



CONDERS

JANUARY 2021



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MOYNIHAN TRAIN HALL OPENS TO MIXED REVIEWS

By Kevin Feeney



The long-awaited addition to NYC ‘s decrepit Penn Station [NYP] opened to the public on New Year’s Day. The \$1.6 billion project converted what was once the NYC

General Post Office, more recently the Farley PO, into a supposed transit hub. The original GPO was designed by the same firm [McKim, Mead & White] that designed the original NYP and was built in the same Beaux-Arts style across 8th Ave. between 1911 and 1914.

Of course, your editor had to be there so I rode on AMTK #54, *the Vermonter* [that only goes to NYP!] from 30th Street arriving about 10:45. I was in the next to the last car and exited to west thinking I would go up directly into the new hall. However, I did not see any signs pointing me that way, but the platform had new lighting. Instead, I came up in the **New West End Concourse** that opened in June 2017. This concourse was very empty, and it was my first time using it.



I went thru the concourse and following signs there turned left and went up a ramp to the new train hall stopping by this sign. To the left, I entered the new hall and must say it was impressive. The steel beams holding up the glass roof were reminiscent of the original NYP that was torn down in

1963 to make way for Madison Square Garden. I was only there once in 1957. There were maybe 200 folks milling around only a few of which were rail passengers. *Continued on p.8*

PRESIDENT/EDITOR EMERITUS MESSAGE

- R. L. EASTWOOD, JR.

It’s A New Year, but Still a Lot of Old Stuff

Happy New Year (Maybe)! As Kevin Feeney is putting together the January 2021 issue, your Editor Emeritus (and President) has suffered a similar E-mail service interruption, courtesy of Comcast. As of Wednesday morning, January 6, my E-mail completely failed, as it did back late last year. Attempts to contact my computer service since early Wednesday morning have been without response, so I don’t know where we are going.

Election Day 2020 has come and gone, but yet it hasn’t. The Postal Service is still in a meltdown situation, with many (myself included) missing much mail. The carriers in my Huntingdon Valley office are coming around daily, but with precious little mail in their trucks.

Our January 21 meeting will feature Member Mike Szilagyi with another ZOOM presentation, this one covering his recently issued book, *Bucks County Trolleys*, a companion to his prior book. In his presentation, Mike can provide details on getting his book, which we believe he will autograph for you. ZOOM access information is provided on Page 2.

There is no word on our meeting in-person given the up-and-down restrictions issued by the Governor of Pennsylvania. Please remember to renew your membership for 2021. We are hopeful of restoring our activities to a normal level, but most clubs like ours and in a holding pattern. Please stick with us – it’s tough on us, too.

We thank you for your support and patience, and hope each of you is staying well through this cold January.

In-person Chapter meetings are CANCELLED for the foreseeable future. We plan to hold monthly "ZOOM" meetings with log in info available in the monthly issues and on our website. Log in info for our JANUARY meeting appears in the middle of the right column. Please bear with us during these continuing uncertain times.

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, INC.

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For current Chapter information, as well as vintage views of Chapter trips and activities, visit:

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Effective September 1, 2020, dues are \$20.00 per person, which covers Philadelphia Chapter thru Dec. 31, 2021. (NRHS National membership dues for 2021 are \$50.00, billed directly by NRHS.) NRHS chapters bill members separately for Chapter dues. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS should forward remittance in the amount of \$20.00, payable to:

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Also contact the Editor Emeritus if your copy does not arrive or arrives in a damaged condition.

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Chapter ZOOM Meeting for JANUARY 2021 Thursday 1/21 at 7pm ET

<https://zoom.us/j/97832376414?pwd=L0NDaTlmMWRmR25sUDJzQWwKWXy4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 978 3237 6414

Passcode: 692248

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Upcoming Local Events

The **Rockledge Model Railroad Museum** [aka **GATSME**] at 323 Montgomery Ave. in Rockledge, PA should be open to the public on Saturday Jan. 16 and Saturday/Sunday Feb 13 & 14th from Noon to 3 PM. Going forward, the club expects to continue being open on 2nd Saturday of each month, with possible additional dates later in 2021. Visitors are asked to confirm the open house dates on its web site or Facebook page before traveling there.



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.



SEPTA will be one of the beneficiaries of the \$14 billion in relief funding earmarked for transit in the \$900 billion COVID-19 emergency package passed by Congress last month. AMTRAK also will receive \$1 billion in aid, airlines are listed for \$16 billion, intercity buses for \$2 billion and airports for \$1 billion. The transit appropriation will be split, \$13.27 billion going to urban systems such as SEPTA and \$679 million to rural areas. The COVID-19 stimulus legislation was included in a massive \$2.3 trillion appropriations bill which also funded many other government activities. With ridership still far below normal levels, SEPTA certainly will welcome any additional funding that supplements the \$643 million received last spring from the CARES Act.

In an effort to attract more riders during the COVID pandemic, SEPTA will postpone until July the fare increases that were due to take effect this month. The higher fares originally were intended to become effective last July.....SEPTA has awarded a \$3-million contract to Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates to assist with the Authority's proposed Comprehensive Bus Network Redesign initiative. The plan would "create a frequent, interconnected and easy-to-understand bus system," as stated in a staff summary of the agreement. SEPTA has been working on this plan for at least three years

President-elect Joe Biden has selected former South Bend, IN Mayor Pete Buttigieg, 38, as his new secretary of transportation. Buttigieg is known to be a transit-friendly official, who worked to restore the SOUTH SHORE LINE's commuter rail service into the center of his home city.....SEPTA General Manager Leslie Richards gave an interview to *Trains Magazine* for its January issue on how the agency is coping with the COVID-19 emergency. One of the steps she mentioned was identifying \$250-million worth of capital projects that will not be funded.

One major project to which SEPTA is still committed is the \$2-billion extension of the Norristown High Speed Line to King of Prussia. In its first complete update on the project since 2017 SEPTA revealed several changes to the four-mile route and furnished new renderings of the five stations on the proposed line. Those stations will be at Henderson Road, Allendale Road, Mall Blvd., First & American Avenues and Moore Road/Valley Forge, where a 500-space parking garage will be located. The new line would split off from the existing NHSL just north of the present Hughes Park station. The estimated cost of the project has increased from \$1.3 billion to \$2 billion due to inflation, changes in design and higher real estate acquisition

costs. Funding from Uncle Sam will be a necessity. A final environmental impact statement should be completed by early this year, with the actual start of service anticipated sometime between 2025 and 2027.

The union representing most SEPTA transit workers last month threatened legal action against the agency over how it pays employees who are quarantined for exposure to the coronavirus. Currently SEPTA gives workers up to four weeks of paid leave, enough for two 14-day quarantines, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, but if a worker faces a third quarantine, he or she must apply for sick pay at half their regular wages. This policy, said Transport Workers Union Local 234 President Willie Brown, is "foolhardy" because it encourages workers to report for their regular shifts while sick or after being exposed to the virus.....AMTRAK and NJ TRANSIT riders who wish to transfer to SEPTA can now validate their tickets at any of the five center-city Regional Rail stations. They must use the barcode scanners at designated Key Card gates.

Like other cities, Philadelphia has been heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, a fact spelled out in a lengthy article in the December 4 edition of the Inquirer. In center city for example, the West Walnut Street retail corridor has at least 25 percent of its stores currently or about to be closed, and the 1700 block near Rittenhouse Square has nearly half of its premium storefronts shuttered. Foot traffic in center city is way down because so many office workers have been sent home to do their jobs remotely, causing retail demand to shrink by more than \$1 billion. "It's horrible," said one real estate executive. "The market here is in bad shape," but as these workers come back "there'll be more foot traffic and more demand." She added that "everything hinges on the vaccines. Without question. Absolutely."

A snowstorm on Wednesday afternoon December 16 caused some disruption to transit service and numerous highway delays. An official 6.6 inches fell at International Airport, the most since March of 2018, while lesser amounts were measured in some suburbs. Several Regional Rail trains were cancelled that afternoon and evening, almost 30 bus routes were detoured or suspended, and the Broad Street and Market-Frankford trains ran all night instead of yielding to owl bus service. The seven-day-a-week closure of the center city trolley tunnel from 12 midnight to 5 AM, which began December 13 for maintenance and heavy cleaning, was cancelled for the night of the 16th. Late night service on the Norristown High Speed Line was suspended to allow for clearance of the tracks, with the 10:10 PM departure from 69th Street the last northbound train. Most rail services were restored on Thursday morning the 17th, with some train cancellations and delays reported.

A heavy wind-driven rainstorm soaked the region early on Christmas morning December 25, dropping one to two inches of rain in many areas with up to three inches in parts of

Montgomery, Delaware and Chester Counties. At least 64,000 PECO customers lost electric power, with about 7,500 of them still without power by 9 that evening. SEPTA operated a Sunday schedule on Christmas Day. Paoli-Thorndale Regional Rail service was suspended for a time but resumed around 8:30 AM after several downed trees were cleared, but trains continued to operate with delays of up to ten minutes throughout the day. During the day outbound Lansdale-Doylestown, West Trenton and Warminster trains were forced to board from the inbound platforms at Melrose Park and Elkins Park to avoid a tree blocking the #2 track.

In an apparent money-saving action, the advanced train stop signals on the Norristown High Speed Line were taken out of service effective December 7. These signals warned train operators that a passenger or passengers were waiting to board at the next station, but low ridership evidently now make the lights redundant. Their removal seemingly will cause delays as operators now need to slow down at some stations to visually determine if there are waiting passengers.....Regional Rail ticket offices at many outlying stations were temporarily closed effective Monday, December 14, and all center city ticket offices now have reduced hours on weekdays and weekends. Temple and Penn Medicine station offices are closed on weekends.

SEPTA reports that “rush hours” on Regional Rail are running 90 to 100 minutes earlier than in normal times, due to the fact that many riders are essential workers such as those traveling to and from hospitals or other healthcare jobs. Trainsets have been downsized with some seats blocked off for social distancing, reducing the usable seats in Silverliner IV cars to 55. Track and wire work on AMTRAK Saturday and Sunday, December 5 and 6, required SEPTA to bus Paoli-Thorndale Line riders between Overbrook and 30th Street Station. Amtrak also ran several Keystone trains on adjusted schedules, with later arrivals and departures at 30th Street on those days.

Among coming projects that will affect the Regional Rail system are these: Paoli-Thorndale line—switch work at Overbrook and platform construction at Ardmore; Manayunk-Norristown—eight miles of shoreline stabilization and new high-level platforms at Conshohocken; Wilmington-Newark—I-95 overhead bridge work in Wilmington; Trenton—AMTRAK rebuilding work between “Zoo” and North Philadelphia. The latter will prevent any early resumption of Chestnut Hill West service. SEPTA plans to extend four present Wilmington roundtrips to Newark. New timetables will be issued effective January 24 for six RRD lines including Wilmington-Newark, and a general reissue is tentatively set for March 7. A pilot project is being considered for late-night service to accommodate third-shift essential workers\

A taste of the old Pennsy has appeared at SEPTA’s St. Davids station on the Main Line. Two beautiful reproductions of the original PRR red-and-gold Keystone-style station signs were

installed last month on the old outbound passenger shelter at St. Davids, and two more will soon be placed on the inbound shelter by the Radnor Historical Society. The signs were cast from an original that had been rescued by local resident Bruce Wilson in 1971 when the station building was being demolished. He spotted the sign on top of a dumpster in the parking lot and asked the agent if he could have it. “Sure, it’s only going to the dump.” Many years later he loaned the nicely preserved sign to the historical society and now it hangs in Bruce’s living room! At least two other SEPTA stations also are graced by reproduced PRR signs—Wayne and Lansdowne.



This is the year when AMTRAK turns 50! No doubt some special events are being planned for the railroad’s golden anniversary on May 1... As mentioned above, AMTRAK has received a \$1-billion bailout in the

Federal government’s \$900 billion stimulus package signed into law last month. Amtrak had requested \$4.8 billion to include both its annual funding request and the \$1 billion in pandemic aid. Amtrak CEO William Flynn thanked Congress for its action but said the COVID funding ‘is intended to be a temporary Band-Aid that will help Amtrak and our state and commuter partners [and] is critical for minimizing negative impacts to our customers, employees and service between now and the end of March.’ He added that the railroad will look for additional funding “so we can restore service, bring back furloughed employees and continue our progress on vital capital projects.”

AMTRAK last month celebrated the long-awaited completion of a 1.5-mile third main track between “Yard” interlocking in Wilmington and “Ragan” interlocking near Newport. This project, which also included bridge replacement, was part of a larger \$71.2-million improvement project on the Northeast Corridor between Wilmington and Newark, partially funded by the Delaware DOT....In the weeks before the inauguration of Joseph R. Biden as President of the United States, there was some online speculation that “AMTRAK Joe” might ride a special train from Wilmington to Washington for the occasion. This, however, seems unlikely due to security concerns. It will be recalled that Barack Obama rode a special train from Philadelphia to Washington for his first inauguration in 2009, picking up then-Vice President Biden at the Wilmington station (which is now named for him).

AMTRAK had its own problems with the December 16-17 snowstorm (see above). On Wednesday the 16th a severely modified schedule was operated on the Corridor between Boston and Washington. All Acela service was cancelled, along with 14 Northeast Regional trains between Newport News and Boston and 16 Keystone Service trains to and from Harrisburg.

Four other Keystone trains that normally run to and from New York were cut back to Philadelphia. Northbound Corridor train #170 was photographed at Wilmington station early Thursday morning with P42 diesel #90 coupled behind road power ACS-64 electric #619, evidently as insurance against electric power problems.

Then, beginning Monday, January 4, AMTRAK temporarily cancelled 13 of its 38 weekday Keystone Service trains to and from Harrisburg. Three weekend schedules also were cut. Amtrak said that it was taking the action to adapt to changing demand, meaning reduced ridership. But three roundtrips will operate through to New York, an increase of one. Reservations will be required on all trains to allow for social distancing.

On New Year's Day AMTRAK officially opened its much-heralded Moynihan Train Hall in New York. The \$1.6-billion project has converted the historic Farley Post Office building into an opulent annex to grungy Pennsylvania Station. Located across 8th Avenue from the existing station, the Train Hall boasts over an acre of glass skylights and numerous art installations while serving as a magnificent waiting room and ticketing area for Amtrak and LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD passengers. A new concourse connects the hall with 17 of Penn Station's 21 tracks. Named for the late New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan who long championed the project, the awe-inspiring structure partially compensates for the shameful demolition of the famed Penn Station building which was torn down in the 1960's to make way for an office building and the Madison Square Garden sports arena. This forced all passenger activities to be entombed in the lower level of the old station, creating what the *New York Times* has called "the busiest and perhaps most miserable train hub in America." The Moynihan Hall will be a dramatic contrast.

The first of AMTRAK's 28 next-generation Acela trainsets has run over 30,000 miles at the Transportation Technology Center near Pueblo, CO, reaching speeds of up to 166.8 mph. Aided by more than 60 implanted sensors, a team of technicians has been monitoring the streamlined train's performance. When testing is completed next month, the train will be returned to builder Alstom's Hornell (NY) shop to be fitted with all of its interior features. The hope is that when the new Acela fleet is introduced this fall, as currently planned, it will help reinvigorate Amtrak's ridership which has suffered a steep decline during the current pandemic.



NJ TRANSIT announced on December 18 that it had completed the installation and

implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) over its entire 400-mile system, just days before the deadline set by the Federal government (see December Cinders and previous issues). NJT

was the last railroad in the U.S. subject to the PTC requirement that completed the installation. If NJT had not finished the job by December 31 it would have been subject to a \$25,000 per day fine. Federal Railroad Administrator Ronald Batory later announced that the 41 railroads subject to the mandate, including seven Class I freight railroads, AMTRAK, 28 commuter railroads and five shortlines and regionals, now had PTC fully in operation on all 57,536 route miles of their lines. PTC was required by the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 to be installed on all heavily traveled freight mainlines and, on any lines, where intercity or commuter rail passenger service is operated. The various automatic PTC braking systems also must be interoperable between connecting lines.

NJT and its riders also were victims of the December 16-17 snow emergency, which hit the New York-North Jersey area especially hard. All rail service into and out of New York Penn Station and Hoboken Terminal was suspended as of 7:30 PM Wednesday evening, and bus service in the north and central areas of the State was halted, starting at 6 PM. Atlantic City train service and River Line light rail service operated on normal schedules, while bus routes in South Jersey continued to run as long as weather and road conditions allowed. The North Jersey rail cancellations persisted into Thursday morning, but bus and light rail services gradually resumed. Some train service did operate on Thursday under the Severe Weather Level 2 schedule, but regular weekday rail service was not restored until Friday morning the 18th.



PATCO shifted to a new winter schedule effective on Saturday, December 5. This is normal procedure, which marks the end of the fall leaf season when slippery rail conditions force trains to operate at reduced speeds. With the leaves gone trains enjoy faster run times, saving up to two minutes.



The famed EAST BROAD TOP RAILROAD, through the non-profit EBT Foundation, has received a \$1.4-million grant from the Pennsylvania Redevelopment Capital Program to assist in the revival of regular tourist train operation next summer. The money will go toward the construction of a new events facility at Colgate Grove, rehabilitation of the historic machine shop complex at Rockhill Furnace, and extension of the line northward for a mile to the town of Shirleysburg. The railroad, which had been out of service for the past eight years, is headquartered at Orbisonia in Huntingdon County (see October *Cinders*). The former carbarn of the long-forgotten Quakertown Traction Company in the center of Quakertown has received new life. Dating from 1896, the brick building has been converted into the Trolley Barn Public Market where 18 specialized vendors occupy spaces. The trolley line to Richlandtown was abandoned in 1929.

The Ft. Washington Passenger Cars

More interesting, but also conflicting, information about these historic cars has been received from our members. Look for even more in the next issue too!

Dave Briggs writes:

The recent ad in October and additional details in the December issue of *CINDERS* on the cars at the former Coach Inn restaurant in Ft. Washington sent me digging through my files to see if I could possibly fill in some additional details. Using the top photo of all four cars in the December issue as a reference, here is what I can add:

The car on the right is ex-PRR business car 90, PRR-built at Altoona Shops in 1913. I believe that when retired, as car 90-*DELAWARE*, it first went to Red Clay Valley Railway Equipment & Leasing (the Wilmington & Western folks) and later went to John Meyer Jr., the restaurant owner who put the project together. At the restaurant, it served as a private dining room. A later owner did indeed want all four cars moved out, but as the December article mentioned, the 90-in December 1990--and the adjacent *MARY AMBLER* were the only two cars cut up when there were no takers. [*Editor's note: Will history repeat itself?*]

The second car from the right--named *MARY AMBLER* by the restaurant and also scrapped on-site in January 1991--was also the most interesting. Built and operated by Pullman as part of 6-car Lot 6393 in October of 1930 and originally named *NEW HAVEN CLUB*, it featured 8 sections, a buffet-lounge and a six-seat sunroom. It and sister car *CUMBERLAND CLUB* were initially assigned by Pullman to the "State of Maine Express." Sold to the Baltimore & Ohio in 1948, it was numbered 7364, and in August of 1950 was renamed *SUSQUEHANNA CLUB*. It was removed from Pullman service in June of 1961 and subsequently converted to coach-observation 3335, its configuration when it was retired and went to the restaurant.

The third car from the right was built as B&O baggage-coach 1436 by Pullman in 1926. It was extensively rebuilt and streamlined in 1946, emerging as baggage-coffee shop-lounge 1308-*HYDE PARK* for service on

the new 1947 *Cincinnatian*. It saw service as a kitchen at the Coach Inn

Unfortunately, I have little to contribute on the leftmost car, the restaurant-named *ELYSIAN FIELDS*. I believe it to be one of the B&O 3301-3303-series buffet-observation cars, rebuilt and streamlined in the early 1940's from older heavyweight 5200- and 5300-series Pullman-built coaches, but can offer no further details, speculative or otherwise.

Anecdotally, my late friend, Larry Haines, onetime **AAPRCO** officer and former co-owner of heavyweight Pullman car *CLOVER COLONY*, once told me that his car co-owner Rudy Morgenfruh helped prepare all four cars for the move to the restaurant and that Bennett Levin (Juniata Terminal RR and one of the current families behind revival of the EBT RR) would have liked to have salvaged the rare Altoona-built truck frames from the 90 before it was scrapped but was unable to do so. Larry also noted that all but one of the cars had major holes cut into their common sides and that none of the cars could be moved out on their own wheels because they had all been welded to the rail under them when placed at the restaurant.

Some of this historical information was extracted from several published works by another friend and fellow passenger-car historian with whom I have long corroborated and has just recently passed, a victim of COVID-19, the late Bob Wayner, from whom I have had blanket permission to quote data if credited.

Editor's Note: Dave is the author of *The Private Passenger Car Annual* Volume 1 (1980 & now out-of-print).

Charlie Loutey, now living in Collegeville but who spent most of his life in Willow Grove send me a .pdf file of an article from the Sunday *Philadelphia Bulletin* dated November 8, 1964 about the "three" Baltimore & Ohio passenger cars once part of the **Coach Inn**. Charlie said the fourth car, the PRR business car #90 *Delaware* was added later. That article has been retyped from a dark image and appears *verbatim* on page 7, but without an attached photograph showing "Railroad cars are installed as additions to the Coach Inn on Commerce drive in Ft. Washington."

[from *Philadelphia Bulletin* Nov. 7, 1964]

3 Railroad Cars Become New Wings of Restaurant

By JOSEPH J. McMAHON
Of The Bulletin Staff

Drivers along the Pennsylvania Turnpike and Route 309 where the two roads cross in Ft. Washington are doing a double-take these days.

Off to one side, it looks as if a railroad car has rammed into a restaurant.

But, it's just an illusion. What's really happening is this: A restaurant owner is adding three retired Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Club cars onto his establishment.

Completion Due Soon

When the work is completed early next month, one car will become a Victorian-era cocktail lounge. The other two will be modern dining rooms, each seating 44 persons.

The man with the idea is Andrew Meyer, 28, a graduate of Cornell University's hotel school. He lives on Norristown Road in Springhouse, several miles from the location of the **Coach Inn**, the restaurant he took over in August 1963.

Not long ago he was casting about for a special attraction to give the **Coach Inn** a distinctive air. He hit upon the idea of a railroad car.

So he went to the Baltimore, where the B&O has 300 steel, air-conditioned cars for sale. He paid \$1,000 each for the Royal Blue, Hyde Park and Quarter Century Club—names familiar to many regular patrons of the old New York-to-Washington run, which the line abandoned several years ago. [Editor's note: on April 26, 1958, the B&O discontinued the *Royal Blue*, its remaining passenger train between Baltimore and New York, ending passenger service altogether to the latter city.]

Cars Are Moved

Then he paid \$7,000 a piece to have them moved from Baltimore to a Reading siding at Ft. Washington.

Finally, he said yesterday, he paid "even more" to have the three 160,000-pound cars trucked from the siding to his restaurant a mile away.

That operation including laying three 85-foot sections of track, one strip for each car.

The cars were removed from the tracks and the trucks put in position on each track.

Then the car bodies were hoisted on 50-ton cranes to flat-bed trucks, transported to the restaurant and lowered onto the trucks.

Side by Side

The final operation put the cars side by side, about three feet from each other, with the front ends abutting the restaurant. Now a foyer is being built so that patrons may enter through the restaurant or from the fronts of the cars.

The moving operation from siding to restaurant took six days. Meyer estimates the overall cost, including purchase moving and redecorating and furnishing at \$100,000. [Editor's note: this is equal to \$831,631 in 2020 dollars].

He plans to paint them green with white roofs and gold scroll work. The cocktail-lounge car will feature Victorian-style lamps, black marble top tables, rooms furnished in red velvet and a 23-foot bar, complete with oversized brass rail and black leather elbow rests.

[Your editor was a newspaper boy for the *Bulletin* with a paper route in Cherry Hill around 1964 and may well have delivered the actual issue that had this article.]

Your editor emailed Dave Briggs about the conflicting info in the above article and received the reply below. I took additional pictures of the cars that will appear next month with even more reader comments.

Dave Briggs writes:

The *Bulletin* news article intrigues me. *HYDE PARK* is the old B&O name for the combine, as I noted in my email. The *Royal Blue* had a consist of rebuilt heavyweight cars, including buffet observation cars of the 3301-3303 series as I had surmised. When you take the photo, note to see if there is a long blank section of pier panel (the part just above the belt rail, where the side windows are) close to the vestibule door on the exposed side of the car, and if you can squeeze (or at least see) between the two cars,

check and see if there is a blank section on that side of the observation car just past the third or fourth pair of side windows, counting from the rear of the car. That will further narrow down the specific possible car, as one of them had the blank on one side, the other had it on the other side, as their interior configurations differed when in B&O service.

While B&O did not have a car named *Royal Blue*, some of their cars in captive service (used only on one particular train) apparently did have the train name on the side, so not having seen the car in its as-received state at the restaurant, one might speculate that that was how the reporter got the name. B&O passenger service between Baltimore and Jersey City ended on April 26, 1958, so that was the point at which these observation cars may have become surplus. It appears from the news item that they were apparently moved to the restaurant about the same time as the article, which would be logical allowing for a few years of reassignments or storage after the cessation of service to Jersey City.

The *QUARTER CENTURY CLUB* name referenced in the news article intrigues me, and if true, upends all of the previous information I'd received about the *MARY AMBLER*--because it otherwise fits the general description of that car and its function. The car named in the article has a history similar to that of the *SUSQUEHANNA CLUB*, almost to the letter. According to information researched by Bob Wayner, it was Pullman-built as one of three cars for service on the Erie RR as *SPRING BROOK CLUB* in September 1929, it had the identical 8 section-buffet lounge-sunroom interior configuration (as Pullman Plan 3989). It was renamed *METROPOLITAN CLUB* in October 1932 and renamed again to *QUARTER CENTURY CLUB* in February 1942. Sold to the B&O in 1948 and later numbered 7356 along with the name, it was removed from Pullman service in 1961 and soon thereafter converted to a coach-observation and renumbered 3336.

Bob Wayner's data for both cars does not show ultimate disposition, which is the gap I and other researchers have tried to fill with our work. So, it is very possible--if the name was still on the car--that this is the car that ultimately was named *MARY AMBLER* at the restaurant as it appears this was based on the notes taken by the reporter in 1964.

I'd be curious to see a photocopy of the newspaper article [*Editor's note*: sent to him], even if the photo appears as a giant grey blob, just to see what all the reporter had said.

It was apparently written while the restaurant still being built and before the 4th car--the Pennsylvania RR business car--had arrived and been moved into place, as from what you said, there were only three cars referenced by the reporter.

To be continued...

Comment about our 12/17 Zoom meeting

Dennis Goren writes:

I enjoyed the presentation last night. I chuckled at the comment that Baldwin locomotives were everywhere you went. Yes, they are everywhere!



For example, and in a place, one might not expect, is this picture of a Baldwin plate taken at the Ghum Railway Museum. Ghum is in northeast India, and is the next to last station on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, and so it is just before Darjeeling.

Moynihan Train Hall

continued from page 1.

For security, there were AMTK police, DHS police and the NY Army National Guard. There were a few AMTK Ambassadors walking round giving away something. I went up to one and was disappointed to just get a bottle of hand sanitizer.

The central part of the hall is approximately the same size as the central area of GCT. Along the east edge are the small, ticketed passenger waiting room. Along the west edge are ticket windows for AMTK and LIRR [not finished]. The only food was at Starbucks by the entry sign pictured on p.1 and a small food cart in one corner. Upstairs is a new AMTK lounge. Other facilities for AMTK employees are still under construction.

The new hall does nothing for NJT riders as there is no access to tracks #1-#4. LIRR riders entering from 7th Ave. are unlikely to walk thru Penn Station to enter the tracks from here. Press reports were mixed with some noting it was just a hall [with extremely limited seating] and not a new train station, which is what NYC really needs.