



CINDERS

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IN THIS ISSUE

Quartet of Nor'easters Slam East Coast in Span of 20 Days.....	1
Philadelphia Chapter News and Meeting Notice.....	2
PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS, by Frank Tatnall.....	6
Extra List.....	8

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

Chapter Website: www.nrhsphiladelphia.org

Quartet of Nor'easters Slam East Coast in Span of 20 Days *Philadelphia Gets Hit by 3 of the Storms*

The month of March was a memorable one along the East Coast, as four fierce nor'easters struck within three weeks of each other. High winds and heavy snow caused millions of households and businesses to lose electric power for anywhere from a few hours to a week, and all modes of transportation suffered major disruptions during this unprecedented series of late-winter storms. A persistent low pressure system entrenched over the Atlantic Ocean helped these troublemakers to gain strength.

The Philadelphia area was seriously crippled by the first "bomb cyclone" that roared up from the South on Friday, March 2, then somewhat less by the next one which arrived just five days later, on Wednesday the 7th. The third nor'easter on Tuesday the 13th pretty much bypassed the Delaware Valley, but struck New England with a vicious blow. Boston, for example, had to dig out from 14.5 inches of snow whipped by strong winds that created whiteout conditions. In Portland, ME, the storm brought the total snowfall for the winter season to 90 inches!

In the City of Philadelphia, by contrast, only 7.6 inches of snow was measured over the first three storms, with winds causing by far the most damage. PECO reported that this trio of nor'easters cut power to at least 800,000 of its customers for anywhere from one hour to more than a week. The fourth storm on Wednesday, March 21, was forecast to drop as much as a foot of heavy, wet snow, and some places in the region did receive that much or more, but officially 7.6 inches fell at International Airport, the same as the total from the three earlier storms. Still, this one was less disruptive than those on March 2 and 7, except perhaps in parts of South Jersey where the heavily waterlogged snow did cause power outages and other problems.

The big blow on Friday the 2nd seriously impacted all transportation modes from Virginia to Maine. High winds, snow and poor visibility made highway and air travel difficult or impossible. Thousands of flights were cancelled nationwide. Then came storms #2, 3 and 4 in rapid succession, with the final one arriving the day after spring began (at least on the calendar). Following is a summary of how these four winter events impeded transportation in the Philadelphia area.

SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL ---- On Friday afternoon the 2nd some two to four inches of wet snow fell in the Delaware Valley as winds gusted to 60 mph, disrupting train service systemwide. Deteriorating weather conditions caused many delays during the late morning hours, and by early afternoon service was suspended on eight Regional Rail lines. These were the Chestnut Hill East and West Lines, the Cynwyd, Lansdale-Doylestown, Paoli-Thorndale, Trenton, Warminster and West Trenton lines, mostly due to downed trees on tracks and power lines. Trains on the Airport, Fox Chase, Media-Elwyn, Manayunk-Norristown and Wilmington-Newark lines were running, but more than an hour late, and by 5 PM the Airport and Wilmington lines also were shut down. At 6 PM TrainView did show a few trains still headed for Doylestown, Thorndale, Trenton and Wilmington with most of them running at least 90 minutes late. Many passengers who had taken the train that morning were caught unawares by the afternoon service stoppage. Hundreds of regular riders milled about at Jefferson, Suburban and 30th Street Stations, hoping their trains would come or somehow they'd find another way home.

On Saturday morning most service was still suspended, although Fox Chase, Manayunk-Norristown and Warminster resumed something like normal operations. The line between Doylestown and Lansdale remained shut down due to a leaning utility pole but service from Lansdale to Philadelphia resumed. By early afternoon service was restored on the Paoli-Thorndale, Trenton and Wilmington-Newark lines, but some trains were annulled and very crowded conditions reported. The Airport Line was closed with shuttle bus service substituted between the Airport and AT&T station on the Broad Street subway. As of 5 PM trains were running again on all lines except Airport, Chestnut Hill East and West, Media-Elwyn and West Trenton. Each of those lines was still blocked by fallen trees or downed wires. Service was restored from Doylestown.

The situation was much improved on Sunday the 4th. Most downed trees had been cleared and catenary wires repaired even though the Chestnut Hill East and West Trenton lines remained out of service. They would resume operations in time for the Monday morning rush hour. One glitch occurred early on Monday morning when fallen trees were found blocking the #4 track at several locations between Haverford and Paoli. Westbound trains had to operate over the inner #3 track from Overbrook until 2 PM, then #4 was reopened as far as Bryn Mawr. The track was restored to Paoli later in the afternoon. Wilmington

(Continued on Page 3)

Notice of Annual Meeting & Election

Notice is hereby given of election of Chapter officers for the year 2018-2019, to be held at the Annual Meeting of Philadelphia Chapter, National Railway Historical Society on Thursday evening, April 19, 2018 at SEPTA Elkins Park Regional Rail Station, 7879 Spring Avenue, Elkins Park, PA 19027. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM.

Any member in good standing who is interested in service as President, Senior Vice President, Vice President & Treasurer, Secretary or National Representative, may be nominated from the floor at the April 19 meeting, or in writing, before April 1, 2018 to: Daniel J. Murray, Chairman, Nominating Committee, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, 745 Sunflower Avenue, Langhorne, PA 19047-3747.

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

CHAPTER WEBSITE: For current Chapter information, as well as vintage views of Chapter trips and activities, visit website: www.nrhsphiladelphia.org

CHAPTER OFFICERS (Elected)

President.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769
Senior Vice President.....Daniel Knouse (215) 659-3436
Vice President & Treasurer.....Richard Copefand (215) 343-2765
Secretary.....Marie K. Eastwood (215) 947-5769
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Appointed)

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Program Director.....Harry Garforth (215) 266-3180
Webmaster.....Daniel Knouse (215) 659-3436

2018 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: Effective September 1, 2017, \$20.00 per person, which covers Philadelphia Chapter dues through December 31, 2018. (NRHS National membership dues for 2018 are \$50.00, billed directly by NRHS.) NRHS chapters bill their members separately for Chapter dues. Donation requests for Philadelphia Railfriends were mailed during October via separate mailing from *Cinders*. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS should forward remittance, payable to Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS in the amount of \$20.00 to Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Please be sure to include name, valid mailing address, telephone number and E-mail address, as applicable.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Send to Editor at Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. (Include your CURRENT TELEPHONE NUMBER and E-MAIL ADDRESS so our records are complete.)

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 avrestower@comcast.net.

If your *Cinders* Arrives in Damaged Condition

If your *Cinders* arrives damaged or with pages missing, contact Editor Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or avrestower@comcast.net and a replacement copy will promptly be sent to you. The incidence of damage has been greatly reduced through the use of envelopes for mailing each issue, although there is an additional cost involved.

Meeting Cancellation Notice

In the event of an extreme weather or transportation emergency on a Philadelphia Chapter meeting date, Chapter officers will make a decision on whether to hold the meeting as scheduled. If questionable circumstances arise, members should telephone 215-947-5769 after 12 Noon on the day of the meeting for recorded advisory. Thank you.

Meeting Notice

THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2018

SEPTA Elkins Park Regional Rail Station, Elkins Central Meeting Venue, 7879 Spring Avenue, Elkins Park, PA 19027. See Page 8 of our May, 2017 issue for complete details on our meeting location. **DANGER! DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ACCESS OUR MEETING ROOM FROM THE DOOR ON THE INBOUND PLATFORM TO PHILADELPHIA! YOU WILL TRIGGER POLICE & FIRE ALARMS!! WALK AROUND TO THE SPRING AVENUE ENTRANCE.**

MEETING START TIME: 7:00 PM

Our April 19, 2018 meeting will feature a 35., color slide presentation by Chapter Member and Historical Archivist Kenneth Thomas. Ken, a longtime volunteer with the Reading Company Technical & Historical Society, has taken time to photographically document much of their preservation efforts. This program, *Curtain Call: The RCT&HS at the former Reading Locomotive Shop, 1984 to 1989*, documents the last time the shop facility was actually used for railroad work. Don't miss this historical treat!!

The Chapter has programs lined up for our May 17 and June 21 meeting as well. Our May 17 meeting will find Steve Stewart returning with a photographic presentation, *From Communipaw to Philadelphia*, documenting the Baltimore & Ohio, Jersey Central and the Reading between Jersey City and Philadelphia. Steve has amassed an amazing collection of images between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers. On June 21, Chapter Member Mike Szilagyi will provide an interesting program, *Montgomery County Trolleys*, which will compliment a forthcoming Arcadia book of the same title. Mike has assembled historic photographs, maps and blueprints to illustrate the story of where the County's trolley lines were built, when and by whom. There were 140 route-miles of trolley line in Montgomery County. More details in May *Cinders*.

Philadelphia LCL.....

NRHS lost a longtime female member, as well as a well-known female supporter during the month of February. Fifty-year Member Shirley Jo Hott, of Gaithersburg, MD, passed away on February 1, 2018, at the age of 78, following an illness. She was the wife of Member Jerry Hott, who has held numerous positions at the National level of NRHS, including National Director of the Potomac Chapter.....Locally, Nancy Myers Rogers Laessle, of Moorestown, NJ, passed away on February 20, 2018 at the age of 90. Nancy was the widow of longtime West Jersey Chapter National Director James Laessle, who passed away in 2014 at the age of 94. Nancy was seen at many NRHS events.

Quartet of Nor'easters Slam East Coast in Span of 20 Days

(Continued on Page 1)

trains also suffered delays for most of the day due to Amtrak signal problems along the Northeast Corridor. Many trains were crowded because of the Philadelphia Flower Show at the Convention Center.

Three days later, on Wednesday, March 7, another powerful nor'easter swept up the coast. This one did not pack the high winds that its predecessor did, but the heavy, wet snow caused plenty of trouble nonetheless. SEPTA drew on its experience from the previous few days by announcing *in advance* that it would place its Severe Storm Schedule in effect on Wednesday, which essentially was a Saturday schedule enhanced with certain Wilmington trains extended to Newark. The Cynwyd line would not operate. (Actually, some of the additional trains to Newark did not run due to a switch failure on Amtrak.)

Many trains on Wednesday were delayed due to storm conditions, with an overall on-time performance for the day of only 57 percent. Service on the West Trenton line had to be suspended for almost two hours in the afternoon until a downed tree near Forest Hills station was cleared. Nine trains were annulled and passengers on a stranded train #316 were rescued by a bus at Bethayres station. Service was disrupted at several other locations by fallen trees, including at Exton, Gladstone, Miquon, Noble and Levittown, resulting in delays. A loss of signal power on the Warminster Line at Willow Grove around 2:40 PM caused serious delays to at least ten trains, and a signal power outage on the Corridor between Croydon and Trenton from 3:40 to 4:30 PM forced SEPTA to annul ten trains to and from Trenton.

The third nor'easter on Tuesday, March 13, which local forecasters correctly predicted would be less severe than the first two, actually stayed well off the Jersey coast and only brushed the Delaware Valley. But it did head north to hammer New England with heavy snow and gale-force winds. It had virtually no effect on rail, air and highway traffic in the Philadelphia region except that Amtrak service and air travel to and from New England points had to be cancelled. (It was noted that just a year ago, on March 14, 2017, the Northeast hosted the so-called "Not-Quite-Blizzard of '17" which had been advertised to drop 12 to 18 inches on Philadelphia but actually produced only six to seven inches.)

Then came the final storm of winter 2018 (as of this writing), which in spite of its dense snowfall actually caused less disruption than the first two nor'easters. On Wednesday morning the 21st storm #4, fortified by a big batch of cold air from the West, did its best to throw the region into chaos, but failed. Among the reasons were less wind, another was that the earlier blows had stripped most of the vulnerable branches off the trees (which also had no leaves on them), and an accurate forecast which convinced schools and government offices to close and many people to stay home. Regional Rail again fell back on its Severe Storm Schedule, which meant a Saturday timetable with a few extra trains on the Wilmington-Newark line. It seemed to work reasonably well, with a tolerable number of delays and a few annulments for an on-time percentage of 83. Crew shortages were responsible for some of the annulments. Regular service resumed on Thursday morning, but as might be expected many delays were reported.

SEPTA TRANSIT --- The March 2 storm with its high winds and snow had a crippling effect on highway travel in the local area. SEPTA transit services were heavily impacted, as many roads were blocked by fallen trees and wires. Dozens of bus routes had to be detoured or suspended, with the most newsworthy event involving a Route 125 bus westbound on the Schuylkill Expressway near Belmont that was hit by a fallen tree around 1 PM. The passengers were rescued with no injuries but the Expressway was shut down for more than 2-1/2 hours while the debris was cleared. That same afternoon another SEPTA bus was struck by a downed tree and power pole on Wayne Avenue near Lincoln Drive in Germantown.

Routes 101 and 102 trolleys out of 69th Street had to be bused over the weekend because of fallen trees taking down the wires in several locations. Shuttle buses were handling Norristown High Speed Line passengers between 69th Street and Township Line due to a tree on the tracks near Parkview station. Service on the NHSL then was suspended on Saturday due to downed trees damaging PECO power lines along the right-of-way. Shuttle bus service was operated on Sunday. Rail service resumed Monday morning on Routes 101, 102 and the NHSL, but Route 101 cars were turned back at Woodland Avenue with shuttle buses carrying passengers on to Media. Route 11 trolleys had to be cut back for a time on Friday at Woodland & Island Avenues because a tree was down on Main Street in Darby, but routes in the city generally were able to continue running on street trackage, with delays.

Then a couple of days later came Wednesday, March 7, and the second storm. While not as severe as its predecessor, SEPTA said that Broad Street and Market-Frankford Line trains would operate every 20 minutes all night on Wednesday evening into Thursday morning and numerous bus routes would be detoured. Riders were advised to check the System Status page on the SEPTA website for up-to-date information on all trolley and bus routes and the NHSL. All Bryn Mawr trips on the NHSL were to be cancelled on Wednesday afternoon. As it turned out, icy road conditions were so bad that service on dozens of bus routes, including all those running in the suburbs, was suspended in the afternoon, although some service was restored later in the evening. Routes 101 and 102 were listed as operating with delays of up to 30 minutes. By the Thursday morning rush hour, conditions had improved and all but three bus routes were restored to service. The third storm on March 13 caused few problems on trolley or bus routes.

Storm #4 on March 21 with its heavy snow accumulation forced detours on many bus routes, and service on at least 35 routes in hillier sections of the city and suburbs was suspended. The Market-Frankford and Broad Street Lines operated all night on Wednesday evening into Thursday morning. The Norristown High Speed Line ran on 20-minute headways with no express trains, but service between Bryn Mawr and Norristown had to be suspended after 10 PM because of drifting snow. On Thursday local service only was operated on 20-minute headways between 69th Street and Norristown. Trolley routes on Wednesday ran mostly on regular weekday schedules, with delays. Service was restored the next day on most bus routes, although detours remained on a few routes.

AMTRAK --- The four nor'easters caused huge headaches for Amtrak managers and train service people—not to mention the many thousands of passengers inconvenienced by the resulting service disruptions. On Friday morning March 2, as nor'easter #1

(Continued on Page 4)

Quartet of Nor'easters Slam East Coast in Span of 20 Days

(Continued from Page 3)

blew through Washington and set its sights on Philadelphia, New York and New England, trees started to fall on tracks and wires along the Northeast Corridor causing numerous train delays and cancellations. By 10:30 AM Amtrak had made the decision to suspend all service between Washington and New York and on the Harrisburg line. Continuing power outages forced Amtrak to extend the shutdown into Saturday morning, although service south of Washington to Richmond and Newport News, VA, did resume as did the Empire Service in New York State. The Auto Trains were cancelled in both directions on Saturday.

At 10:45 AM on Saturday, Amtrak announced the resumption of New York-Washington service but on a modified schedule which saw the cancellation of many Acela Expresses and Regional trains. New York-Harrisburg Keystone trains began running on a modified schedule. Service between New York and Boston also was resumed that morning. Amtrak said that it was working to restore near normal service on the Corridor by Sunday morning the 4th, along with the Auto Train. Most regular trains did operate on Sunday although there were numerous delays due to signal problems and ongoing repair work. By Monday morning all scheduled service was restored on the NEC and Harrisburg line.

Then, in the run-up to nor'easter #2, Amtrak announced on Tuesday the 6th that a modified schedule would be in effect on the NEC the next day, Wednesday. Nine Regional trains and all but six Acela Expresses were cancelled, as were eight Keystone trains and eight Empire Service trains. That evening Amtrak temporarily suspended all service between New York and Boston but on Thursday some service was restored. The schedule on the Corridor was further modified from the previous day, as repairs from the two storms continued. Ten Regional trains and 15 Acelas still were cancelled along with ten Keystone and eight Empire Service trains. At least six Regional trains that would normally operate to or from Boston were cut back to New York, as were four Acelas that operated only New York-Washington. Amtrak continued to run the same modified schedule on Thursday the 8th.

The next day, Friday the 9th, with yet another nor'easter looming early the following week, Amtrak announced that it would make a few minor service adjustments starting on Saturday. But on Monday the 12th, when it became clear that storm #3 would heavily impact New England, Amtrak said that all service between Boston and New York would be suspended on Tuesday morning. When the storm arrived, it producing blizzard conditions in parts of New England and the suspension was extended for the entire day. The **Vermont**, trains 55 and 56, operated only between New York and Washington. Nearly full service was restored on Wednesday, except that three Acelas were cancelled east of New York and New York-to-Boston Acela #2190 was erased entirely.

Storm #4 which settled in on Wednesday, March 21, was another "here-we-go-again" event for Amtrak. This time a more extensive list of cancelled trains was announced, including 26 Regionals and 21 Acelas on the Corridor, leaving only six Regional trains and three Acelas running southward and eight Regional and eight Acelas north. Eight Keystone trains and eight Empire Service runs were cancelled plus the **Pennsylvanian** in both directions. A host of long-distance trains, among them the

Silver Service, **Crescent**, **Capitol Limited**, **Cardinal**, **Vermont** and the **Carolinian** north of Raleigh also were annulled, but the **Auto Train** did operate in both directions. The southbound **Palmetto** terminated at Washington and the northbound was cancelled, but those trains which operated on the Corridor did not appear to suffer undue delays. The same bare-bones schedule was continued into Thursday but more trains were added later in the day. Full service returned on Friday the 23rd.

NJ TRANSIT, OTHER LINES — NJT made a valiant effort to keep trains and buses in operation during the first nor'easter on Friday, March 2. It continued to operate trains on the Northeast Corridor through the evening rush hour even though Amtrak itself had already suspended Corridor service. Many trains were delayed and some cancelled, causing overcrowding on those that did run. Several lines remained in service but a few such as the Gladstone branch were shut down because of fallen trees and wire damage. Bus service on some routes continued but others were suspended as the storm worsened. The River Line continued to operate with delays. NJT's Emergency Operations Center was open during the storm, trying to assist with the many problems that arose around the system. Cross-honoring of tickets among NJT rail, bus and light rail services was in effect on Friday and Saturday.

The next nor'easter that struck New Jersey on Wednesday, March 7, had more snow and less wind, but was in some ways harder to deal with than the first storm. NJT activated its Severe Weather Schedule Level 1, which provided reduced train service on all lines. The Northeast Corridor line had to be suspended west of Jersey Avenue due to overhead wire problems, but later resumed with up to one-hour delays. Several other lines including Atlantic City were shut down, and all bus service statewide was suspended after 4:30 PM. The River Line light rail service between Camden and Trenton also was partially suspended due to downed trees. Cross-honoring of tickets between rail and light rail was again offered.

On Thursday morning regular service resumed on the Northeast Corridor and a couple of other lines, but several lines including Atlantic City remained closed because the heavy, wet snow caused trees and wires to foul the track. The ACRL was cleared by early afternoon and train #4624 was the first train to operate out of Atlantic City. Light rail service on the River Line also was restored. NJT reported that its crews removed more than 100 trees which had blocked rail service across the State.

Prior to storm #3, NJT announced that all bus service would be suspended on Tuesday the 13th. Trains would run on a Saturday schedule, except Atlantic City which would be on a regular weekday schedule and the River Line on a Sunday timetable. But nor'easter #3 stayed well off the coast and headed toward New England, leaving New Jersey with only a coating to four inches of snow, depending on location. Public transportation that operated did relatively well. Not so with storm #4 on Wednesday, March 21. NJT again was forced to impose its Severe Weather Schedule Level 1 systemwide, except for regular service on the Atlantic City Line. Cross-honoring of tickets between modes was reinstated. Delays on rail lines were widespread, and all NJT bus service statewide was halted at 3 PM due to the heavy snow. NJT made an effort to resume regular service on all modes Thursday morning but many delays were reported. The Atlantic City Line remained shut down due to signal problems around Hammonton, and rail tickets were cross-honored on PATCO and buses. Full ACRL service was restored by late afternoon.

(Continued on Page 5)

Quartet of Nor'easters Slam East Coast in Span of 20 Days

(Continued from Page 4)

PATCO did not suspend service during the big storm on Friday, March 2, but obviously there were many delays. For storm #2 on Wednesday, March 7, a special snow schedule was placed in effect, providing rush-hour service every ten minutes and off-peak service every 15 minutes. All trains operated as locals making all stops. Regular service was resumed the following day. The same operating plan was followed during the storms on Tuesday the 13th and Wednesday the 21st.

In general, freight service in the region was not seriously affected by the four nor'easters, although there were some delays caused by the weather and occasional crew shortages. But the high-velocity winds caused a couple of odd accidents during the Friday, March 2nd storm—trains were blown off the tracks! The most serious accident happened that evening as westbound CSX train Q409 was crossing the high bridge over the Susquehanna River near Perryville, MD. A violent wind gust blew four empty cars off the bridge and into the river, while two other cars overturned but remained on the bridge. The nearby I-95 and U.S. 40 bridges already had been closed to traffic due to the winds, and Amtrak had suspended service. Earlier in the day two cars of pipe in an East Penn Railroad train were blown off the track east of Oxford, PA. The locomotive also was derailed.

All in all March was a rough month for anyone who depends on rail, bus, air or personal transportation. The hope is that the approaching hurricane season will be an uneventful one.

---- *Frank Tatnall*

Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern Sets Full Season of Budd RDC Trips

The Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern has set a full season of weekend Budd RDC trips between its new "Reading Outer Station", Port Clinton and downtown Jim Thorpe, PA, beginning on Monday, May 28, 2018 (Memorial Day) and ending on Sunday, November 25 (Thanksgiving weekend).

Promoted as the way to visit historic Jim Thorpe, the county seat of Carbon County, RBM&N urges you to let them "Do the Driving" and avoid parking fees (and traffic) in Jim Thorpe. The trips permit a 3-1/2 hour layover in Jim Thorpe to take in a meal and visit the attractions.

Dates of operation are May 28, June 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 30, July 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29, August 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26, September 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, November 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24 and 25. Note that no trips are scheduled during October, which traditionally has been the period during which RBM&N operates steam excursions on its lines.

This service departs Reading "Outer Station", 3501 Pottsville Pike, Reading, PA 19605 at 9:00 AM, arrives Jim Thorpe at 11:20 AM. Return trips depart Jim Thorpe at 3:30 PM, arriving Reading at 6:00 PM. An additional stop for passengers is

SEPTA Holds Open House for Jenkintown Station Project

On Tuesday, March 27, SEPTA planners and architectural consultants held an Open House at the Jenkintown Regional Rail station to present proposed accessibility improvements to the largest station on the former Reading routes. Jenkintown has no ADA improvements at present. Staffers were on hand to explain the plans and accept input from commuters.

There were artist renderings of the structure which would house elevators to allow accessibility to the high-level platforms; in addition, there would be a heated waiting area and accessible restrooms for passengers. Those attending were asked to vote on the construction of the facility (either brick or stone). It would seem that stone would serve to blend in better with the present station and the landmark Verizon facility across the street.

Following completion, the present 1929-vintage station, designed by famed Architect Horace Trumbauer, would be disassociated with any SEPTA operations, save the brick former "KJ" switch tower on the north end of the platform. Conspicuously absent would be any ticket office, as the facility would be completed after implementation of the SEPTA Key Card on Regional Rail lines.

Parking would be affected as well. There would be a loss of approximately 50 spaces in the "South" lot, where the platforms would be located. It is hoped that 25 new spaces could be created along West Avenue, but that is dependent upon negotiations with the Borough of Jenkintown and local property owners.

made at Port Clinton station, 1 Railroad Boulevard, Port Clinton, PA 19549, departing there at 9:30 AM, and returning by 5:30 PM.

The two former Reading/SEPTA Budd RDC's feature open windows for viewing and photography, and each car has clean restroom facilities. There is a refreshment area on the train, with cash settlement by individual passengers.

Fare from Reading is \$32 per person from Reading, and \$30 per person from Port Clinton. Tickets may be purchase by telephone at 610-562-2102 or online at www.readingnorthern.com. They may also be purchased in person or by mail at the Schuylkill Haven Station, 12 West Main Street, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972-1909. Tickets must be purchased in advance, as there are no ticket sales on the day of the individual trips.

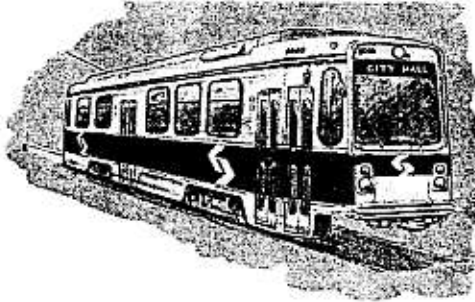
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FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA TRANSIT



When deliveries of the 525 new hybrid buses from New Flyer are completed, SEPTA says that 97 percent of its bus fleet will be environmentally-friendly hybrid or fully electric vehicles. But SEPTA also reports that ridership on its bus and trackless trolley network fell by ten percent from 2016 to 2017, to 159 million trips, a loss of 18 million trips. This compares with an average 4.7-percent decline nationwide. But over the past decade the 3.7-percent drop in SEPTA bus ridership actually was much better than the national average. A consulting firm was hired last year to review SEPTA's present network and suggest changes to better serve the public.....By this fall SEPTA plans to launch its new bus Route 49 operating between Grays Ferry, University City, 30th Street Station, and the Fairmount and Strawberry Mansion neighborhoods.

SEPTA last month began detouring Routes 11 and 36 trolleys to allow replacement of the 1920's-vintage bridge that carries Woodland Avenue over the Media-Elwyn Regional Rail line. The project will extend through the summer of 2019. In addition to the bridge and street work SEPTA will replace the tracks east of 49th Street. Also in progress this spring is a project to replace Route 36 tracks on Elmwood Avenue between 59th and 65th Streets, which should be completed by June 9. Buses operate between the Eastwick loop and the 40th Street trolley portal during this period.....Service was halted on the Norristown High Speed Line for over two hours on Thursday, March 29, when a pole fell across the tracks near County Line station around 5:15 PM. Shuttle buses were pressed into service.....A large fire at Broad & Jefferson Streets in the afternoon of Thursday, March 29, disrupted service on the Broad Street subway for over six hours. Shuttle buses were operated between the Walnut-Locust and Erie stations A trespasser was struck and killed by a westbound Market-Frankford train east of 30th Street Station around 7 PM on Friday evening, March 30. Subway service was briefly suspended.

More than 400,000 passengers rode the Market-Frankford and Broad Street Lines on Eagles Parade Day, Thursday, February 8. This was 110,000 more than the average weekday ridership, the result of an outpouring of enthusiastic fans celebrating the Eagles' Super Bowl victory—and the free rides courtesy of Independence Blue Cross.....SEPTA has proposed a \$1.45-billion operating budget and a \$749.6-million capital budget for Fiscal Year 2019 starting this July 1. The

operating budget includes no fare increases or major service changes. Public hearings in the city will be held on Monday, April 23, for the operating budget and on Wednesday the 25th for the capital budget, both at 1234 Market Street starting at 11 AM and 5 PMSEPTA will stop selling tokens at all of its locations on April 30, as the phase-in of the Key Card fare collection system ramps up..... "SEPTA Drives the Economy of Pennsylvania" is the title of a new report released last month, in which SEPTA seeks \$6 billion to invest in major improvements over the next 15 years.

SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL



Five of SEPTA's 15 new ACS-64 electric locomotives from Siemens were on the property at the end of March. Units #902 and 903 were picked up from CSX at Woodbourne on February 21 and 904 and 905 arrived on March 23. It's not yet known when an ACS-64 will make its first revenue trip. All of the aging, ailing AEM-7's are expected to be retired within the next few monthsSEPTA issued new timetables for the Lansdale-Doylestown, Media-Elwyn, Paoli-Thorndale and West Trenton lines effective March 11, but available only online. A track improvement project on the Doylestown Line has resulted in cancellation of the midday half-hourly service out of Lansdale, and stub-ending of the runthrough half-hourly Malvern trains at Suburban Station. Doylestown customers are bused to Lansdale.

This spring SEPTA will be testing the Key Card system on Regional Rail, but only with employees in Zones 3 and 4. By late spring Zone 4 customers also will have the option of using their Key Cards. Validator devices can now be found at most stations, although no gates or fencing have yet been installed at 30th Street Station. After the Key system is fully implemented parking fees at outlying stations will increase to \$1.25 per daySEPTA held a public open house on March 27 to inform the public of its plans for a new station at Jenkintown (see separate report elsewhere in this issue).

A warehouse fire along Paschall Avenue in Southwest Philadelphia on Thursday morning, February 22, disrupted both

(Continued on Page 7)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 6)

AMTRAK and SEPTA's Wilmington-Newark service for about two hours. Service resumed around 12 noon after the pall of heavy smoke began to clear. SEPTA was forced to annul four trains. A 24-year-old man walking on the track was killed by southbound Fox Chase train #851 near Olney station just after 7 PM on Saturday, February 24. Six trains had to be annulled and several others were delayed. A SEPTA signal employee was injured at 10 AM on Monday, March 12, when he was hit by Airport train #420 in "Phil" interlocking, two miles south of 30th Street Station. Airport service was suspended for almost two hours, as seven trains were annulled and eight others delayed.



AMTRAK has issued a report card on the freight railroads over which it operates. The ratings are based on the number of minutes of host-caused delays per 10,000 train miles during 2017. CANADIAN PACIFIC was the only carrier to receive an "A," while BNSF earned a "B+" and UNION PACIFIC a "B-." CSX received a "C" but both NORFOLK SOUTHERN and CANADIAN NATIONAL got failing grades (*Trains*)The construction curtain which covered the south wall of 30th Street Station has been removed. Much of the east side façade now is obscured by another large curtain.



CSX, NS, OTHER ROADS

The new Precision Scheduled Railroading plan that has convulsed CSX since the late E. Hunter Harrison introduced it a year ago finally appears to be showing positive results. Current CEO James Foote told the Surface Transportation Board last month that service metrics such as average train speeds and terminal dwell times have improved over the last six months. After several months of scrutinizing CSX's performance, the STB acknowledged the improvements and as of April 1 will no longer require that CSX provide it with weekly service updates. But the agency said that most of the major railroads in the U.S. are currently experiencing service issues. NS and UP in particular have acknowledged that they are struggling with stubborn operational problems and are working to speed up service (*Trains*).

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, who took office in January, has promised to boost NJ TRANSIT's budget to address service complaints and increase the amount of equipment available for service. He also promised that there will be no fare increase in Fiscal Year 2019.....Buses will replace Atlantic City Line trains between Lindenwold and Atlantic City from about 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM on weekdays through June 22, to allow for track work and signal improvements.....A male trespasser was struck and killed by Atlantic City Line train #4631 near Hammonton station on Wednesday afternoon, January 31. Buses were substituted until rail service was restored around 8:30 PM.....The Budd Company's old Red Lion railcar plant site in Northeast Philadelphia has been purchased for a warehouse center. The former railroad spur could be restored.

Chartered trains may be a thing of the past, now that AMTRAK has decided that they "caused significant operational distraction, failed to capture fully allocated profitable margins and sometimes delayed our paying customers on our scheduled trains." The notice was sent to employees last month, according to several sources including *Trains News Wire* and the Rail Passengers Association *Hotline*. "There may be a few narrow exceptions to this policy in order to support specific strategic initiatives..." so there is some doubt about the full impact of the decision. Word received on April 2 indicates that Amtrak's own popular "Autumn Express" will not survive. The written notice did not mention private car moves on regular trains, but AAPRCO officials expressed concern about this service as well. Reaction was swift from many quarters, including calls for Congress to intervene.

This decision evidently came down from new AMTRAK CEO Richard Anderson, a veteran of the airline business. It was made known soon after Congress approved an omnibus spending bill for the current fiscal year, which President Trump reluctantly signed. The bill provides almost \$2 billion for Amtrak, the most in ten years, in spite of Trump's insistence that \$630 million be cut from Amtrak's appropriation. No money is specifically directed to the controversial Gateway Program between New Jersey and New York, which is opposed by the President, but some of the funding could be directed thereAMTRAK is taking some heat for its decision to end discounts to military personnel. Discounts to students and AAA members also will end and the minimum age for senior discounts is being raised from 62 to 65.

AMTRAK issued new timetables for the Northeast Corridor effective March 10. Major construction projects along the NEC require the lengthening of some schedules, plus the infrastructure renewal project at New York Penn Station which is to wrap up next month. All Acela Expresses now depart Washington at ten minutes before the hour rather than on the hour. In addition, weekend Regional trains #152 and 153 were cancelled effective March 25 and the **Cardinal** was cancelled between New York and Washington effective March 29 (*Trains*)..... AMTRAK reissued its online National Timetable in March, with a view of Fairmount Park and the Philadelphia skyline on the cover.

Important Phone Numbers

CINDERS lists below the telephone numbers which should be used to report suspicious sightings, emergencies or other conditions affecting rail operations, including trespassers, vandalism, fires, defective equipment, etc.

AMTRAK	800-331-0008
CSX	800-232-0144
CONRAIL Shared Assets	800-272-0911
NJ TRANSIT (NJ only)	800-242-0236
NORFOLK SOUTHERN	800-453-2530
PATCO Transit	856-963-7995
SEPTA	215-580-8111

Members may wish to photocopy and or clip this notice and keep a copy in your wallet as you are out watching trains. Remember: **SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!**



Saturday, April 14, 2018:

Meeting of Philadelphia Chapter, Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society, Drexel Hill Methodist Church, 600 Burmont Road, Drexel Hill, PA 19026. Doors open at 10:30 AM. Modelers' Meeting at 11:00 AM, Dining Car at 11:30, Business Meeting 1:00 PM. Presentation 1:30 PM. Program will be Philadelphia Chapter Member Frank G. Tatnall with a slide presentation, *A Century of Catenary*, detailing the PRR Main Line electrification between Philadelphia and Paoli. This is a "do not miss" program.

Saturday, April 14: 3rd Annual Railfan Slide Show

Special on the Allentown & Auburn Railroad, at the Kutztown Railroad Station, 232 Railroad Street, Kutztown, PA 19530. Program starts at 9 AM and ends 3 PM. Presenters include Mike Bednar, Rich Frey, Dennis Tiley and Kermit Geary, Jr. Price: \$30 per seat, limited to 40. Check or money order to: Allentown & Auburn Railroad, 200 Center Street, Tamaqua, PA 18252-2417. Order deadline: April 5, 2018. Order online: www.squareup.com/store/allentown-and-auburn-railroad.

Thursday, April 19: Regular monthly meeting of

Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS at SEPTA's Elkins Park Regional Rail station ("Elkins Central" meeting room), 7879 Spring Avenue, Elkins Park, PA 19027, 7:00 PM. Program will feature Chapter Historical Archivist Kenneth Thomas with a narrated 35mm slide program, *Curtain Call: The RCT&HS at the Reading Locomotive Shop 1984 to 1989*, covering the restoration of ex-RDG Alco C630 #5308, GP30 #5513, many other back shop activities. Don't miss!

Saturday, April 21: Phillipsburg Railroad Historians

Spring Open House, at 10 Pine Alley & Cross Street, 10 AM to 4 PM, in conjunction with Lehigh Valley Chapter, NRHS. Many different attractions, equipment displays, NS freight train action. All attractions are free to the public.

Saturday, April 28: Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys

and Electric City Trolley Museum present a first ever photo charter at the Electric City Trolley Museum 235 Montage Mountain Road, Moosic, PA 18507, 9 AM to 4 PM. Ex-PSTC Brill car #80 and ex-PSTC Stafford car #164 will be used. Order tickets from: Harry Donahue, 103 Mulberry Court, Morgantown, PA 19543-8843. \$40.00 per person, with check/mo payable to FPT, Inc.

Sunday, April 29: Hawley Train Show & Sale at the

Hawley Fire House, 17 Columbus Avenue, Hawley, PA 18428-1037 (fire house behind the Hawley Post Office), 9 AM to 3 PM. Free parking. Refreshments available. Admission: Adults \$3.00, children under 12 free when accompanied by an adult. Eight-foot tables are available for \$15, which includes two admissions. For information, and to reserve tables, contact Bill Delling, 618 Fern Street, Hawley, PA 18428-1522, telephone 570-226-3206, or by E-mail to: hawleyfd@ptd.net.

Saturday, May 5: "Oneida Clipper" photo freight ex-

cursion, sponsored by the Lackawanna Valley Railway Historical Society on the Reading & Northern's obscure freight branches. See article with full details and flyer on Page 6, March *Cinders*.

Tuesday, May 8: Regular monthly meeting of

Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS, Hoss's Restaurant, 743 Wertzville Road, Enola, PA. Optional dinner at Hoss's, 5 PM, business

meeting and program 7 PM. *Passenger Train Journal* Editor Mike Schafer will provide multi-media program, *Time Line With Tunes: The Illinois Terminal Railroad*. In addition, there will be a musical tribute to the photography of the late Jim Boyd.

Thursday, May 17: Regular monthly meeting of

Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS at SEPTA's Elkins Park Regional Rail station ("Elkins Central" meeting room), 7879 Spring Avenue, Elkins Park, PA 19027. Program will feature repeat presenter, Steve Stewart with photographic presentation, *From Communipaw to Philadelphia*, documenting the B&O, CNJ and RDG between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers. See Page 2.

Saturday, May 19: Friends of Northeast Philadelphia

History presents Centennial Celebration of the Nation's First Regularly Scheduled Air Mail Delivery, 11:30 AM, at Red Lion Road and Haldeman Avenue in Northeast Philadelphia. For more information, visit www.1stairmail.com.

Saturday, May 26, 2018: Pottstown & Reading

Chapter, NRHS will sponsor Picnic '18 at Maier's Grove, Grove Drive, Blandon, PA, from 1 PM until ???. This is a fundraising event for sponsor an individual to attend NRHS RailCamp East this summer. There will be an evening show by E. Steven Barry and Frank Etzel. Included are snacks and beverages during the afternoon and a barbeque chicken meal served promptly at 5 PM. Price: Adults \$16, children 3-12 \$8. To order tickets, send self-addressed, stamped envelope with remittance payable to P&R Chapter, NRHS to Philip Reppert, 17 Adele Avenue, Blandon, PA 19510-9750.

Beginning Monday, May 28: Reading, Blue

Mountain and Northern scheduled Budd RDC service between the new Reading Outer Station, 3501 Pottsville Pike, Reading, PA 19605 and CNJ station, Jim Thorpe, PA. Trains depart Reading Outer Station 9:00 AM, arrive back by 6:00 PM. Three-hour layover in Jim Thorpe allows for touring, dining, etc. Service will run weekends through November 25. Fare: \$32 per person. No ticket sales day of trip. Order by phone (610-562-2102 on website, www.readingnorthern.com. Full details on Page 5, this issue.

Saturday, June 2: "Spring Fling 2018" at the Museum

of Bus Transportation at the Antique Automobile Museum Campus, 161 Museum Drive (PA Route 39), Hershey, PA 17033. Event runs from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. It is free to MBT Members, Regular Admission Pricing reduced to \$7.00 for non-MBT members. For more information, visit www.BusMuseum.org.

Saturday/Sunday, June 9-10, 2018: *Railfest 2018:*

Hauling Black Diamonds on the Reading, at the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, 500 South Third Street, Hamburg, PA 19526-1906, 10 AM to 5 PM Saturday, Noon to 5 PM Sunday. Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Museum. Tickets at the door, \$15.00, children 5-12 \$5, under 5 free. For more information, visit www.readingrailroad.org.

Extra List Extra

Monday, April 16: Regular monthly membership

meeting of Lancaster Chapter, NRHS, Christiana Freight Station, 10 Railroad Avenue, Christiana, PA 17509-1416, 7:30 PM. Program will feature longtime Lancaster Chapter Member Gerry Futej presenting *Circus Train Finale*. For the legion of members who are passionate about the life of the circus trains, this will be an opportunity to relive them one more time.