



CINDERS

SEPTEMBER 2018



IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Philadelphia Chapter Meeting Notice..... | 1 |
| Philadelphia Chapter News..... | 2 |
| PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS, by Frank Tatnall..... | 3 |
| Extra List..... | 8 |

Volume 79

Number 8

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

Chapter Website: www.nrhphiladelphia.org

SEPTA ACS64's Enter Revenue Service; AEM-7, ALP44 Days Are Numbered

SEPTA's Siemens-built ACS64 #901 was dedicated in a special ceremony at the Chestnut Hill East Regional Rail station on Wednesday, July 11. Siemens is supplying 15 of the locomotives, sisters to Amtrak's 70 ACS64's now in use on the Northeast Corridor and Harrisburg Lines, at a cost of \$154 million.

A three-car Bombardier push-pull trainset headed by ACS64 #901, broke a banner at the former Reading Railroad station. Following speeches by local political dignitaries, SEPTA Board Chairman Pasquale T. Deon, Sr. and SEPTA General Manager Jeffrey D. Kneuppel, attendees were invited to tour the cab and engine room of the 901.

Following the festivities, the 901 pushed its trainset downtown, through 30th Street station to be wyed at Zoo. A number of rail historians on hand were invited to ride with the trainset as far as Suburban Station. After the set was wyed, it returned to Wayne Electric Car Shop to be coupled to three additional coaches for its first revenue run on the Great Valley Flyer that evening.

General Manager Kneuppel couldn't hide his enthusiasm for getting the 901 and her sisters into revenue service as quickly as possible, allowing the retirement of failure-prone AEM-7's #2301-2307, as well as ALP44 #2308; he predicted all the old locomotives would be gone by October, but the end of September might seem more realistic.

As of the weekend of August 18-19, AEM-7's #2302, 2303, 2305 and 2306 were stored at Frazer. This left AEM-7's #2301, 2304 and 2307 available for service, plus the often-maligned lone ALP44 #2308, often referred to as the "Hangar Queen". At the end of the week, ACS64's #901-903 were in active service, with #904 expected to be activated on Monday, August 20. AEM-7's #2301 and 2304, meanwhile, both suffered service failures during the week of August 20, most notably on Wednesday, August 22, when #2304 failed on West Trenton Express #6321 just below Bethayres. The always-packed train had some 700 passengers on board. Crews were able to reverse the train back to Bethayres where the passengers boarded following West Trenton trains.

Meeting Notice

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 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

We will start another meeting season with a special treat furnished by our good friends at the West Jersey Chapter, NRHS, especially National Representative Fred Ciocciola and Chapter President Dave Homer. As you will read elsewhere in this issue, Additional Chapter Member Robert L. Long of Betterton, MD passed away at the end of June. Bob had donated his photo/negative collection to West Jersey a number of years ago, and they have been cataloguing, scanning and digitizing this immense collection. In his prime, Bob had been virtually everywhere on the rail scene recording its history.

We're told this presentation will include railroad scenes from the Philadelphia/Camden area, mainly Pennsylvania Reading, Reading Company and Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines. This will include of the last operational days of the Pennsy's Delaware River ferries.

Also to be shown are traction photos from Bob's collection, including those from Philadelphia and suburbs, Atlantic City, Pittsburgh, Scranton, Allentown/Bethlehem, Altoona, Cleveland, Quebec, Ottawa and Toronto.

We also have our meeting programs for October 18, November 15 and December 13, so mark your calendars now for an interesting meeting season this Fall.

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.nrhphiladelphia.org

CHAPTER OFFICERS (Elected)

President.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769
Senior Vice PresidentDaniel Knouse (215) 659-3436
Vice President & Treasurer.....Richard Copeland (215) 343-2765
SecretaryMarie K. Eastwood (215) 947-5769
National Representative.....Peter M. Senin, Jr. (609) 458-2090

COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Appointed)

Editor.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769
Equipment Chair.....David R. McGuire (856) 241-8046
Historical Archivist.....Kenneth Thomas (215) 635-2335
Membership Chair.....Sheila A. Dorr (610) 642-2830
Program Director.....Harry Garforth (215) 266-3180
Webmaster.....Daniel Knouse (215) 659-3436

2019 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: Effective September 1, 2018, \$20.00 per person, which covers Philadelphia Chapter dues through December 31, 2019. (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 will be 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 ayrestower@comcast.net.

TO THE MEMBERS OF PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER:

During my sleep on Saturday night, August 19, I suffered a mild stroke, which has impaired the use of my right hand, so necessary in preparing this newsletter, as well as other duties. While some medical tests are pending, I have been advised to avoid any heavy lifting, for the present.

Welcome relief did arrive in the form of Frank Tatnall's lengthy news column, which has permitted a full issue of *Cinders* for September.

The next couple of weeks will determine the forward path from here, but I am hopeful that proper treatment and therapy to my right arm and hand will provide a full recovery.

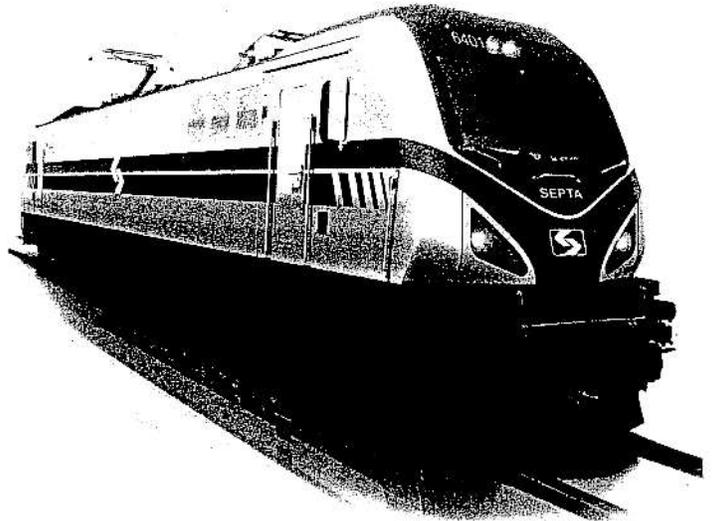
**R. L. Eastwood, Jr.
President and Editor**

Conway to Leave Steamtown

On Wednesday, August 15, Steamtown National Park Superintendent Debbie Conway informed her staff in Scranton that she would be leaving the Park effective October 1. Conway has accepted a deputy regional director position for NPS's Northeast Region.

Conway said "This is a very difficult decision for me, actually the toughest of my career. This is a great opportunity professionally for me and a position in which I think I can have some positive influence for the region." Conway has said that there are a number of things she would like to complete or see happen at Steamtown that she will not get to.

Conway had been in Scranton for a little more than four years, and one of her goals restoring steam operation there. An acting superintendent will replace her prior to the appointment of a permanent superintendent.



2018 Bill Wagner Summer Dinner Attracts 20 Members

A total of 20 members took part in the Chapter's annual William C. Wagner Summer Dinner at Moonstruck Restaurant near SEPTA's Fox Chase Regional Rail station on Friday evening, July 20. Members feasted on either broiled filet of salmon or stuffed chicken breast with mushrooms.

Dinner Chair Leslie J. Dean, who has arranged this annual event for many years, coordinated the dinner with the very cooperative staff from Moonstruck. We certainly thank Les for his efforts. As space permits, we hope to compile a list of the summer dinners to refresh members' memories.

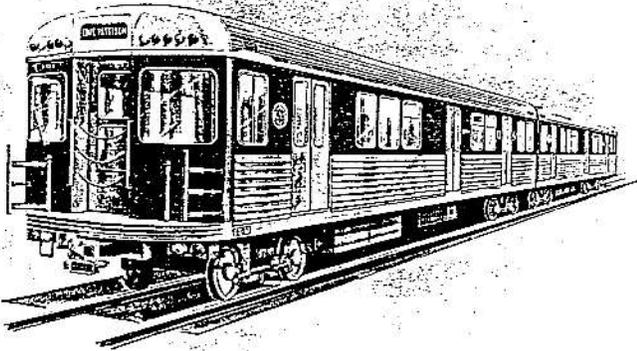
Regrettably, not all members could be accommodated because Moonstruck is not a fully-accessible facility. When looking forward to a 2019 event, careful planning will need to come into play to insure that each member who wants to attend may do so, given mobility issues caused by an aging membership..

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA TRANSIT



The last stop on the southbound Broad Street Line has a new name: NRG station. This is the third time that SEPTA has sold naming rights to one of its stations, the others being Jefferson Station on Regional Rail and AT&T station, as the old Pattison Avenue terminal at the south end of the Broad Street subway was known for the past five years. But that \$5-million contract has expired and was replaced last month with a new sponsor, energy firm NRG. The company concluded a \$5.25 million, five-year deal with SEPTA to identify itself with the station that handles hundreds of thousands of fans headed to and from the nearby sports complex every season. NRG also has bought the exclusive rights to have its sales people man portable booths in SEPTA stations to market the company's retail energy services.

Once again this summer SEPTA conducted its around-the-clock "Trolley Tunnel Blitz," in which the 2-1/2-mile-long tunnel between 40th Street and City Hall was shut down for major repairs. Between July 13 and 23 all Route 10, 11, 13, 34 and 36 trolleys were diverted to the 40th & Market Streets subway station. Among this year's Blitz projects were the replacement of curved rail, cleaning the track bed and drainage system, replacing wire over the newly-installed rail, testing emergency power backup generators, heavy cleaning and maintenance at all stations, raising the platform at the eastbound 15th Street station, and replacing ties and a switch at the 40th Street portal.

A separate project spearheaded by the University City District is the new Trolley Portal Gardens. This effort has transformed the unattractive concrete surface at the 40th Street portal into an area featuring flowering plants, trees and a new Trolley Car Station restaurant. Work is almost complete and a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house are scheduled for Thursday, September 27, at 5 PM.....City Transit fall timetables were issued effective Sunday, August 26 and suburban schedules on Monday the 27th.....Former SEPTA General Manager Louis J. Gambaccini died August 19 at his home in Skillman, NJ, at the age of 87. He was GM at SEPTA for eight years during the 1990's and also served in high management positions at NJ TRANSIT and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.

SEPTA surface lines performed relatively well during the deluge of rain on Monday, August 13, which flooded many streets and highways in the region. Some locations on the Main Line were hard hit, but SEPTA's worst problem there was the flooding of pedestrian tunnels at Regional Rail stations. Although the Borough of Darby was hit hard by flooding from Darby Creek, the Route 11 trolleys continued to operate, with the worst problem being a CSX train blocking the Main Street grade crossing for 17 minutes. Some high water on Baltimore Avenue delayed Route 34 cars for a time and westbound Route 15 cars encountered water over the rails at 33rd & Girard Avenue near the Zoo.

For an hour and a half on Monday morning service on the Market-Frankford Line had to be suspended west of 63rd Street station, due to high water around 69th Street Transportation Center. Water in the loop and yard area rose close to the third rail, forcing the line to be de-energized. One train was stranded west of Millbourne station and passengers had to be evacuated. Ten other trains were turned back at 63rd Street, with shuttle buses handling passengers between 63rd and 69th Streets until the water receded and train service could be restored at 11:40 AM.

There were some annoying problems on suburban lines as well, including Route 102 cars forced to turn back at MacDade Blvd. due to high water under the CSX bridge in Sharon Hill. Shuttle buses were used until the underpass was reopened about 12:30 PM. Several Route 101 cars also were delayed in the morning when water covered the outbound track at Aronimink and single-track operation was necessary for more than two hours. The towns west and north of Philadelphia received much more rain than the city—Wayne on the Main Line received 5-1/2 inches in just a few hours! Norristown High Speed Line passengers suffered delays when water rose over the railheads at 8 AM at a point between Hughes Park and DeKalb Street stations. Shuttle buses were operated between Gulph Mills and Norristown until the water receded about 11:15 AM and train service resumed. Water also was found over the rails near Haverford station during the height of the storm around 8 AM. Trains were held at Bryn Mawr and Wynnewood Road, with riders handled via bus bridge between those stations until rail service was restored at 11 AM.

During the summer SEPTA was urging seniors who don't have Key Cards to get them immediately. As of September 1, the new fare cards should be used by anyone over 65, as the old paper senior citizen ID cards no longer are accepted. Valid PA driver's licenses with magnetic strips on the back also are accepted. SEPTA reported that as of July 1 a total of 145,000 senior Key Cards had been issued (out of a total of 835,000 cards). By early summer about 75 percent of all SEPTA transit riders were traveling with Key Cards as opposed to those still using legacy cards, cash or tokens.

(Continued on Page 4)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 3)

In July SEPTA released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a further engineering study to advance the long-discussed King of Prussia extension of the Norristown High Speed Line. Bids are due to be submitted this month.....A 52-year-old man was killed when an out-of-control Route 84 bus smashed into the front of a home in the Northeast around 6:30 PM on Thursday, July 5. The bus apparently ran a red light at the intersection of Frankford and Morrell Avenues in the Torresdale section of the city, striking two automobiles then jumping the curb and plowing through a fence before hitting the man in the front yard of the home. Two other people in the yard, as well as the bus driver and the drivers of the two cars, were injured and taken to the hospital.



SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL

On Wednesday, July 11, ACS-64 locomotive #901 made its much-anticipated debut in revenue service, hauling train #9561 Great Valley Flyer to Thorndale. This followed a dedication ceremony for the shiny new 6,700-hp ACS-64 class unit at Chestnut Hill East station, presided over by General Manager Jeffrey Knueppel. With a price tag of \$154 million, SEPTA has ordered 15 ACS-64's from Siemens, of which 13 were delivered by mid-August. As other units are certified for revenue operation they have been gradually replacing the 30-year-old AEM-7's.

After all those years of service the retirement of the last AEM-7's is imminent, as well as for SEPTA's lone ALP-44, #2308. The sturdy locomotives ran well for a long time in spite of never receiving a complete overhaul, but in recent years they have become increasingly unreliable. During the summer railfans were scrambling to get their last pictures of the aging veterans before it was too late. GM Knueppel had told the press that all of the AEM-7's (as well as the ALP-44) would be retired by October, but their final runs might occur even sooner. One favorite location for photographers has been Bryn Mawr where, if the timing is right, a video can be made of Flyer #9561 behind a new ACS-64 rushing past an AEM-7 stopped at the station on the head end of express-local #9559. With its horn blaring, the new power salutes the old! At Cinders' presstime in late August, three of the AEM-7's continued to run, plus the ALP-44. It's possible that one or two may be held in reserve for a few months as backup power.

By mid-August #902 and 903 had entered revenue service on the Paoli-Thorndale and West Trenton lines. The new units did experience a few teething problems, but SEPTA has been careful not to entrust them with live trains before they undergo extensive testing out on the railroad, in addition to close examination by the mechanical and electrical staffs. The ACS-64's benefit from many advanced features, such as an electronic FastBrake pneumatic braking system, an integrated Crash Management System, Positive Train Control (PTC) equipment and a state-of-the-art cab. Reports are that certain midday trains may be run with ACS-64's and push-pull equipment in order to allow additional maintenance time for the 40-year-old Silverliner IV MU's. But a big part of the ACS-64's role will be hauling the new

fleet of multi-level coaches which SEPTA has ordered from CRRC MA, delivery of which is to begin in 2020.

SEPTA began live testing of the Key Card system on Regional Rail in July, but initially confined it to those Zone 4 monthly passholders who sign up for the "Early Adopter" program. The program includes the 19 stations between Pennbrook and Doylestown, Malvern and Thorndale, Woodbourne and West Trenton, and Bristol on the Trenton line. (Paoli, Exton and Levittown were not included due to construction underway there.) By July 23 all five center city stations were fully fenced and gated, but of course there are farelines for passengers with tickets. The turnstiles are in service weekdays 6 AM to 8 PM. Some 700 card validators also have been installed at outlying stations. Conductors still are responsible for checking tickets and cards on board trains, and new hand-held fare devices will be tested.

Good news for senior citizens: effective September 1 your rides on Regional Rail are free, just as they have been on SEPTA transit lines for many years. Unused senior tickets may be sent in for refund.....The new pedestrian tunnel under the tracks at Villanova station was opened in July, but the ramps at either end were not yet in use.....High-level platforms at Yardley and Bala stations have been completed.....Trackwork on the Doylestown Line was finished in July and regular Monday-Friday midday service was restored effective August 5. The next branch targeted for trackwork will be the Warminster Line.

SEPTA plans a full reissue of all Regional Rail timetables on September 30. This will be the first printing of regular paper timetables since January 14, with all changes since then appearing only online. Individual schedules run off on copy machines also have been available in center city stations..... Michael Dobson, chief officer of the Railroad Division, has retired and a permanent replacement has not yet been named.....The Hyundai-Rotem plant in South Philadelphia, builder of SEPTA's Silverliner V fleet, closed its doors at the end of August due to a lack of new orders.

After a decade of planning and discussion, work on a new rail station at Ardmore may actually begin early next year. The original intent was to make the station an integral part of a master plan to redevelop the entire area near the station with new commercial and residential buildings, but with the exception of one building under construction across Lancaster Avenue nothing much happened until last year. Finally SEPTA, AMTRAK and Lower Merion Township agreed to build a new station and—later—a multilevel parking garage where the parking lot now exists. The first phase, to begin in 2019, should go out to bid soon for the station building and foundations for the garage. The current station, an unimposing one-story structure, was erected by the Pennsylvania Railroad in the early 1950's to replace a huge Victorian-era building on the north side of the tracks.

SEPTA has rightly received praise for its achievement in placing a fully-operative Positive Train Control system in service prior to the Federally-mandated deadline of December 31, 2018. The SEPTA system is fully compatible with AMTRAK's ACSES (Advanced Civil Speed Enforcement System), which also is now in service on most of the Northeast Corridor. But many other freight and commuter railroads—NJ Transit's situation being the most egregious—are lagging far behind and likely will need to

(Continued on Page 5)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 4)

petition the Federal Railroad Administration for an extension beyond this December. The PTC problem was covered in a special report in the July 3 edition of the *Inquirer*, which followed up an article in the July issue of *Trains Magazine* detailing the full-bore effort put forth by SEPTA people to get the job done. The *Trains* article shows how SEPTA combined its existing ATC (Automatic Train Control) with Amtrak's ACSES to create an efficient PTC system on its own railroad.

Between August 4 and August 19 SEPTA continued its multi-year Southwest Connection Improvement Program to upgrade the busy line between 30th Street Station and "Arsenal" interlocking south of University City station (see September 2017, May 2018 *Cinders*). Some startup work was done during two weekends in May, but this second phase of the project is more extensive. During the August construction period Media-Elwyn line passengers were bused between 30th Street Station and 49th Street station where the transfer between bus and train took place, while all Wilmington-Newark trains operated into and out of the Lower Level of 30th Street Station. The Airport Line was operated entirely with shuttle buses between 30th Street and the Airport. Special online timetables were issued for the duration of the work.

The overall scope of the program is quite ambitious. It includes the rebuilding and reconfiguring of "Arsenal" interlocking where the Media-Elwyn line diverges, as well as removal of "Walnut" interlocking just south of the Walnut Street tunnel portal, construction of a new "Civic" interlocking and turnback track near University City station, replacement of the catenary system in the area, and repair of the interior walls of the tunnel. This summer's work included new high-speed switches and turnouts at "Arsenal" and catenary wire replaced or moved to conform to the new track layout. Heavy maintenance also was carried out along the Airport Line, and work was done on the new Woodland Avenue bridge over the Media-Elwyn line (see April *Cinders*). Another phase of the project will be scheduled for next summer. SEPTA has considered taking over the dispatching of tracks #4 and 5 between "Arsenal" and "Phil" which carry its Airport and Wilmington trains, but this could only be done with the approval of AMTRAK.

Meanwhile, the massive Paoli Transportation Center continues to rise, with all the steelwork for the pedestrian overpass in place and concrete piers for the center high-level platform installed. These are Phase I of the project, budgeted for \$35 million and due to be completed next year. A previous report that the 1893-vintage wooden shelter and stairway on the outbound side had been demolished apparently is untrue. Instead, according to on-site supervision, parts of the historic structure have been preserved and may eventually be restored for display near the new station. It's interesting to note that erecting this transportation hub has been under consideration for a long time. The September 1995 issue of *Cinders* contains the following statement: "Plans for a new Paoli Transportation Center are being discussed by county and township officials, SEPTA and AMTRAK personnel. The preferred option is to build a new rail station in the vicinity of the now-closed Paoli shop..."

Excessive heat this summer has resulted in some problems for SEPTA, including the frequent need to issue F-S1 speed restrictions. Sent out by radio when the official temperature reaches 90 degrees or above, these orders require that trains not

exceed 50 mph.....A rather unusual delay on Friday morning, July 30, occurred when the engineer could not raise the pantograph on ACS-64 #902 at West Trenton, forcing the annulment of inbound train #6325. A dead battery was the cause, the result of improper shutdown procedures on the new locomotive the previous evening. RL-1 diesel #61 was dispatched to haul the train to Wayne Electric, and #902 was back in service the next day.

Catenary power issues cropped up several times during the summer. Tuesday, July 3, was a bad day with severe thunder storms pounding the region in the afternoon and evening. At 6:45 PM Malvern local #8569 was halted when a tree fell on the catenary near Haverford station, but its passengers were rescued by following train #573. Five eastbound trains had to be annulled. At almost the same time as the tree fire Cynwyd train #1087 lost power at "Paxon" interlocking in West Philadelphia. With power out in the area, six following Paoli-Thorndale trains were annulled. Then, at around 8:30 PM a push-pull train deadheading from Thorndale with AEM-7 #2307 became stranded near Frazer, due to wires and trees falling on top of the train. Several following trains already had been annulled due to the problem near Haverford. With all these power outages AMTRAK Keystone trains #620 and 655 were annulled and four other trains seriously delayed--#653 by four hours, #619 and 633 by three hours and #656 by one hour. In addition to all the troubles on the Paoli-Thorndale line three Manayunk-Norristown trains were annulled that evening due to a water main break in East Falls, which also delayed three others.

Early the next morning, the July 4 holiday, overhead power on the Paoli-Thorndale line again was knocked out by a fallen tree near Downingtown. Two SEPTA trains were annulled and AMTRAK decided to single-track the line between Paoli and Parkesburg while repairs were made. Then, early on Sunday, July 22, trees fell on the wires over all four tracks near Ardmore station. SEPTA service had to be suspended. Power on one track was not restored until 1 PM and Paoli-Thorndale service finally resumed at 3:15 PM. Amtrak managed to get a few of its trains through using diesel power but with delays of more than an hour. Finally, a power failure on Corridor track #4 between North Philadelphia and Holmesburg around 6 AM on Saturday, July 28, delayed a total of 36 SEPTA trains on the Chestnut Hill West and Trenton lines. Power was restored on #4 at 11 AM.

NJ TRANSIT train #3831 was involved in a slow-speed derailment at Trenton station around 11:15 AM on Friday, July 20. The accident shut down tracks #5 and 7 at the station through the afternoon, forcing SEPTA to cancel rush-hour trains #1758 and 9747.....A trespasser laid down on the Warminster Road grade crossing at Fulmor station, and was run over by northbound train #6448 about 6:20 PM on Tuesday, June 26. Buses rescued the 200 passengers. One other train was annulled and three delayed until the line was reopened at 8:10 PM. Then another suicidal trespasser ran in front of Airport-bound train #9455 in the middle of "90th Street North" interlocking near Eastwick Station at 6:20 PM on Monday, July 30. He was killed. Service was suspended until 9:15 PM, with shuttle bus service provided between the Airport and 30th Street Station. Later that same evening a female trespasser was seriously injured when she was struck by train #584 at the Main Street crossing as the train was arriving at Lansdale station. The track was cleared within a half-hour but 584's turn to 587 was annulled.

(Continued on Page 6)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 5)

Just after 7 AM on Tuesday, July 24, an out-of-control van smashed through a fence and over a wall at 49th & Kingsessing Avenue in Southwest Philadelphia, landing on the SEPTA tracks near the 49th Street station. The engineer of a deadheading train out of Elwyn spotted the van and police were notified. Passengers on inbound train #3224 were bused on from 49th Street as service on the Media-Elwyn line was suspended. Inbound service resumed at 8 AM but outbound trains were held back until the van was towed away at 10:05 AM and inspectors checked the track for damage. Three people were injured in the two-car crash that caused the van to fall onto the railroad.

A large junkyard fire near the railroad east of Holmesburg Junction station disrupted SEPTA and AMTRAK service on the Northeast Corridor for several hours on Sunday evening, August 19. The fire was reported around 7:25 PM. Since the catenary had to be de-energized nine Trenton and two Chestnut Hill West trains were annulled but power to CHW was restored at 8:45 PM. Trenton service did not resume until the next morning and more than a dozen Amtrak trains were delayed, some for extended periods. Eastbound Regional train #158 was held at 30th Street for seven hours waiting for clearance past the scene. NJ TRANSIT Atlantic City service also was shut down for a time.

Passengers using the west end stations along the Paoli-Thorndale line on Monday morning, August 20, found the first six trains out of Thorndale had been cancelled. At 4 AM AMTRAK notified SEPTA that a serious defect had been found in the #1 track near Downingtown and it would be taken out of service for repairs. Trains could only run eastbound from Frazer yard until repairs were completed at 8 AM, so all trains before that had to originate at Malvern. Train #9542 was the first train out of Thorndale, departing at 8:14 AM. A person was struck and seriously injured by SEPTA train #6291 in 30th Street Station at 9:20 AM on Wednesday, July 25. Reports did not indicate whether the individual fell or jumped into the path of the train. The track was released at 10:10 and catenary power restored. Then there was the bizarre incident in a virtually empty Jefferson Station around 3 AM on Thursday, August 9, in which a homeless man was stabbed to death during a violent struggle on the eastbound platform. The attacker fled. The station was open for the morning rush hour but track #2 was out of service until 10 AM.



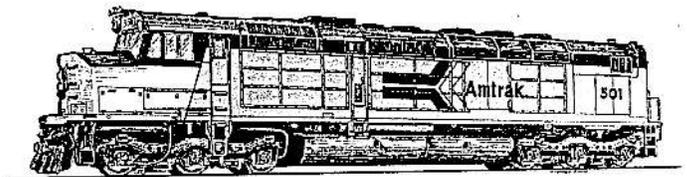
**NORTHEAST[™] AMTRAK
REGIONAL**

AMTRAK has issued a Request for Information (RFI) to see what equipment might be available to replace its aging fleet of Amfleet I cars. The railroad wants to consider single-level coaches, self-propelled units or integrated trainsets to replace the 40-year-old cars which now are a basic part of Amtrak's coach fleet. Most of the Amfleet I's recently have been through a "refresh" program that has replaced many interior elements of the cars, including seats, carpeting and lighting features. In June, Amtrak issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to replace or rebuild as many as 75 of its P40 and P42 diesel road locomotives.

AMTRAK last month revealed what its future Acela Express fleet will look like, with an artist's rendering of the

interior design of a first-class car. Featured are roomy and smooth leather seats, with in-seat lighting and personal electrical outlets and USB ports, large and small tray tables and handles on the seat backs. Each car will be equipped with six LED screens that provide real-time information such as location, train speed and conductor announcements, Wi-Fi for computer users, streamlined overhead luggage racks and spacious ADA-compliant restrooms. "Travelers will have world-class accommodations and amenities," said the Amtrak press release. Alstom is building 28 new trainsets, each with a capacity of 386 passengers, with the prototype to be ready next year and the first train expected to enter revenue service in 2021. The 20 current Acelas are now in the midst of a \$4-million "refresh" program intended to make their interiors more attractive for today's customers.

A Federal appeals court has ruled in favor of AMTRAK and the Federal Railroad Administration in a long-running court battle with the freight railroads. The issue is whether the Passenger Rail Investment & Improvement Act of 2008 can legally authorize Amtrak and the FRA to set standards for the on-time performance of passenger trains operating on freight railroads. Previous decisions had gone the other way. Amtrak applauded the latest ruling, stating that "(s)ince this law was first overturned, we have seen continued deterioration of on-time performance over freight railroads driven primarily by freight train interference." The Association of American Railroads which represents freight carriers could appeal the latest decision (*Trains*)..... The Senate Commerce Committee in July held a hearing on the nomination of Rick A. Dearborn, a former assistant to President Trump, to the AMTRAK board. Senator Roger Wicker said that Dearborn was a lifelong "train freak," apparently because of his large model train collection (*Trains*).



AMTRAK plans to double its engineering efforts on the Northeast Corridor with the purchase of \$370 million worth of new maintenance of way equipment over the next three years. Included will be another multi-vehicle track-laying system, more surfacing equipment and special freight cars and locomotives for work-train service (*Trains*).....ACS-64 #601, which was heavily damaged in the Frankford Junction derailment of train 188 in May of 2015, reportedly is stored at the Bear (DE) shop. It is unknown if or when the locomotive will be rebuilt and returned to service.

The sighting of Keystone train #605 passing through Overbrook on Wednesday, August 8, was unusual because ACS-64 locomotive #616 was on the head end and #630 on the rear of the train. The trailing unit evidently was needed because a 9600-series cab car was not available (Rich Werner).....AMTRAK train #97, the southbound **Silver Meteor**, became disabled at Eddington on Wednesday, June 27. The train arrived at 30th Street two hours and 47 minutes late.....Southbound Acela #2249 struck and killed a 22-year-old trespasser near Newark, DE, about 12 noon on Saturday, August 4. The man was standing just off the track under the Red Mill Road bridge with his back to the oncoming train when he was hit, according to press reports. The 236 passengers were transferred to another train.

(Continued on Page 7)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 6)



CSX,
NS,
OTHER ROADS

NJ TRANSIT made a lot of news last month. First there were Governor Murphy's statements decrying the conditions for NJT and its customers, and blaming much of the trouble on the budget cuts and diversion of funds ordered by his predecessor Chris Christie. "I don't blame commuters one bit for their anger and cynicism," Murphy told reporters last month. "We are climbing out of a deep hole after eight years of failure." Once a national leader in safety, Murphy said that NJT had experienced a high rate of accidents and safety violations after the Christie budget cuts. "I underestimated the mess," the Governor said.

The "mess" includes many cancelled trains, poor communications with customers, crew shortages and trying to play catch-up on the installation of PTC as required by the Federal government. Riders' groups have begun criticizing the new governor for his handling of the NJT problem. And Murphy had trouble dealing with the Legislature—which is controlled by his own Democratic party—over the level of appropriations for NJT in the new fiscal year. The proposed "NJ Transit Reform Bill," which passed the Senate unanimously, is stuck in the Assembly because, the *Newark Star-Ledger* reports, the Governor is pushing for an audit of the agency to be done first.

As for the PTC situation, NJT conceded that it could not meet the December 2018 deadline to complete the work, and would be forced to ask FRA regulators for a two-year extension. But NJT is confident that it will meet certain benchmarks that qualify it for an extension, which include having 85 percent of the necessary hardware in place by the end of this year, full acquisition of the necessary radio spectrum and a successful series of field tests with revenue trains on the Morristown line.

Then came the bombshell announcement on August 3 that NJT would shut down all rail service on the Atlantic City Line for about five months, beginning Wednesday, September 5. The reason given was the need to install PTC equipment on the entire line as quickly as possible. Then it became known that the equipment and crews would not be idle but instead shifted to other lines in North Jersey which have been experiencing shortages of both. The AC Line, NJT's least patronized, carries about 700,000 riders a year and usually offers 12 round-trips a day between Philadelphia and the resort city. The announcement produced a backlash both from riders and politicians since bus service (at discounted rates) is the main alternative being offered. PATCO also will cross-honor NJT tickets between Lindenwold and Philadelphia.

NJT Executive Director Kevin Corbett was called before a legislative panel in Trenton on August 16. He told lawmakers that the AC shutdown is necessary because none of the 60 miles of track or any of the four locomotives and 16 coaches have been equipped for PTC. The line will reopen as soon as the work is completed, he said. Corbett and his staff also hosted a

series of public forums to hear comments and explain NJT's position, in Atlantic City and Lindenwold on Monday, August 20, and at 30th Street Station in Philadelphia the next day.

A trespasser was killed by Atlantic City-bound train #4611 at 7:05 AM on Wednesday, August 1, in Pleasantville, just north of Absecon. All service was suspended until about 10:30 AM.....Another trespasser receive injuries when he was hit by a southbound RiverLine train as it approached the Beverly station at 10:28 AM on Tuesday, August 14. Service resumed after an hour's delay.....RiverLine service had to be suspended on Monday morning the 13th due to high water on the street-running sections in Camden. That was the day when torrential rains flooded the areas around Philadelphia.

The NJT board last month approved a \$2.32-billion operating budget and a \$1.46-billion capital budget for the current Fiscal Year 2019. No fare increases are contemplated in the new budget, which is \$167 million higher than in FY 2018. About 40 percent of the operating budget will be funded from passenger revenues, with the balance coming from state and Federal subsidiesThe diesel locomotive that NJT offered to MARC last May, in exchange for ten borrowed coaches, was GP40PH-2 #4145 (see *May Cinders*). A photo of the unit in Baltimore appeared in the Chesapeake Railway Association newsletter *High Green*.

Both CSX and NORFOLK SOUTHERN reported record low operating ratios for the second quarter of 2018. (The operating ratio reflects expenses as a percentage of operating revenues, and is considered to be a measure of a railroad's efficiency.) CSX, after a year of management turmoil, said that its OR fell to 58.6 percent, a 4.9 percent improvement from the year-ago period. NS reported its OR at 64.6 percent, a second-quarter record. CSX had \$3.1 billion in revenues from railway operations with net income of \$877 million, up 72 percent from the 2017 period, while NS said its revenues of \$2.9 billion in the second quarter produced net income from railway operations of \$1.0 billion, an increase of 18 percent year over year.

Freight traffic on U.S. railroads is growing and executives of several Class I carriers say they are optimistic about continued growth. The railroads are being helped not only by strong traffic demand but also by rising truck rates and the prospect of continued increases in diesel fuel prices which tilt the competitive advantage to rails. The greater fuel efficiency of trains as compared with trucks also will make it easier for the railroads to increase prices, which also will add to the bottom line. But faced with the prospect of having to run more trains, the *Chicago Tribune* reports that railroads are adding thousands of jobs, and some roads are offering hefty hiring bonuses to attract applicants for both train service and maintenance positions. Domestic coal traffic, however, is declining. The 661 million tons of coal consumed last year by electric generating stations in the U.S. was the lowest amount since 1983.

Crude oil traffic also is coming back to the rails, after a severe slump over the past two years. Though still far below the peak of 13.8 million gallons shipped in November of 2014, the 5.9 million gallons of Midwestern crude shipped in May 2018 was the most in over a year, probably the result of a steep increase in the benchmark price of crude from \$30 a barrel to the current \$65 a barrel, plus higher costs of tanker transport from foreign sources.

(Continued on Page 8)

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This EXTRA LIST is somewhat abbreviated due to the illness suffered by the Editor during August. We will attempt to have a full listing of events, including autumn activities, in the October issue of CINDERS.)



Saturday, September 8, 2018: "The Secret Valley Ramble" bus excursion from Neshaminy Mall "Park-N-Ride", Bensalem, PA to the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, Hamburg, PA and parlor car excursion on the Colebrookdale Railroad, Boyertown, PA, sponsored by Delaware Valley Chapter, NRHS. Bus leaves Neshaminy Mall 8:30 AM. Please see separate article this page for complete details.

Sunday, September 9; Saturdays, September 15, 22, 29: Grand Opening of Rockledge Model Railroad Museum, 323 Montgomery Avenue, Rockledge, PA (adjacent to the Fox Chase section of Philadelphia). Hours: September 9, 2 PM to 8 PM; September 15, 22, 29, 12 Noon to 4 PM. For additional information, visit website www.rockledgemrm.org.

Thursday, September 20: 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 a special program from our friends at West Jersey Chapter. It will be a PowerPoint program of the enlargements and photos from the late Chapter Member Robert L. Long of Betterton, MD, who did extensive rail photography over the years. Bob's collection has been left to West Jersey Chapter.

Sunday, October 7: 42nd Annual Lehigh Valley Regional Train Show and Expo, sponsored by Lehigh Valley Chapter, NRHS. Show location is Charles Chrin Community Center, 4100 Green Pond Road, Easton, PA 18045. Show hours 10 AM to 4 PM. Admission: \$5.00 per person. Food and beverages on-site. For directions to location, visit www.palmercommunitycenter.org. Don't miss this show!!

Thursday, October 18: 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, 7:00 PM. Program will feature Chapter Member Harry Pinsker with a traction-oriented slide program.

Thursday, November 15: 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 vintage 35mm color slides from the extensive library of Richard S. Short.

Through Sunday, November 25: 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) or on website www.readingnorthern.com. Complete information was published on Page 5 of the May issue of *Cinders*.

Thursday, December 13 (SECOND Thursday): 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 Member Kevin Feeney with his always interesting PowerPoint program of the year's rail activities from around the World.

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 ayrestower@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.

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!**

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 7)

About 86.4 percent of railroad employees in the U.S. are union members, out of the approximately 150,000 employees on the seven Class I railroads, according to Surface Transportation Board figures.....PATCO plans to apply for a Federal grant to finance half of the estimated \$26.4-million cost to reopen the long-closed Franklin Square station in Philadelphia..... PATCO now is offering a new type of Freedom fare card which can be used at SEPTA Key Card readers. The sale of SEPTA tickets at PATCO vending machines ended on August 31Noted Philadelphia Private Car Owner Bennett Levin is heading an effort to restore to service famed Pennsy K4 steam locomotive #1361, after 30 years of failed efforts to do so. The engine currently resides in Altoona, but is disassembled.