

CHANDERS

MARCH 2014



IN THIS ISSUE

The Winter That Just Keeps Coming.....	1, 6-8
Philadelphia Chapter Meeting Notice.....	1
Philadelphia Chapter News.....	2
Extra List.....	2
PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS, by Frank Tatnall.....	3

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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

The Winter That Just Keeps Coming.....

Meeting Cancellation Notice

In the event of snow, sleet or freezing rain on a Philadelphia Chapter meeting date, 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.

Meeting Notice

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2014

Room 121, Randell Hall (access through Main Hall main entrance, 3141 Chestnut Street – just east of 32nd) Drexel University, (three blocks from Amtrak/SEPTA/NJ Transit 30th Street Station (Easily accessible to all public transportation; at our recent meetings, there has been plenty of parking on Chestnut Street immediately in front of Main Hall – pay at the kiosks)

MEETING START TIME: 7:00 PM

Our meeting on **Friday, March 21, 2014** will feature a Power Point lecture presented by Daren Petroski, PE, Vice President Railroad & Transit Systems, Burns Engineering, Inc., of Philadelphia. Mr. Petroski will speak on the proposed “re-electricification” of Amtrak’s Harrisburg Line between “Zoo” tower in Philadelphia, and Paoli. This stretch of the former Pennsylvania Railroad electrification dates from 1915, with upgrades in 1938. The century-old infrastructure is deteriorated and has exceeded its life expectancy. Replacement of catenary structures and a new step-down substation at Bryn Mawr are part of this major project. Mark your calendar today and don’t miss this informative presentation. Guests are most welcome to attend.

Philadelphia Chapter is looking for programs for our April through June meeting dates. Members with suggestions are asked to contact either President Larry Eastwood or Senior Vice President Bill Thomas – contact information is on Page 2.

Transportation Struggles Continue

If you thought that January was the worst month of the winter, the gods of February beg to differ. The onslaught of snow, sleet and ice continued unabated in the Delaware Valley, with three major storms recorded just in the first half of the month. Even flooding became an issue in some areas when the melting cycle began. All modes of transportation—and the folks who use them—suffered through some very challenging times. Here is a day-by-day log of what happened to the rails, roads and airways in the Philadelphia area last month:

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3: A nasty nor’easter raced up from the South, dropping 8 inches of heavy, wet snow, jamming traffic on the expressways, causing power outages and forcing many schools to close for yet another “snow day.” PennDOT and other agencies had their snowplow crews hard at work, but fortunately highway traffic was lighter than usual as many people decided to stay home. In the big picture, though, it wasn’t a major disruption. On SEPTA, at least 53 Regional Rail trains were reported late and four annulled, while some 45 bus routes were either delayed, detoured or suspended. The Market-Frankford Line was running every ten minutes, less than its normal frequency, and trolley lines also suffered delays. Norristown High Speed Line trains ran every 15 minutes, but with no express service. By Tuesday SEPTA service was well into recovery, though 43 weather-related delays were reported on Regional Rail.

Amtrak also had delays on the Northeast Corridor, a few of them up to an hour, but otherwise ran full service on both Monday and Tuesday. The Keystone Service to Harrisburg was on a normal schedule. In New Jersey Governor Christie declared a state of emergency. NJ Transit said that it was experiencing train delays on the Corridor and elsewhere, as well as late-running buses, but systemwide cross-honoring of tickets between modes was in effect. PATCO said it was operating on time. Philadelphia International Airport instituted ground delays of over four hours for some flights, while as many as 350 others were cancelled.

(Continued on Page 6)

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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2014 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$68.00 per person, which includes National (\$50.00) and Chapter (\$18.00) dues. Additional Chapter membership 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 an Additional Chapter membership. Members joining this category are required to furnish Philadelphia Chapter with their home chapter and membership number. *Note: National NRHS dues are increased by \$11.00 for the year 2014.*

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, or by electronic mail to ayrestower@comcast.net.

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 ayrestower@comcast.net.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS Board of Directors Meeting Spring, 2014

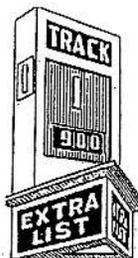
Passenger Services Conference Room
Amtrak 30th Street Station

Tuesday, April 8, 2014
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

Members of Philadelphia Chapter are
welcome and encouraged to attend

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!

If there is an **ORANGE DOT** near the address label on this issue of *Cinders*, then your **2004 NRHS and Chapter dues or Philadelphia Railfriends contribution has not been received, as of February 28. This will be your LAST issue unless you renew before the end of March!!**



Saturday, March 15: 28th Annual Harrisburg Railroad Show & Collectors Market, sponsored by Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS. Hours: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. Location: I. W. Abel Union Hall (Steelworkers' Union), 200 Gibson Street, Steelton, PA. Admission: \$5.00 per person (children under 12 free). Chapter advises its "Harris" tower museum adjacent to Amtrak station in Harrisburg will be open on this day (admission charge applies).

Saturday/Sunday, March 15-16: Greenberg's Train & Toy Show, at the Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison Avenue, Wilmington, DE 19801, 10 AM-4 PM both days. Admission: \$8.00 (good for both days), children 11 and under free.

Monday, March 24: Regular monthly meeting of West Jersey Chapter, NRHS, Haddon Heights Borough Hall, 625 Station Avenue (corner 7th Avenue), Haddon Heights, NJ, 7:30 PM. Program will feature Professional Photographer Dan Troy, speaking on great photo techniques. After his "clinic", Dan will present a sampling of his work featuring railroad operations in the scenic American West during the mergers of the last two decades.

Saturday, March 29: 4th annual Project 113 Slide Show, will take place at Christy Joy Catering Service, 141 Bulls Head Road, Pottsville, PA. Doors will open at 9:00 AM for coffee and donuts, presenters begin at 9:00 AM. The presentation schedule was shown on Page 5 of the February issue of *Cinders*. There will be a buffet-style lunch of city chicken, ham, stuffed shells, mashed potatoes, stuffing, green beans and mixed homemade desserts.

Admission: \$30 per person, including lunch. Seating limited. Order tickets, first come, first served from Project 113, 113 East Sunbury Street, Minersville, PA 17954-1720. Make checks payable to "Project 113". For additional information and directions, telephone 570-544-8300 or E-mail: rproject113@hotmail.com.

Saturday, May 3: Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Chapter, NRHS, together with Reading & Northern Railroad will operate "Vosburg Flyer" diesel-powered rare mileage photo freight excursion over R&N Lehigh Division. Two-unit set of EMD SD38 diesels will power ten-car train of mixed freight cars, caboose and passenger cars (including full dome). Numerous options available, including coach, dome, caboose and cab ride (varying prices). Trip leaves 10:00 AM from Duryea. For complete information, including box lunch, telephone 570-575-5320 or visit on-line: www.laurellinesspecials.org. Some very rare mileage will be covered on this trip.

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

**SEPTA
TRANSIT**



Hard to believe but this year will mark SEPTA golden anniversary. SEPTA's first organizational meeting took place 50 years ago on February 18, 1964, after it was established by the State the previous year. SEPTA then absorbed two earlier agencies in 1965—the Passenger Service Improvement Corp. (PSIC), which had helped finance new commuter equipment, and the Southeastern PA Transportation Compact (SEPACT), whose mission was to plan for improved rail service between the City and suburbs. In 1966 SEPTA contracted with the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroads to help subsidize their commuter services. But SEPTA did not assume direct responsibility for transit operations until it took over the ailing Philadelphia Transportation Company (PTC) in 1968 and then the suburban Red Arrow Lines in 1970. In early 1983 SEPTA began direct operation of the former PRR and Reading commuter rail networks. It is now the nation's 5th largest transit system.

SEPTA plans a year-long anniversary celebration. This will include an advertising campaign that will feature SEPTA logos over the years, of which there have been several. Older members will recall the "meatball" emblem from the 1970's which former General Manager David Gunn junked in favor of the present rectangular logo. Special contests also will be held on the ISEPTAPHILLY website, and a first-ever official SEPTA archive filled with memorabilia from the pre-SEPTA and SEPTA eras will be established. "With this anniversary, we look forward to building and enriching an archive with the help of our riders, friends and neighbors," said GM Joseph M. Casey. Presumably, this will include donations from railfans as well. SEPTA staff is working on a history of the Authority which is to highlight material from its predecessor agencies and operators. The *Inquirer* carried an article on SEPTA's history and development in its February 28 editions.

SEPTA's contract with its largest union, Transport Workers Local 234, is due to expire on March 15. At *Cinders* presstime both sides have been very quiet about progress in the ongoing negotiations, perhaps remembering the strike that preceded the last contract agreement three years agoSEPTA reports that its part of the Dilworth Plaza rebuilding project adjacent to City Hall is about 65 percent complete. Most of SEPTA's work is below street level and includes reinforcing structural steel in subway tunnels, boring new elevator shafts from the plaza level to the 15th Street subway and trolley stations, and upgrading the stations and fare-paid areas on the upper concourse level. The entire \$55-million plaza project should be finished this fall.....SEPTA is considering whether to extend service on the Market-Frankford subway-el and Broad Street subway until 3 AM on Friday and Saturday nights, replacing the present NiteOwl buses. This is due to the increasing late-night activity in center city, especially on weekends.

SEPTA held a public meeting on February 26 at which it revealed more about its "Catching Up" plan for much-needed capital improvements (see January *Cinders*). Passage of the State's \$2.3-billion transportation bill last November, officially known as Act 89, will bring substantial new funding to SEPTA and other Pennsylvania transit agencies. It is estimated that in the 2013-2014 fiscal year transit agencies will receive an *additional* \$55 million, which will increase to \$487 million in 2017-2018. SEPTA will receive about 70 percent of those funds, more than doubling its current bare-bones capital budget of \$308 million and making it possible to attack the \$5-billion backlog of projects needed to bring the system to a state of good repair. By contrast, NJ TRANSIT's present capital budget is nearly four times larger than SEPTA's! Among the projects with the highest priority are the replacement of critical infrastructure such as bridges on the Media-Elwyn rail line and a number of 80-year-old electrical substations. New commuter rail cars—including possible double-deck coaches—are high on the priority list as well as new state-of-the-art trolleys. The presentation for the first time publicly referred to the planned fleet of new MU's as "Silverliner VI" cars, a term heretofore used only internally at SEPTA. The 27-year-old AEM-7 electric locomotives also are to be replaced.



**SEPTA
REGIONAL
RAIL**

SEPTA is working to equip all of its lines with the Positive Train Control (PTC) collision avoidance system before the government-mandated deadline of December 2015. But another passenger train operator, METROLINK in southern California, announced last month that it had become the first commuter rail system in the U.S. to actually place PTC in active service. Metrolink's first PTC-equipped line is a BNSF route between Los Angeles and Fullerton, but Metrolink officials said their entire 500-mile system would have PTC in operation by next year. (Among freight railroads, BNSF is probably the most advanced in PTC testing and installation.) Ironically, the Federal law requiring all rail lines carrying passengers or certain types of hazardous chemicals to install PTC was enacted after a disastrous head-on collision in 2008 between a Metrolink train and a UNION PACIFIC freight, in which 25 people were killed (*Trains*).

SEPTA expects to handle a large number of extra passengers on Regional Rail to and from the annual Philadelphia Flower Show this month. The event will occupy the Pennsylvania Convention Center from March 1 to 9. Even the train of Comet coaches, recently stored for several weeks, was to be made ready for Flower Show service.....After the conclusion of the Flower Show, weekend trackwork will resume in the Norristown

(Continued on Page 4)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 3)

area beginning Saturday, March 15. This will mean that NORFOLK SOUTHERN will be forced once again to detour trains operating from or to Morrisville, with westbound intermodal train 21E expected to use an unusual AMTRAK route through Lancaster on Saturday mornings. SEPTA Manayunk-Norristown trains will be turned back at Conshohocken (see February *Cinders*)On February 8 Lower Moreland police arrested two Levittown men whom they caught red-handed stealing wire from SEPTA's Neshaminy Line near Bethayres. Several West Trenton trains were delayed during the investigation.....A broken rail on #1 track just north of Oreland station on Friday morning, February 28, caused numerous delays until temporary repairs were made at 8:55 AM.....AMTRAK train #955 became disabled at Paoli station around 9:30 PM on Thursday, February 27, blocking the westbound platform. Three SEPTA trains, #581, 583 and 585, had to be crossed over to discharge on #1 track at the eastbound platform. The next morning Amtrak train #646 stalled east of Paoli, delaying SEPTA train #554 for 40 minutes.

Sometimes due to emergencies SEPTA crews have to operate well beyond their normal assignments, and must be pre-qualified over that "foreign" territory. One example of this occurred on Thursday, February 20, when train #2718 was 18 minutes late leaving Newark, DE, because the southbound deadhead move could not cross over to the station due to freight train interference. So the crew had to operate an extra 12 miles south on AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor to "Bacon" interlocking in Maryland, where they crossed over, reversed and headed back to Newark for their regular trip north to Philadelphia..... The *Inquirer* reports that the West Chester Borough Council has begun another effort to restore SEPTA rail service between the Chester County seat and Philadelphia. A Restoration of Rail Committee will be established to work with SEPTA and the county to bring SEPTA trains back to West Chester, a service which was discontinued beyond Elwyn in 1986. Funding will be a major obstacle to the campaign.



AMTRAK introduced the first of its new ACS-64 electric locomotives to the public on Friday, February 7, when #600 powered train #171 from Boston to Washington. The shiny new engine hauled a nine-car train—with business car 10001 **Beech Grove** on the rear—with no problems. The train departed 30th Street Station four minutes late at 2:12 that afternoon, but was on time into Washington. Since then the Siemens-built unit has been in more or less regular service on the Northeast Corridor. All reports indicate that it has performed well. At least four other ACS-64's are on the property and are frequently seen testing on the Harrisburg line. Engine #601 was expected to enter revenue service during the first week of March. Over the next two years the 70 new "Sprinters" should replace the current fleet of AEM-7 and HHP-8 units, which have logged an average of 3.5 million miles. Amtrak plans to build a new \$12-million shop building at its Wilmington maintenance complex to service the ACS-64 fleet. But first the soil at the shop location will need to be removed because of contamination with the toxic PCB chemicals used for many years in locomotive electrical systems.

The day before its first run from Boston, #600 was the center of attention in a ceremony at 30th Street featuring Vice President Joseph Biden. Biden was introduced as the "president of the Amtrak Fan Club" because of his outspoken support for the railroad and the thousands of trips he made on the train between Wilmington and Washington during his tenure in the Senate. Biden spoke of the need for more Federal funding to invest in infrastructure and especially in the Northeast Corridor, saying that I-95 would be a "parking lot" without Amtrak. Along with Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx, he then inspected the cab of the locomotive. Later that day #600 headed a special train to Boston in preparation for its inaugural run to WashingtonThere has been no announcement yet as to when the first of the 130 new Viewliner II cars, currently under construction at the CAF USA plant in Elmira, NY, will be placed in service. The first eight cars off the production line, two of each type, are expected to begin field testing this spring.

AMTRAK's exhibit train set out from Philadelphia last month to begin its third year of barnstorming around the country. The train, consisting of two diesel locomotives, an Amfleet "bistro" car, three renovated baggage cars containing the displays and a dormitory car for the crew, is set up for self-guided tours. Several new exhibits have been added including workable signals and an interactive virtual tour of sleeping cars, along with many holdover exhibits showcasing Amtrak's four decades of service. The train's first stop was scheduled to be at the Arizona Railway Museum in Chandler, AZ, March 1-2, followed by several other locations in the Midwest and West. The closest it will come to the Philadelphia area will be the Delaware State Fair in Harrington on July 19-20. The specially-painted Veterans unit, P42 #42, is advertised to lead the train on much of the tour..... AMTRAK plans to eliminate several dining amenities on its long-distance trains as part of an effort to eliminate losses in its Food & Beverage Department over the next five years. Complimentary juices and wine will no longer be offered to sleeping car passengers and other cuts include the removal of flowers and vases in the dining cars.

We have written here before concerning AMTRAK's project to replace the overhead electrical transmission system in the 20 miles between the Philadelphia "Zoo" and Paoli substations. This will be the subject of a presentation by one of the involved consulting firms at Philadelphia Chapter's March 21 meeting. The project calls for replacing the 100-year-old ex-Pennsy catenary structures with new, taller poles, which will support not only the existing catenary but also the 138,000-volt transmission line which carries power from the Safe Harbor hydroelectric station on the Susquehanna River to Philadelphia. This line currently is routed via the old Trenton Cut-Off to Norristown, then via the former Schuylkill Valley branch right-of-way to Manayunk (now a multi-use trail) and finally over SEPTA-owned property through Cynwyd to West Philadelphia. Construction may begin as early as next year and be completed in 2020.

In an appearance in St. Paul, MN, last month, President Obama made a strong pitch for a new surface transportation law to replace the current legislation which expires in September. The President proposed a \$302-billion, four-year plan that would authorize \$206 billion for highway improvements, \$72 billion for transit systems, \$19 billion for rail programs including for the first time passenger rail, and a multimodal freight grant program to address the greatest needs for moving goods to ports and across the nation. The cost would be paid for by a tax reform plan on

(Continued on Page 5)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 4)

corporations. As mentioned here last month, the Highway Trust Fund, which also supports transit, is expected to run out of money by this summer. Obama's proposal, however, may stir up opposition in Congress, and likely will be watered down. But at least it's a start.



CSX, NS, OTHER ROADS

Both CSX and NORFOLK SOUTHERN say they had great success last year in boosting industrial development along their lines. NS announced that it had helped to locate 67 new industries and expand 25 others, which represented an investment of \$2.3 billion and the potential to generate more than 136,000 carloads of new rail traffic each year. CSX said that it helped develop 121 new or expanded facilities on its railroad or on connecting shortlines, representing \$3 billion in customer investments and some 151,000 carloads of new business annually for CSX (*Trains*).....NS CEO Wick Moorman told a U.S. Chamber of Commerce meeting last month that U.S. freight railroads are "essential to driving America's continued economic recovery," while providing America "with a key competitive advantage in the marketplace and [serving] to bolster economic prosperity" (*Trains*).

CSX handled the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Blue Unit circus train into and out of Philadelphia last month. The train arrived in Philadelphia from Greensboro, NC, on February 11 for performances February 12-16, then departed late on the 17th for Brooklyn, NY. After returning south and then visiting New England, the Blue Tour will play at Trenton May 14-18, then make the usual move to Hershey via NS for shows May 21-26The January 20 freight train derailment on the ex-Pennsy Schuylkill River bridge in South Philadelphia (see February *Cinders*) was caused by a track crew's failure to properly secure a rail after replacing ties on the bridge, according to a preliminary report from CSX.....An overheight tractor-trailer got wedged under a CSX bridge in Wilmington on Wednesday morning, February 5, forcing the railroad to suspend train service until the bridge could be fully inspected.

NJ TRANSIT has hired a new executive director to replace James Weinstein, 67, who stepped down last month. Veronique ("Ronnie") Hakim, 54, takes over at NJT after serving as executive director of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority for the past three years, and before that as executive vice president and general counsel at the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Capital Construction Division. Weinstein has been criticized for the Hurricane Sandy debacle in 2012, when NJT failed to move many locomotives and cars out of harm's way before they were inundated in floodwaters, costing more than \$120 million to repair the equipment.....Legislation being considered in the New Jersey State Senate would create a commission to study the possibility of combining certain NJT, SEPTA and New York commuter rail operations, as a way to increase efficiency and save money. The legislation is likely to die in the State Assembly.

Much attention is being focused by the industry and Federal regulators on the issue of how to improve safety in transporting crude oil by rail. With the huge increase in crude oil movement in unit trains, as well as in regular service, there also has been a spike in accidents involving crude oil traffic. The Lac-Mégantic disaster of last July, in which 47 people were killed, called public attention to the volatility of crude oil originating in the Bakken fields of North Dakota. Since then several other fiery wrecks have occurred, which inspired *Bloomberg Businessweek* Magazine to run an article last month entitled "Trains that go boom." Two recent derailments in Pennsylvania have heightened local awareness, one of them on CSX in South Philadelphia in which no oil leaked (see above), and the other an NS derailment at Vandergrift, near Pittsburgh, on February 13 in which four tank cars spilled oil but did not ignite.

There have been urgent appeals to replace the older fleet of so-called DOT-111 tank cars, whose shells are believed to be too thin to prevent spillage in the event of a derailment. Many shippers are ordering new, stronger tankers, and BNSF Railway last month made the announcement that it would purchase 5,000 "next-generation" tank cars, an unusual move in that most tank cars are privately owned. Even AMTRAK has looked into the subject, since there are unit oil trains moving on the Northeast Corridor enroute to a refinery at Delaware City, DE. Last month the railroad industry and the U.S. Department of Transportation announced a new initiative to begin addressing the issue of safety in crude oil shipments, including reduced train speeds, more frequent track inspections, rerouting of unit oil trains away from high population areas, and additional training of first responders. The questions of tank car construction and accurate product description by shippers will be handled separately. Both NS and CSX are heavily involved in moving large volumes of oil to refineries in Philadelphia, Delaware and New Jersey, and new unloading facilities here are being planned.

The old saying that "no news is good news" is something that PATCO in recent months has not enjoyed. Since last fall PATCO riders have been beset with broken-down escalators and elevators, broken-down trains and service delays. Ridership on PATCO actually declined slightly in 2013 for the first time in several years, mirroring a drop in vehicle traffic on the Delaware River Port Authority's four bridges as tolls have steadily increased. Much has been made in the press and elsewhere about PATCO's parent agency, the politically-sensitive DRPA, especially about its heavy spending on non-transportation-related projects to the detriment of its major funders, the bridge tollpayers. This also seems to have resulted in less attention to PATCO, its vital rail link between South Jersey and center city Philadelphia. But management cites the ongoing two-year, \$100-million project to upgrade both rail lines on the Benjamin Franklin bridge, and the \$194-million rebuilding of PATCO's 120-car fleet.

Unfortunately, the trackwork on the bridge exacerbated the most recent misadventures, which occurred on Monday, February 10. About 8 o'clock that morning a westbound train stalled midway on the bridge due to a shorted-out traction motor, and smoke filled the cars. The train eventually was moved back to City Hall station in Camden where the passengers were unloaded. That same evening around 5:15 an eastbound train broke down in the tunnel approaching the bridge, again blamed on an overheated traction motor which has become a someone common occurrence in PATCO's aging car fleet. Two cars filled with smoke and

(Continued on Page 8)

The Winter That Just Keeps Coming..... (Continued from Page 1)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5: This was a very bad day—the winter's worst thus far—as a severe ice storm overspread the region in the morning. Just as residents, businesses—and railroads—were cleaning up from Monday's storm, they got hit with another wintry blast. Many hundreds of trees fell under the weight of up to a half-inch of ice on top of the earlier snow, snapping wires and causing widespread power failures. Gusty winds made a bad situation even worse. At the height of the storm, Peco Energy reported that nearly 715,000 homes and businesses—45 percent of all its customers—were offline, most of them in the four counties north and west of Philadelphia. Schools and government offices throughout the region were closed, as were many businesses. As it turned out an army of 6,800 workers and their trucks—many recruited from out of state—would be needed to restore electric service over the next several days. In fact, a handful of unlucky customers wouldn't see their lights back on until the following Tuesday! Even residents with portable generators sometimes found it difficult to buy gasoline to keep their machines running. Stores like the Home Depot reported that they were selling out of generators, shovels and rock salt almost as fast as the merchandise arrived. Peco said it was the second worst power crisis in its history, next to the 800,000 customers affected by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012. Power outages were also seen in South Jersey and Delaware, but were less serious because those areas had higher temperatures and received mostly rain. PSE&G reported only 20,000 outages.

Pennsylvania was the hardest hit state in the path of the storm, prompting Governor Corbett to declare a state of emergency in the five-county Philadelphia area. Scores of roads and streets were blocked by fallen trees and other roads made impassible by flooding. Ice on top of snow made driving treacherous, resulting in accidents and backups on major routes such I-76, I-95, the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the Route 30 bypass near Downingtown. Many side streets remained blocked and again traffic volume was less than on a normal day.

SEPTA had to deal with horrible storm conditions, with delays just about everywhere. The "wintry mix" deposited ice on catenary wires which with the numerous downed trees caused widespread problems on Regional Rail, forcing the suspension of all service on four lines—Paoli-Thorndale, Cynwyd, Warminster and West Trenton. Paoli-Thorndale and Cynwyd services were cancelled in their entirety, while northbound Warminster trains were turned at Glenside until through service was restored in time for the afternoon rush. West Trenton trains were turned at Jenkintown until 11 PM, when #396 became the first train to operate all the way to West Trenton. (The derailment of a CSX freight train near Yardley the night before added to the problems on that line.) A grand total of 370 trains were delayed and 175 annulled during the day, resulting in only a 50-percent on-time record. The Market-Frankford Line and Broad Street subway ran with only minor delays, but they were the exception. Virtually all bus and trolley lines were affected—20 bus routes had to be detoured due to street conditions—and the Routes 101 and 102 suburban trolley lines were suspended for a time during the morning but later restored. NHSL service had to be cut back to Bryn Mawr in the morning because of downed trees near Hughes Park.

Amtrak was forced to suspend all service on its Keystone line after the first westbound train, #601, got no further than Paoli before retreating back to 30th Street. At least 45 trees reportedly had toppled onto the overhead wires, tracks and signal lines at many locations and, because the catenary had to be de-energized while repair work proceeded, SEPTA's Paoli-Thorndale service also was suspended. Passengers on trains #42 and 43 **Pennsylvanian** were bused between Harrisburg and 30th Street Station, but otherwise Keystone Service customers were on their own. Nearly two full days were required for crews to clear all of the trees and repair the damage. Some delays occurred on the Northeast Corridor, but a nearly full schedule was operated. NJ Transit had its own headaches, as it ran a reduced "storm schedule" on all rail lines except the Atlantic City Line. Service on the Trenton-New York corridor was suspended during the morning but was restored around 11 AM. River Line light rail trains were operating 30 minutes behind schedule while delays were rampant on bus routes. A bus skidded off the highway in Carneys Point, resulting in a few minor injuries. PATCO ran with a special storm schedule. At the Airport 115 flights were canceled and numerous delays posted, often due to conditions elsewhere.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6: President Obama signed an Emergency Declaration covering the five-county Philadelphia area, giving access to Federal recovery funds through FEMA. Amtrak crews continued to remove downed trees and repair the catenary, so rail service to Harrisburg remained suspended as did SEPTA's Paoli-Thorndale service. Passengers on trains #42 and 43 again were the only ones bused between Harrisburg and 30th Street. The Cynwyd line resumed operation in the morning. Overall, SEPTA counted 128 weather-related delays and 98 annulled trains. A complicating factor was a downed catenary wire at Amtrak's "Girard" interlocking east "Zoo," reported at 6 AM, which served to delay many Trenton, Chestnut Hill West and Amtrak trains until repairs were completed around 1:30 PM. For an hour that afternoon SEPTA dispatchers lost control of signals and interlockings on the Mainline north of Wayne Junction, which contributed to many additional delays.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7: Peco crews working around the clock had restored power to more than half of its customers who had been struggling without heat or light. As of this morning the list of outages was down to 290,000. Amtrak finally was able to restore full service between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, but some delays were experienced due to signal repair issues. Service on the New York-Washington Corridor was virtually back to normal. On SEPTA's Regional Rail system Paoli-Thorndale service finally was operating after a two-day hiatus. Just one train (to the Airport) was annulled but there were a number of others delayed due to loss of signal control through the center city tunnel and down to "Arsenal" interlocking. For the second straight day car shortages became noticeable, as nine trains were reported at least one car short.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10: A light snow overnight was measured at 2.7 inches at International Airport. By Monday morning Peco had its list of customer outages down to 23,000 (the last customers were restored the next day). SEPTA's Regional Rail service was virtually normal, except for four annulments and scattered delays. Amtrak reported only minor delays.

(Continued on Page 7)

The Winter That Just Keeps Coming..... (Continued from Page 6)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13: This was another “oh no, not again!” day for everyone in the Delaware Valley, along with millions of other storm-weary folks along the East Coast. A huge and dangerous nor'easter raced up from Georgia and through the Carolinas, leaving death and destruction in its wake. After dumping on Washington, DC, and forcing a government shutdown, the storm arrived in Philadelphia early Thursday morning. By mid-morning about 10 inches of new snow was on the ground at the Airport, with more in the northern and western suburbs. Delaware also was hit hard, and a state of emergency was declared in New Jersey where all State offices and many schools were closed. Then there was a lull in the action, with only some sleet and light rain falling until the back end of the storm arrived that evening, dropping another 1-1/2 inches of snow. The storm even brought reports of thunder and lightning.

Peco logged a few scattered power outages but these paled in comparison with the previous week's debacle. Schools in and around the City were closed, as were government offices and many businesses. Even the Philadelphia Orchestra had to cancel its evening performance. Highway conditions during the day were hazardous. Reduced speed limits were imposed on many major routes, but traffic was light as many workers stayed home. At PHL a total of 866 flights were cancelled.

SEPTA dealt with this intense storm as best it could, but some 470 delays were reported on Regional Rail lines during the day Thursday, including 188 train cancellations. On-time performance was 36 percent. Early morning service on both the Trenton and Chestnut Hill West lines had to be suspended due to a signal problem on Amtrak, but service was restored by 9 AM. Trolley and bus routes suffered extensive delays, prompting the suspension of all bus service at 10 AM after several buses got stuck in the snow. But 12 routes, including the three trackless trolley lines, were restored to service as of 3 PM, mostly routes that fed into the Market-Frankford or Broad Street Lines. Service on the Norristown High Speed Line was suspended around 11 AM but restored two hours later with trains running every 15 minutes in the afternoon and evening, making all stops. Routes 101 Media and 102 Sharon Hill managed to operate over their entire routes.

On Thursday afternoon SEPTA announced that it would shut down all bus and Regional Rail service beginning at 10 PM to avoid stranding passengers. Only the Market-Frankford subway-el and the Broad Street subway and certain trolley lines remained in service after that time. The Market-Frankford and Broad Street Lines ran all night in place of the usual NiteOwl buses, as they had done on Wednesday night. To ensure that its key operations people could get to their jobs early on Thursday and Friday mornings, SEPTA arranged for some of them to stay overnight at the Marriott Hotel across Market Street from the headquarters building.

Amtrak cancelled all six of its long-distance trains operating south of Richmond, VA, on Wednesday and Thursday (plus the New Orleans-bound **Crescent**), as the storm moved northward. Northeast Corridor and Keystone services ran normally on Wednesday but on Thursday Amtrak said that it would operate a “modified” (read reduced) schedule on the NEC and Harrisburg line. A total of 17 Acela Expresses, 18 Regional

and ten Keystone trains were cancelled in their entirety. The remaining trains to and from Harrisburg ran reasonably well, although #655 arrived there two hours and 40 minutes late. Trains #42/43 **Pennsylvanian** between Pittsburgh and New York operated almost on time. One source said that by cutting service on the Corridor Amtrak could implement a “snow plan” to allow straight-through running at many interlockings, minimizing the number of switches that needed to operate. NJ Transit attempted to maintain its regular weekday schedule for rail and light rail, but many delays were encountered. Systemwide cross-honoring of tickets between modes was placed in effect for both Thursday and Friday. PATCO once again adopted a special snow schedule, running trains every 15 minutes except during rush hours, and speeds were reduced.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14: The storm was over but its after-effects lingered. Although temperatures rose to a high of 44 degrees, many schools—including all public and Archdiocesan in Philadelphia—remained closed, while others opened late. After a day and night of continuous plowing and salting by highway crews, the main roads generally were in pretty good shape—except for the sudden proliferation of wheel-crunching potholes. Then around 8:30 AM there was a horrendous series of crashes on the eastbound Pennsylvania Turnpike near the Bensalem interchange in Bucks County. Nearly 100 cars and tractor-trailers were involved, many of them seriously damaged. Drivers were trapped for hours and at least 25 people taken to hospitals. Traffic in both directions was tied up for hours until the Turnpike could be reopened around 4 PM. The disaster was attributed to an icy surface on the highway.

SEPTA's Regional Rail service continued to struggle, with many trains cancelled owing to a shortage of crews. Some 418 trains were reported late, including 100 annulments, but on-time performance at 44 percent was slightly better than on Thursday. The serious shortage of equipment continued, as cars and locomotives were taken out of service for storm-related repairs. Slippery rails no doubt contributed to two encounters with bumper blocks, both in Chestnut Hill around 8 AM and both involving Silverliner V equipment. Arriving train #5712 struck the bumper at Chestnut Hill East station and #809 did the same thing at Chestnut Hill West. Damage at CHE was relatively minor but the head car at CHW suffered a broken front door. Both cars were quickly repaired.

Amtrak restored most Regional service on the Corridor, but 17 Acelas did not operate between New York and Washington. All Keystone trains were back in service, as this storm produced little ice to damage power lines and fell trees. Among long-distance trains only the **Cardinal** and **Crescent** ran, while the **Silver Meteor**, **Silver Star**, **Palmetto** and **Auto Train** remained idle. The Washington-Chicago **Capitol Limited** ran without interruption throughout the storm period. NJ Transit rail lines were operating with delays and PATCO was running on a regular weekday schedule.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15: A light snowfall in the afternoon brought the official total for the season in Philadelphia to 55.4 inches, making this the 3rd snowiest winter in the City's recorded history. By contrast, the total for the entire winter of 2012-2013 was only 8.3 inches! Amtrak announced that it would restore full train schedules to its NEC and Keystone Services, and

(Continued on Page 8)

The Winter That Just Keeps Coming.....

(Continued from Page 7)

long-distance operations in the Southeast—including the **Auto Train**—would return to normal. All eight scheduled Acelas ran close to schedule. SEPTA Regional Rail had a relatively good day, with 114 trains reported late but few of them tardy by more than ten minutes. There were no annulments.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18: A nuisance storm early this morning dumped two to three inches of snow on the Philadelphia region. Traffic on the expressways, especially I-76, I-95, I-476 and Route 422, was tied up in knots during the morning rush, mainly due to a rash of accidents dotting the roads. Airport passengers had to deal with numerous flight delays and several cancellations. SEPTA reported some 100 weather-related delays on Regional Rail, most of which were just ten minutes or less, and on some bus and trolley routes. For a time in the morning Route 15 Girard Avenue was bused and the NHSL was running every 15 minutes making all stops. Amtrak said its NEC and Keystone Services were running a full schedule in spite of several delays in the morning ranging from five minutes to a high of two hours and 17 minutes, in the case of train #644 from Harrisburg to 30th Street.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26: Topping off a truly miserable month, a quick storm blew through the region on Wednesday morning, dropping an inch or less of snow. But it was enough to create slick roadways during the rush hour, with numerous spin-outs and fender-bender accidents. Highways in Chester and Bucks Counties were the hardest hit. Many flight delays hindered travel at the Airport but there were few cancellations.

During the rush hour SEPTA posted delays averaging about ten minutes on Regional Rail, as the Operating Rule F-S1 weather alert was placed in effect. Most delays were gone by mid-morning and otherwise the storm had little effect on transit in the Philadelphia area. NJ Transit said its Northeast Corridor trains were running 20 minutes to a half-hour late while most other services were doing well. Amtrak reported only minor delays to its NEC and Keystone services, some possibly caused by ice patrols in the North River tunnels leading to Penn Station, New York. NJT trains also were affected by the inspections, as well as by an early-morning Conrail freight derailment along the Corridor in Linden, NJ. PATCO was running on time.

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The absence of extreme weather during the last ten days of February provided some relief to beleaguered homeowners and businesses, as well as to their utilities and transportation providers. "It's been a long, cold winter," one senior meteorologist at the National Weather Service told the *Inquirer*. "If you like snow, it's a bonanza." But after digging out from all these storms many residents may not welcome another blanket of white, even though it could mean a day off from work or school, a trip to the ski slopes or sledding in the park.

During this relentless winter of 2013-2014 a total of 58.4 inches of snow has been recorded in Philadelphia through the first three weeks of February, compared with an average annual accumulation over the past century of about 22 inches. We remember that the season began ominously even before the official start of winter, when an 8-inch snowfall on December 8 forced the

Eagles to play a football game in near-blizzard conditions. Peco reported more than 822,000 outages over the past three months which, together with the many travel hangups, made it one of the most disruptive winters in 130 years of record-keeping in the Delaware Valley.

Oddly enough, the thermometer soared to a high of 63 degrees on Friday the 21st, thawing some of the snow, but flooding then became a threat in low-lying areas as heavy rains added to the snowmelt. The balmy temperatures continued over the weekend before turning colder again on Monday the 24th.

So, will Old Man Winter decide to take a vacation in March?

--Frank Tatnall

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 5)

passengers had to be evacuated through the tunnel to the long-closed Franklin Square station, where they were loaded onto another train. A few others were brought to the street through an emergency exit. One rider waiting at the 8th & Market Streets station told the *Inquirer* that "PATCO's gotten terrible. It's an unmitigated disaster." Some passengers complained that the line is slow to send out information on train delays and does not use social media such as Twitter effectively. One rider said that SEPTA, by comparison, "does a great job with its Twitter account. It responds to questions and complaints personally and with humor, understanding and concern." Since only one track is open on the bridge, failures such as those described tie up all service for an extended period. The single-tracking work, which began in January, extends from 11 AM each Friday to early Tuesday mornings. DRPA now says it may temporarily reduce the duration of the track closures.

"Take A Ride on the Reading" Set For Reading Railroad Heritage Museum

The Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, located at 500 S. Third Street, Hamburg, PA announces a new exhibit – **Take a Ride on the Reading**. The exhibit runs from March 1 to November 2, 2014, and tells the story of the Reading Company's best known passenger trains through a collection of artifacts, photographs, art and three-dimensional models. The exhibit is made up of items from the collection of the Reading Company Technical & Historical Society.

The Reading's famous **Crusader** streamlined passenger train is remembered with an original oil painting, several models, a preserved lounge car seat and the Reading diamond logo plate from one of its two steam locomotives. Visitors can hear a recording of the ceremony inaugurating it as the first streamlined train in the eastern United States.

Other Reading "name" trains featured are the **King Coal**, **Schuylkill**, **Wall Street**, **Interstate Express** and the **Queen of the Valley**. Visitors can have their photograph taken on a preserved coach seat. Learn the important role of rail transportation before the introduction of the freeway and the Interstate highway.

The Museum is open Saturdays 10-4 and Sundays Noon to 4 PM. Regular admission applies. For more information go to www.Readingrailroad.org or telephone 610-562-5513.