are located, which sounds similar to SEPTA's proposed "BusView" program.....The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce took its annual rail excursion to Washington on a snowy January 27. Governor Christie gave the keynote speech at the Chamber's 74<sup>th</sup> annual dinner, but he did not ride the chartered AMTRAK train.

After gale-force winds blew some containers off an NS intermodal train crossing the Rockville bridge near Harrisburg in December (see January *Cinders*), the railroad took precautions when another strong storm approached on February 18. A string of coal hoppers was parked on the bridge to shield the relatively-light intermodal trains as they crossed (Keith Latimer) ..... CSX has rebuilt ten of its 30-year-old SD40-2 locomotives into state-of-art SD40-3's at its Huntington (WV) shop. Numbered

4000-4009, the units feature an angular short hood rather than the wide nose standard on new units (*Railfan & Railroad*) .....Those new signal masts that CSX has erected on its mainline along the Schuylkill River near Race Street in center-city Philadelphia reportedly will become "quiet signals" rather than interlocking signals. According to a CSX source, the signals will indicate to approaching trains that the locomotive horns need not be sounded at the pedestrian crossing which links the Schuylkill Trail with Race Street, if the proposed safety gates at the crossing are closed. The City will be responsible for installing the gates at some future time. The Friends of Schuylkill River Park, an advocacy group, states on its website that the plan to build a pedestrian bridge over the CSX tracks at Locust Street is still very much alive.

Those 15 ex-American Orient Express cars to be used on the proposed ultra-luxury "Greenbrier Express" arrived at Pottstown in a chartered AMTRAK train on January 26 (see February *Cinders*). Ross Rowland, Jr., president of Greenbrier Express and a name familiar to railfans for his many steam excursions in years past, has released a video describing the car rebuilding program to be carried out in a former Bethlehem Steel shop building at Pottstown. The "Greenbrier Express" is to operate between Washington, DC, and White Sulphur Springs, WV, via the route of the **Cardinal**, beginning in the summer of 2012. While the train would powered by ex-NS C39-8 diesels, reports persist that Rowland wants to rebuild his ex-Chesapeake & Ohio 4-8-4 #614, now on display in Roanoke, VA, for use over part of the route.....In late January the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society finally was able to move three of its long-stored diesels from Winslow Junction, NJ, to Scranton. The units, which were handled in a special train via CONRAIL - NS - DELAWARE-LACKAWANNA, are ex-Lehigh Valley Alco C420 #414, an Alco FA2 lettered for New York Central and an EMD F3B painted in Jersey Central colors.. The two Alcos will go to the D-L shop, which specializes in Alcos, and after restoration the B-unit will be used to form an A-B-A set with ARHS's two ex-Bangor & Aroostook F3A units currently at Steamtown, which have been restored as "Lackawanna" #663-664 (ARHS).

The Railroad Retirement Board reports that more than 67,000 railroad workers, or 30-percent of the workforce, will be eligible to retire over the next five years. As a result, major railroads are planning to recruit many new employees, and can cite government data showing that in the year 2009 the average railroader earned \$81,653 in wages or salary and \$12,665 in benefits (NARP).....The tax-cut bill passed by Congress and signed by President Obama in December includes a provision much sought-after by shortlines and regional railroads. It allows the railroads to claim a tax credit of 50 cents for each dollar spent on capital improvements, up to \$3,500 per mile of track, in Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011. The same provision had expired at the end of FY 2009 in spite of bipartisan support for its continuance. A bill to extend the tax credit to 2017 was introduced in Congress last month (*Railway Age, Trains*) ..... Former NS C39-8 diesel locomotives #8202 and 8211, previously stored on the NEW HOPE & IVYLAND (see December *Cinders*), will be relettered for use on the new PENNSYLVANIA NORTHEAST RAILROAD out of Lansdale, as mentioned here last month (Richard Adams).....WINCHESTER & WESTERN has bought SD9m #54 from NORFOLK SOUTHERN and repainted it as W&W #954 for service in South Jersey. This 1957-vintage ex-Nickel Plate unit is W&W's first six-axle locomotive (*Railpace*).



## Dining on the Reading

The Reading-New Jersey Central dining car department was organized in April, 1905, with the late S. W. Derr as superintendent. After the purchase of equipment and supplies, and the location of commissary was settled, the dining cars themselves started to operate on Monday, June 12 of the same year.

At the time operation was started there were six café cars seating 16 persons in the dining room at eight two-seat tables, and 18 leather chairs in the club end. These cars were modern at that time, being equipped with gas for illumination. Four of these cars were used in regular line service between Philadelphia and New York; the other two cars being held in reserve for relief purposes and special business.

The meal service was a la carte for breakfast and lunch and a table d'hôte dinner was served in the evening. This character of service was continued up until the time the United States entered the World War (I), when Government regulations were enforced and platter meals served on a restricted basis. There were numerous meatless days, wheatless days, etc., and for one period of six months' duration the dining car service, not only on this road but all railroads in the United States, operated without the use of wheat flour in any form—the operators were allowed a certain percentage of rice flour, corn meal, etc., with which to make bread. Also, during this period patrons were restricted to one teaspoonful of sugar each. However, the dining cars did considerable business as similar restrictions were in force in most all restaurants and hotels. After the war the meal service was restored to straight a la carte for breakfast, lunch and dinner and this character of service was continued until April 24, 1927, at which time the present type of club breakfasts, lunches and dinners was put into effect.

Few people knew that liquor was withdrawn from the dining cars on this road, and most all other eastern roads, in July 1912, which was eight years before Prohibition, and was not restored in any form until May 1, 1933, when permission was

received to sell beer of an alcoholic strength not exceeding 3.2 percent. In December, 1933, with the advent of Repeal, the alcoholic content of beer was increased to 4.7 percent. The Reading-New Jersey Central dining cars restored spirituous liquors on April 3, 1934.

The character of the liquor business on dining cars has changed considerable since the old days. "When I first started in the business years ago," said W. M. Shaw, superintendent, "there was a great deal of champagne, clarets, sauternes, white wine, etc., served on dining cars; some of the larger railroads still carry a limited amount of these wines, but on our line, due principally to the short hauls, our patrons probably satisfy themselves in the large cities of Philadelphia and New York, as we have had no demand whatever for table wines."

Today the Reading-New Jersey Central dining car department has a total of 16 cars, ten of which are in daily operation. The cars are air-conditioned and equipped with modern furniture. The dining cars are operated on a very close schedule and it is frequently necessary to switch them from one run to another on short notice in order to cover trains.

There are none of the original employees of this department left in the service, however. Daniel Turner and John Cornell, stewards of official cars 10 and 15, were two of the original waiters, who have been in the dining car service for a great number of years. Mr. Shaw has just completed 25 years in the service of this department.

The dining car department, like all other departments of the railroad, and other lines of business, has felt the hand of depression, and has had to economize in every manner in order to reduce losses which, as should be known, are great, not only on this road, but all railroads. However, in making these economies, never, in any way, hurt the service insofar as the traveling public is concerned. (*from the Reading-Jersey Central Magazine, printed in the NRHS Bulletin, January, 1937*)

## Philadelphia Chapter LCL (Less-than-Carload)

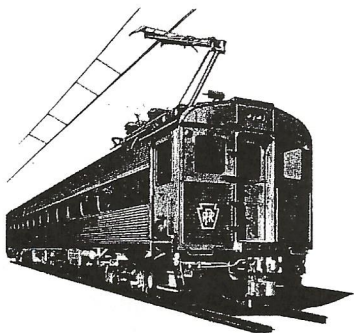
Sometimes, in the hustle and bustle of the everyday life we all lead, we neglect to say "Thank You" to individuals who do things for Philadelphia Chapter. These "behind-the-scenes" actions are important to the success of our activities.

Recently, Member **Kevin Feeny** gave an afternoon of his time to assist Editor Larry Eastwood in uploading and fine-tuning the Chapter's mailing list to a bar-coded format. At our January and February meetings, **Pete and Judy Senin** generously provided 2011 Orchard Supply wall calendars, with numerous railroad paintings to those members present.

## Silverliner Update

There have been a number of SEPTA Silverliner changes since our last update in the November, 2010 issue. During the week of February 21-25, Silverliner V's #701, 801-802 and 803-804 were in revenue service, operating on Trains 501 and 9530 in the morning, and Trains 9359, 3256 and 6271 in the afternoon/evening. Meanwhile, married pair #805 and 806 were moved by CSX to Woodbourne Yard for SEPTA to pick up, which was done on February 18. Car #703 is at Wayne Electric Shop, testing with the 805 and 806. Car #702, meanwhile is somewhere in limbo between Philadelphia and Ottawa, Canada, while Rotem attempts to resolve heating and air-conditioning issues. It was reported that single-car #704 would be delivered before the end of February.

During February, Budd Silverliner II's #205, 214, 251, 257 and St. Louis Silverliner III's #222, 224, 232, 234 and 237 were officially retired. The 214, which had been at Wayne Shop for a number of years, was scrapped on Wednesday, February 16 at Roberts Yard. Budds #208, 213, 219 and 9003 are out-of-service long-term. The 9006 and 9010, both reported stored in the November update, have been returned to active service.



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**MARCH 12, 2011:** 30<sup>th</sup> annual Canal History & Technology Symposium at William E. Simon Center, Lafayette College, Easton, PA, sponsored by the National Canal Museum. For further information, telephone the museum at 610-559-6613 (website: [www.canals.org](http://www.canals.org)).

**MARCH 13:** Scalefest Model Train Show, sponsored by Alto Model Train Museum Association, Blair County Convention Center, One Convention Center Drive, Altoona, PA (Plank Road exit off Interstate 99), 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Admission: \$4.00. For further information contact Gregg Miller at 814-695-3246, or visit website: [www.altoonatrains.com](http://www.altoonatrains.com).

**MARCH 19:** 25<sup>th</sup> annual Railroad Show & Collectors Market sponsored by Harrisburg Chapter NRHS, 9 AM-3 PM, at I. W. Abel Union Hall, 200 Gibson Street, Steelton, PA. Donation at door: \$5.00 per person. Railroadiana sales, movies, train layouts and model railroad items will be featured. For information, telephone 717-732-3867.

**MARCH 21:** West Jersey Chapter, NRHS regular monthly meeting, Haddon Heights Borough Hall, 625 Station Avenue (corner 7<sup>th</sup> & Station Avenues), Haddon Heights, NJ, 7:30 PM. Program will feature Kevin Painter with **Santa Fe Railroad Through the Years**. Kevin's photos have been assembled from the Library of Congress Archives and the Internet and will include locomotives, rolling stock and stations, and will be representative of the entire Santa Fe system.

**THROUGH MARCH 26, 2011:** "The Railroad in Delaware History" exhibit at Delaware History Museum, 504 Market Street, Wilmington, DE. Museum open Wednesdays-Fridays 11 AM-4 PM, Saturdays 10 AM-4 PM. Admission is free on Fridays. Extensive exhibit on Delaware's railroads is housed in former Woolworth store, a short walk from Amtrak's Wilmington station. For information, telephone 302-656-0637. **NOTE: We have been advised that this exhibit has been terminated!**

**APRIL 2:** "Spring Training" event at Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA, sponsored by *Railfan & Railroad Magazine* and NRHS. Multi-media slide shows and a night photo session will be featured. For information and reservations, telephone Steve Barry at 973-383-3355 weekdays.

**APRIL 3:** Reading Company Technical & Historical Society 8<sup>th</sup> annual spring Train Meet, at Leesport Farmers Market, off PA Route 61 in Leesport, PA, 9 AM to 2 PM. Railroadiana, model trains and accessories of all gauges, door prizes. Refreshments for sale on site. Admission: \$4 per adult. Additional information available evenings from Chuck at 610-777-2053, or Dale at 610-372-3759.

**APRIL 9:** Dinner and program celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Philadelphia Chapter NRHS, at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant, 12<sup>th</sup> & Filbert Streets, Philadelphia, adjacent to Reading Terminal Market. Program will be presented by *Classic Trains* Editor and Chapter Member Rob McGonigal. Tickets: \$50 per person. Order tickets from: Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. **Capacity limited to 100 persons. See Order Form on Page 9 of February Cinders.**

**APRIL 16 THROUGH DECEMBER 31:** Exhibit on railroad communications and signaling at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg. Displays, photographs, artifacts and videos will tell the story of railroad "C&S" over the years. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. For information, telephone 717-687-8628 (website: [www.rrmuseumpa.org](http://www.rrmuseumpa.org)).

**APRIL 30:** Regular monthly meeting of West Jersey Chapter, NRHS at the Audubon (NJ) Senior Center. Program will be presented by *Cinders* Editor Larry Eastwood, an updated edition of **60 Years of the Budd RDC, 1950-2010**. Full details in April issue.

**MAY 10:** Amtrak celebrates **National Train Day 2011** with a full program of festivities around the United States, with major observance at Philadelphia's 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station. The activities will run from 11 AM to 4 PM, and complete details will be available next issue – mark your calendar.

**MAY 13-14:** East Penn Traction Club will sponsor **20<sup>th</sup> National Model Trolley Meet** at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Avenue, Oaks, PA 19456. Layouts, displays and dealer tables. Additional information will be available in forthcoming issues of *Cinders*.

**MAY 13-15:** "Conrail Days" at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, jointly sponsored by Conrail Historical Society. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. For contact information, see April 16-December 31 item above.

**MAY 21:** Southampton Railroad Station Society presents its first annual "Armed Forces Day Railfest" at Klinger Middle School, 1415 Second Street Pike (PA Route 232) in Southampton, Bucks County, PA. Event will run from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Admission: adults \$5.00, children 12 and under free when accompanied by an adult. More details next issue.

**MAY-JUNE, 2011: Willow Grove 300:** A celebration of the Tricentennial of Willow Grove, PA. May different activities over the period, including a planned steam rail excursion from Willow Grove to New Hope, PA and return (final arrangements not yet known). For up-to-date information visit website: [www.willowgrove300.com](http://www.willowgrove300.com). Additional details expected in time for the April issue of *Cinders*.

## Members Phone/E-Mail Info Needed

Members will note new bar-coded address labels being used to mail *Cinders*. Chapter Member Kevin Feeney assisted Editor Larry Eastwood during January to update the Chapter's mailing list. Please insure that we have your **complete address**, to include apartment/condominium numbers where applicable.

As part of that information update, we would request members to provide us with their telephone numbers and E-mail addresses so that we will have an up-to-date database for contacting members. This may also come into play for possible future electronic distribution of *Cinders*. Update info may be E-mailed to the Chapter at this special E-mail address: [ayrestower@comcast.net](mailto:ayrestower@comcast.net) or to Editor Larry Eastwood at: Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353.



## Winter Woes Bedevil Transit Riders

(Continued from Page 1)

storm barreled eastward toward New England on Wednesday, February 2, passing to the north of Philadelphia, but it did cause some severe icing conditions in southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey. After that the weather moderated for a time and a warmup began around February 11 when the mercury reached 59 degrees. But another fast-moving storm on Monday night the 21<sup>st</sup> dropped four to six inches of powdery snow on the area, causing only a minimum of transit delays, before the sun emerged again.

Regional Rail service suffered the most during the earlier storms, to the point that on February 9 General Manager Joseph M. Casey issued a letter of apology to the public. While bus and trolley passengers had their problems as well, Casey focused on the railroad situation. In pointing out the advanced age of much of the rail car fleet, he said that "(w)inter conditions, especially snow and ice, have been hard on the equipment and we've experienced mechanical failures. In addition, many [spare] parts for our rail cars just don't exist anymore, and the only fix is rebuilding an old part, which is time-consuming and impedes our ability to make a quick repair and send a car back out." In fact, with at least ten percent of the 292 active MU electric cars out of service on certain days in late January, as many as 35 trains had to be shorted one or two cars. Obviously, this led to extremely crowded conditions on those trains. (There also are 53 push-pull coaches which must be hauled by locomotives.) Casey said the ultimate solution is delivery of the 120 new Silverliner V cars currently on order, but which have been painfully slow in arriving. "We tried rushing to get the Silverliner V cars into service but there are too many complex systems that need to be tested and accepted. We believe it's more important that things are done

correctly now so that the entire new rail fleet will perform at peak levels with a minimum of operational issues." Regional Rail carries an average of 132,000 passengers on a normal weekday.

As bad as SEPTA's situation seemed to be, some other operators were doing even worse. Early last month the president of Metro-North Railroad in New York issued a customer letter stating that the winter weather had a "devastating impact" on M-N's New Haven Line. On a daily basis, he said, there were close to 150 MU electric cars—40 percent of the fleet—out of service for repairs. He complained that nearly 70 percent of his New Haven MU's are more than 40 years old, but passengers should take heart because [like SEPTA and its Silverliner V's] there are new M8 cars on the way. As a result, Metro-North issued an emergency timetable reflecting a ten-percent cut in service effective from February 7 through March 4. And NJ Transit reported that January was its worst month for delays in the last six years. An NJT spokesman said that the poor on-time performance "is what you'd expect in a month of extreme weather." Riders on other commuter lines, including the Long Island, Maryland's MARC, Virginia Railway Express, Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad and Chicago's Metra system, also endured many frustrating train delays and cancellations during January and early February. Amtrak, too, was not immune to the weather, with numerous delays and even shutdowns of service reported (see below).

While the first half of winter 2010-2011 proved to be cold, snowy and dangerous throughout the northeastern U.S., the moderation in February gave weary residents—and transit riders—some hope that the worst was over. But the often-unpredictable month of March still lay ahead.

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