

The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Southeastern Massachusetts.....	Paul Cutler, Jr.
“The Operator”.....	Paul Cutler III
Cape Cod News.....	Skip Burton
Boston <u>Globe</u> Reporter.....	Brendan Sheehan
Boston <u>Herald</u> Reporter.....	Jim South
<u>Wall Street Journal</u> Reporter.....	Paul Bonanno, Jack Foley
Rhode Island News.....	Tony Donatelli
Empire State News.....	Dick Kozlowski
Amtrak News.....	Rick Sutton, Russell Buck
“The Chief’s Corner”.....	Fred Lockhart

PRODUCTION STAFF

Publication.....	Al Taylor Al Munn Jim Ferris
Web Page and photographer.....	Joe Dumas
Guest Contributors this issue.....	Jeremy Cahill, Rick Sutton Peter Palica

The Semaphore is the monthly (except July) newsletter of the South Shore Model Railway Club & Museum (SSMRC) and any opinions found herein are those of the authors thereof and of the Editors and do not necessarily reflect any policies of this organization. The SSMRC, as a non-profit organization, does not endorse any position. Your comments are welcome! Please address all correspondence regarding this publication to: *The Semaphore*, 11 Hancock Rd., Hingham, MA 02043. ©2016
E-mail: daveclinton@verizon.net Club phone: 781-740-2000. Web page: www.ssmrc.org

VOLUME 36 ■■■■■ NUMBER 10 ■■■■■ OCTOBER 2016

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FORM 19 ORDERS

OCTOBER B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, October 31st 8 p.m.

DECODER & LOCO TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, November 3rd 8 p.m.

NOVEBER BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, November 7th 8 p.m.

OFFICIAL OPERATIONS

Sunday, November 13th 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. (w/lunch)

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Saturday, November 26th

FALL SHOW AND OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29th 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30th 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

OCTOBER B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, October 31st 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

Congratulations to **Roger St. Peter** on winning this month's 50/50 Raffle!

This month's contest was completed by 11 members:

Coley Walsh	"Gunny"
Doug Buchanan	Al Taylor
Bob Farrenkropf	Joe Dumas
Ron Clough	Fred Lockhart
Tom Wylie	Savery Moore
	John Holmes

Winner of the draw was **Savery**, who took home a P2K S2, decorated in Maine Central "flames". Here're the answers to the type of locomotive that the nicknames apply:

TOASTER (Amtrak AEM7 "Mighty Mouse")

RED BARN (CP SD40-2F)

BIG MAC (EMD SD70, 80 & 90MAC)

COVERED WAGON (EMD E & F units)

SPONGE BOB SQUARECAB (CSX SD40-3)

LITTLE JOE (MILW also CSS&SB electric

locos made for Russia but never sent because of Stalin)

SCREAMER (EMD F40PH)

U-BOAT (GE "Universal"-type)

SHARK (Baldwin RF-16)

HAMMERHEAD (Alco RS3 with both steam generator and Dynamic brakes in short hood)

=====

FOR DECEMBER: Name Amtrak's newest president and CEO. And where did he come from? Drawing from correct answers, which can be placed on Contest Answer Forms, found inside the Train Room on the old wooden display case. Or, any piece of paper will do. Don't forget your name and good luck!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

Next weekend is our Fall Open House and Show; it is one of our major fund raisers of the year. When you read this, there will still be time to help out with the preparations. There are many railroad station parking lots on the Greenbush and Plymouth branches, that can have flyers distributed to the cars. If you live on a main road why not take a show sign home and put it on your front lawn. There are still slots to fill on Saturday and Sunday; some may even be sit-down jobs, so please help out in some way as it all helps to have a successful and profitable show. Speaking of profit: don't forget the White Elephant Table, we probably all have something we bought but never got around to using that could be put out on the table.

Progress on the railroad: the Scenery Committee has installed the residential area in West Middleton and I believe that part to be done. There will be some blending-in that will need to be done between it and the swamp area, along with ballasting the tracks. The other area that is pretty much done is at White River Jct. Peter Palica has filled in the area around the wye, with some very nice scenery using some N scale structures to give a forced-perspective for distance.

The Electrical Committee has recently installed the Model Board for Cedar Hill passenger terminal. This has been a major piece of the terminal that has been missing from our operations, and it will make a big difference for the Station Master with arriving and departing trains. Some things you need to know about it: first, the white LEDs on the double slip turnouts show routing; the standard turnouts have red and green LEDs to show point position; the white LEDs at the far right end show that the track power is on for the station tracks and the last thing to remind about is the LEDs are always correct whether you control the turnouts from your throttle or from the toggle panel in the pit. (See picture on cover.)

That's it for this month, let's have a great show weekend and look forward to November all steam operation.

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer

SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

OCTOBER 2011 (5 years ago)

- Bob Buck, long-time friend of the Club, dies on his 82nd Birthday.
- Fred Lockhart's first "Chief's Column" written, as he takes over as Chief Engineer.
- Saratoga & North Creek finishes its first season of operation and purchases ex-Santa Fe full-length dome car.
- Benchwork completed to fill gap outside Cedar Hill Yard, left by removal of previous temporary track.
- Narrow Gauge construction continues with Bob England's building of a dual-gauge turntable and Al Taylor building engine facilities.
- Larson city scene progressing nicely, thanks to Paul Bonanno and his students.
- Nova Scotia extends funding agreement with CB&NS Railway for additional three years.
- NJ Gov. Christie terminates project to build new trans-Hudson tunnels for passenger service.
- Grafton & Upton begins accepting bulk shipments to its new Envirobulk Terminal in West Upton.
- EMD announces plans to release next-generation passenger diesel in 2014.
- Amtrak orders 40 more cars from Bombardier for lengthening *Acela Express* trains.
- The effects of Tropical Storm Irene affected railroads in Vermont the most, with millions of dollars spent to bring

them back into service, including VRS, Pan Am, NECR and even the Conway Scenic in New Hampshire.

- Study suggests return of commuter rail service to Foxboro over the Framingham Secondary could be viable.

OCTOBER 2006 (10 years ago)

- Canadian Pacific Railway's luxury train, the *Royal Canadian Pacific* chosen as world's best luxury train service by travel agents and travel professionals.
- Amtrak assumes maintenance of its *Acela Express* trainsets from Bombardier and Alstom.
- P&W opens freight rail line to Davisville, RI, easing congestion of mixing with Amtrak passenger trains.
- Pan Am Railways downgrades entire Connecticut River mainline from Springfield to E. Northfield, MA to 10 MPH.
- 1205th Transportation Railway Battalion of the U.S. Army Reserve, located in Westfield, MA is deactivated.
- Waterbury, VT RR station completely restored.
- Mt. Washington Cog RR converts steam loco "Waumbek" (Alco Manchester 1908) to burn biodiesel.
- NJ Transit begins rolling out its first bi-level cars.
- Amtrak introduces 110-MPH service on "Keystone Corridor" between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, PA.
- Rapido Trains brings out first R-T-R passenger car, modeled after CNR's "lightweight coach"; called "Super Continental Line", showing ultimate detailing in plastic.
- NYO&W's "Flying Diesel Corps." Wreck of 1955 recreated in W. Middleton during Operations.

OCTOBER 2001 (15 years ago)

- Amtrak's *Downeaster* service announced to begin December 15th, after 11 years of delays caused mainly by Guilford Transportation.
- First double-stack containers travel through the enlarged Hoosac Tunnel.
- Newark City (NJ) subway PCC's last trip.
- MBTA takes delivery of first Kawasaki double-decker coach from latest order.
- BC Rail ends steam operations.
- BAR sold to Rail World for \$62 million.
- Canadian National gets approval for takeover of Wisconsin Central.
- Historic Canaan, CT RR station nearly destroyed by arson.
- Microsoft introduces "Train Simulator".
- Flagpole at Club project begun.
- MBTA considers building "trench" through Weymouth Landing for Greenbush Line.

OCTOBER 1996 (20 Years Ago)

- Famed RR artist Howard Fogg dies.
- Ex-MEC Rigby Yard "PT Tower" deactivated.
- Connecticut Southern takes over 23-miles of ex-Conrail line in Hartford, CT area.
- MBTA equips control cars with "ditch lights".
- Amtrak's *Adirondack* equipped with refurbished "Heritage" equipment.

●BAR named "Regional Railroad of the Year" by Railway Age magazine.

●Tom Wylie joins SSMRC.

●First "ECL Day on the QBT", with 16 members attending and Kevin Linagen hosting.

●Amtrak tests "Flexiliner" train.

OCTOBER 1991 (25 Years Ago)

●Jim South joins SSMRC.

●Deluxe passenger carrier "American-European Express" files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

●Guilford Transportation low bidder to operate MBTA Commuter Rail.

●MBTA takes delivery of new F40PHM-2C locomotives.

●Senate passes \$35 billion transportation bill, which includes \$208 million for Northeast Corridor improvements, allowing New Haven to Boston electrification.

●Hingham rail tunnel called "possible" by MBTA.

OCTOBER 1986 (30 Years Ago)

●First Semaphore-sponsored rail trip on October 5th; Cape Cod & Hyannis RR trip from Braintree to Hyannis in our own car--\$10 round-trip!

●Monthly Operations changed to Monday & Thursday following Business Meeting.

●Kevin Linagen elected first, and only, "president" of "Hyballers" youth group.

●MBTA begins negotiations with Amtrak for operation of Commuter Rail.

●Worcester takes first step to obtain money for rehabilitation of their Union Station.

●MBTA decides to build new Red Line station at JFK/UMass.

●B&M's Cheshire Branch rail removed from Keene to North Walpole, NH.

●Valley RR in Essex, CT, purchases brand-new Chinese 2-8-2 steam locomotive.

●Amtrak sets plans to renovate Washington, DC, Union Station.

●EMD delivers its 1,000th locomotive: CP Rail GP38-2.

OCTOBER 1981 (35 Years Ago)

●John Governor produces attractive "Operating Rulebook".

●Westside Model Co. goes out of business.

●VIA Rail Canada forced to cancel Montreal to Halifax "Atlantic Limited" (first time).

ENGINE TUNE-UP CLINIC

Rob Cook was first in line, returning with his NYC RS2 from Kato. Last time, he installed a sound decoder, with **Fred Lockhart's** assistance. So, now it

was time for lighting. He tossed the factory LEDs and used new 3mm "golden glow" LEDs to simulate the early, single-bulb headlights. A 470-ohm resistor, as suggested on the Miniatronics package of LEDs was used, along with cutting the light tubes and gluing the end of the heat-shrunk LED to the back of the headlight lens. Worked great. The steam-equipped RS was now ready to pull a short commuter train out of Chatham, NY, down the Brewster Line!

Former member **Ross Hall** returned with his brass B&M P4 Pacific. With the master-mind help of Paul Cutler III, the delicate installation of decoder and lighting continued. The success showed all over Ross' face, as he watched it pull three PS coaches up the grade out of W. Middletown. Nice to see you again, Ross!

Eric Tedeschi brought his new UP Turbine from American Trains, Inc., their first locomotive. He bought the DC version but we found that it needs a 21-pin decoder to convert to DCC. So, the clinic will obtain a small supply of the new LokSound decoders (non-sound), so that next clinic he will be able to just plug one into the receptacle provided.

John Sheridan worked on his new SD40-2T from Genesis, dressed in New York, Susquehanna & Western "Bumble Bee" colors. He successfully installed LokSound decoder and programmed to his liking.

Lastly, **Paul Agnew** worked on two P2K New Haven PA locomotives, installing the DH126 by hard-wiring. These handsome locomotives are decorated in two of the New Haven's attractive schemes worn by this locomotive.

Thanks to **Paul Cutler III** for his assistance and for preparing the Model Shop beforehand. Our next clinic will be **Thursday, November 3rd**. Sign-up sheet on Bulletin Board. Everyone is welcome!

POTPOURRI

MORE U.S. RAILROAD WORKERS are testing positive for drugs. Testing in 2016 has shown that nearly 8% of workers involved in rail accidents were positive for drug use; include marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, benzodiazepine, OxyContin and morphine, according to internal federal documents obtained by the Washington Post. The number of post-accident drug-positives was the highest since the FRA began keeping records in 1987 and three times greater than it was 10 years ago. Overall, the number of railway workers—including engineers, train crew and dispatchers—who tested positive for drug use in random tests soared about 43% last year, the documents show. The number rose to 256 last year from 2014. (WP)

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IT'S BEEN ONE YEAR SINCE Norfolk Southern purchased the Delaware & Hudson Railway Co.'s (D&H) line between Sunbury, Pa., and Schenectady, N.Y. The Class 1 marked the first anniversary of the purchase on Sept. 19 by highlighting the line's infrastructure investments and improved customer service. "We set out to improve our competitive transportation offerings between Pennsylvania, New York and New England, and I'm proud to say Norfolk Southern is well on its way to achieving that goal," said Norfolk Southern Chairman, President and CEO James A. Squires. "Norfolk Southern takes great pride in incorporating this corridor into our safe, reliable and efficient 22-state freight rail network." On Sept. 18, 2015, NS completed its purchase of 282 miles of D&H track for \$214.5 million from Canadian Pacific Railway. Delaware & Hudson is a subsidiary of CP. This past year saw NS hire 166 new employees, including 140 former D&H employees with experience working the corridor. NS also installed 90,000 new crossties, resurfaced 84 miles of track and made improvements to New York's Belden Tunnel to improve safety and service on the line. NS notes that improved service on the route, including an average of eight daily trains, has helped attract additional rail traffic, shifting long-haul trucks off public roadways. NS Intermodal terminals at Ayer, Mass., and

Scranton, Pa., have seen double-digit volume growth during the past year. (RA)

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SPANISH RAIL MANUFACTURER TALGO looks like it will be moving back into its old Milwaukee digs after earning an LA rebuilding contract. Sources close to the company say that Talgo workers will remanufacture light rail cars from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, widely known as LA Metro. The Milwaukee mayor's office confirmed as much to Milwaukee media in a news conference on Monday regarding the manufacturing future for a city-sponsored industrial park. Milwaukee city development officials tell local media that Talgo may move as many as 25 to 30 jobs to Wisconsin as part of the remanufacturing deal. Talgo once had manufacturing operations in the Century City industrial park and workers there built two articulated passenger train sets for use on proposed Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison, Wis., higher-speed passenger service. The State of Wisconsin terminated the passenger rail proposal and reneged on a purchase agreement with Talgo after 2009 elections changed the make-up of state government. The trainsets are now sitting in storage at Amtrak's Beech Grove, Ind., maintenance shops waiting further disposition. (TN)

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AMTRAK'S GREAT DOME passenger car is returning to *Adirondack* trains this fall. The *Ocean View*, the last full-length dome in regular service, will make a six-week appearance on the *Adirondack* from Sept. 29 through Nov. 1st. It will operate northbound on *Adirondack* train No. 69 from Albany to Montreal on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Mondays and will return south on train No. 68 on Fridays, Sundays, and Tuesdays. Dome car trips are not available on Wednesdays. The dome car's visit is in partnership with the New York State Department of Transportation and the National Park Service Trails and Rails program. Passengers riding *Adirondack* trains will be able to enjoy the dome car at no additional cost. Amtrak's dome was built by the Budd Co. for Great Northern's *Empire Builder* in 1955. Earlier this summer it appeared on the Michigan-sponsored Chicago-Grand Rapids *Pere Marquette*. (TN)

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THE MBTA ANNOUNCED the Fitchburg Line's new Wachusett Commuter Rail Station was set for a partial opening on Friday, Sept. 30. The line will see a limited number of trains operating initially while crews complete the remaining construction, representatives

say. MBTA says the station should be prepared for full service beginning in November. Located at 55 Authority Drive in Fitchburg, the station will have two inbound and two outbound trains operating to Wachusett. Officials say there have not been any additional changes to the Fitchburg Line schedule. As part of the Wachusett Extension Project, the rail extension expands the Fitchburg Line's commuter rail service by five miles going west to the Wachusett station in West Fitchburg. Representatives say the full project scope entails the renovation of bridges, signals and track on the Pan Am Southern rail line in addition



to the newly constructed MBTA train layover facility in Westminster. The new station has been made fully accessible and includes parking with a 360-car capacity that will be operated by the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority, officials say. The new MBTA station also touts enhanced safety features, which representatives say include benches, a passenger shelter, windscreens and improved lighting. The Wachusett station is also set to provide riders with closed circuit television video surveillance cameras, police emergency call boxes and public telephones. MBTA says the Westminster Layover Facility is meant to replace the Fitchburg Line Layover Facility, and the new facility will be 1.5 miles west of the Wachusett Station. The new facility will include six train storage tracks, an employee parking area, a maintenance building, an electrical substation, new fencing and landscaping. (RA)

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“VETERANS” P42 LOCOMOTIVE No. 42 now sports a new inscription below its cab, “Amtrak Honors: Joseph H. Boardman, President and CEO 2008-2016, US Air Force Vietnam Veteran.” The engine was positioned on track 20 during a retirement reception

for Boardman held at Washington Union Station Tuesday evening. Among the more than 100 invited guests were Union Pacific CEO Lance Fritz; BNSF Railway Executive Chairman Matt Rose; Federal Railroad Administration Administrator Sarah Feinberg, former FRA boss Joe Szabo, union officials; and dozens of Amtrak employees and managers.



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A FREIGHT CAR COMPANY headquartered in Miami, Fla., is opening a new production plant across the border – the U.S. and Canadian border, that is. ARA Canada Rolling Stock has opened a new production site in Moncton, New Brunswick, that will build grain hoppers, boxcars and DOT-117-type tank cars. The new tank cars will replace older DOT-111s that are being phased out by U.S. and Canadian railroads. The first phase of production will create 200 jobs, CBC News reports. The company plans to produce approximately 1,500 railcars for U.S. and Canadian rail markets in its first year of production. In the article, Arturo Contreras, CEO of the railcar company, says he hopes to increase the number of employees to 450 after three years and to more than 700 after five years. The decision to build a new production site in Moncton was due to a “very friendly business” environment and advantages in logistics, according to Contreras. The facility is located close to two of the province’s ports in New Brunswick. The facility is located on a former Canadian National rail yard. (TN)

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OPERATING EXPENSES GROWTH is at a 15-year low on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. The commuter rail and transit agency says it reduced its operating deficit by 50 percent through reductions in overtime expenses and other operating

costs during the 2016 fiscal year. The agency's budgeted operating deficit was projected at \$169.6 million, however the actual deficit ended up being just shy of \$86 million. Revenue growth exceeded initial expectations due to what the agency says was strong growth in advertising, parking, and real estate revenues. (TN)

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WISCASSET, WATERVILLE & Farmington Railway locomotives now have a place to turn around thanks to a turntable project volunteers completed on Oct. 10. WW&F locomotive No. 9, an 0-4-4t 1891 Portland Co.-built locomotive crept onto the turntable and was pushed around to face north on Oct. 10, the first time it had done so since 1933. Museum volunteers built the 48-foot turntable this summer, which is a replica of turntables at Wiscasset and Albion, Maine, on the original WW&F. The original railroad was abandoned in 1933. Volunteers located turntable plans in the Maine State Museum. In the future, the turntable will serve a three-stall roundhouse that replicates the original that once stood in Wiscasset.



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F40PH LOCOMOTIVES LIVE! The first of 41 Metra F40PH locomotives rebuilt under a \$91 million remanufacturing contract has returned to service. Now designated as F40PH-3s, these units, features the railroad's new paint scheme previously applied to F59PHs. Metra awarded Progress Rail Services Corp. the contract in 2015 to rebuild 41 EMD F40PH-2 and F40PHM-2 locomotives manufactured between 1989 and 1992. The work, being done at Progress Rail's Patterson, Ga., facility, is expected to extend the life of the locomotives by 10 to 13 years and is a major part of a broader modernization plan to rebuild and replace

nearly all the rolling stock that operates on Metra's non-electrified lines. The rebuilt locomotives feature a new high-voltage cabinet with a microprocessor



control system, remanufactured engines upgraded to U.S. EPA Tier 0+ emissions standards, new and reconditioned accessories, carbody corrosion repair and new paint, rebuilt electrical rotating equipment, rebuilt trucks with new wheels and Positive Train Control (PTC) components. Metra has assigned no. 175, the first F40PH-3, to its lines operated by Union Pacific. (RA)

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PAN AM RAILWAYS has applied to abandon trackage on the old "Northern RR" between Concord and Boscowen, NH, about 6 miles of track. (J.Cahill)

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UNION PACIFIC CALLED "dibs" this month on building the first Martian railroad. The surprise announcement came just hours after SpaceX Chief Executive Elon Musk unveiled his dreams of building a fleet of spaceships to put humans on the Red Planet by 2025, a task he likened to the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad. "It's like building the Union Pacific railroad," Musk told the International Astronautical Congress in Guadalajara, Mexico, this week. "Once that transport system is built, then there's a tremendous opportunity for anyone who wants to go to Mars and create something new or build the foundations of a new planet." Not long after the LA Times reported Musk's comments, UP took to social media with the quote and wrote, "We call dibs on building the first Martian railroad." The post included UP's normal tagline "Building America" with the addendum "And beyond?" Union Pacific spokesperson Raquel Espinoza tells Trains News

Wire that the railroad is always looking for ways to share its story on Twitter, Facebook, and elsewhere, and that Musk's comments provided a perfect opportunity to do just that. "Union Pacific is constantly looking at media and pop culture trends that resonate with the general public and help us tell our story in fun, colorful ways," Espinoza says. Espinoza says the railroad was honored by Musk's shout out during the International Astronautical Federation's annual meeting. The federation was created in 1951 as way to establish a dialog between scientists around the world about space exploration. (TN)

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VOTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY will be considering numerous rail-related issues on the November ballot but the citizens in a Maine community may be weighing one of the most unique. In September, the Gray City Council decided to ask its residents if it should give a \$498,000 grant to the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. and Museum to help fund a move from its current home in Portland, Maine. The grant will be used to purchase property for a new museum and restoration facility, as well as construct water control systems and utilities. The entire move from Portland to Gray is expected to cost as much as \$6 million. So far the museum, which has been planning the move for the last few years, has raised \$500,000 in cash and in-kind services. Executive Director Donnell Carroll tells Trains "News Wire" that the move to Gray would help not only the railroad museum but also the community. "The relocation will bring visitors to Gray, provide public walkways, public picnic areas, event space, and tremendous experiential educational opportunities and serve as another attraction that makes the town a destination," Carroll says. "We completed an economic impact analysis that demonstrates one year of operation will generate \$1.2 million in economic impact. It is an investment in the citizen's future, a driver for further business to locate in town." (TN)

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R.I.P. EMD: Effective September 1, 2016, Electro-Motive Diesel, Inc. became Progress Rail Locomotive Inc., and Electro-Motive Canada Co. became Progress Rail Locomotive Canada Co. Sources indicate that Progress Rail would continue to utilize the EMD "bug" design to promote and brand its locomotive and engine product lines. This is a name change only, and there would be no change in the structure of the components of Progress Rail, a division of Caterpillar, Inc. (RPN)

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I ENJOYED THESE ARTICLES in this month's RR magazines and can suggest them to you:

TRAINS

- While the City Sleeps
 MBTA night work
- 2016 Trains Photo Contest Winners
- When a Brit Came Calling
 "Flying Scotsman" tour
- Looters and Runaways
 "in my own words"

MODEL RAILROADER

- Lighting Models with Micro-LED Strings
- Americanizing European Structures
- National Train Show Report
 News & Products

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

- DL&W RPO-Baggage
- Railroad Signals-Part 10
- CLASSIC TRAINS** (Fall)

- Second Chance at Steam
- Beebe & Clegg Ride the Rio Grande Southern
- Tough Trip from Oneonta
- Splendid Isolation: CN on P.E.I.
 Jim Shaughnessy photos

News sources: Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Amtrak "News", Trains Newswire, Railway Age, Railpace Newsmagazine, RRE "Callboy", "The 470", Patriot Ledger, Washington Post.

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. PLEASE **help out Bryan** at "Bryan's Muffin Shop", as he needs baked goods, like cookies, brownies, cupcakes, muffins, which are individually-wrapped (like sandwich bags), so that they can be sold for 50¢ or \$1. Typically, two cookies or one brownie or one muffin to a bag. Cupcakes can be brought in un-wrapped but easy to pick out and serve. Thanks so much for your anticipated participation!
2. Don't forget to check your mailbox for the "**schedule reminder**" cards that Paul III makes for everyone who signed up for show/open house jobs. And if you haven't

signed up yet, please do so and help us out...the more hands on board the better!

.....*David N. Clinton*

MEMBER NEWS

Savery Moore is recovering from his surgery and hopes to return to the Club near the end of this month.

Our condolences to **Eric Wilde**, on the death of his mother earlier this month.

Our condolences also go out to **Roger St. Peter**, on the death of his father, Alexander MacPherson of Merrimac, NH, this month.

Congratulations to **Jeremy Cahill** on his marriage to Elsa Gomonal on October 1st. Best wishes for a life of happiness together!

Birthday Celebrations

The following members have made it through another year and deserve congratulations:

- Tom Wylie November 5th
- Fred Foley November 17th
- Gary Mangelinkx..... November 23rd

RUNNING EXTRA

WICK’S WINTER OF DISCONTENT

(Frank N. Wilner, Contributing Editor, Railway Age 10-18-16)

For newly minted Amtrak President Charles Wickliffe (Wick) Moorman IV, a winter of discontent is nigh.

Amtrak is unlike the polished and profitable Norfolk Southern from which this Mississippi-bred civil engineer and son of college professors retired as president, chairman and CEO. Indeed, Amtrak, on life support since its 1971 creation, is a poster child for

legendary talk-show host David Letterman’s signature empathy, “I wouldn’t give those troubles to a monkey on a rock.”

Neither U.S. presidential candidate shares President Obama’s passion for passenger rail spending; the electorate increasingly opposes higher taxes, more subsidies and bureaucracy; and Amtrak haters in Congress are a formidable force, successfully and progressively shifting financial responsibility for passenger trains to cash-strapped states.

Amtrak’s statutory dispatch preference over freight trains is under attack as neither absolute nor in perpetuity; a statutory provision allowing Amtrak to conspire with federal regulators to saddle freights with performance standards when hosting Amtrak trains was nullified by federal courts; and a Surface Transportation Board definition of “on-time” arrival of Amtrak trains on freight-rail track is ripe for court challenge.

Internally, Amtrak is troubled. Its top cop is ensnarled in a fraud and conflict-of-interest investigation over a \$2 million contract given an alleged paramour. Previously, a chief engineer favored a neighbor with a \$2 million consulting contract. Acela Express was plagued by 9,000 design changes, production delays and breakdowns that spawned extensive and costly litigation. Deception has been alleged in Amtrak financial accounting. And former presidents Tom Downs and George Warrington disingenuously proclaimed to Congress that Amtrak was on a “glide path to self-sufficiency.”

Recently, Amtrak was outed in a failed effort to suffocate commuter-operator competition by limiting access to Washington Union Station; Joe Boardman relentlessly changed out senior executives, many in essential safety positions; and Boardman, after citing declining revenue to justify limits on new hiring plus cuts in retiree health-care, pension benefits and departmental budgets, puzzlingly hired as a consultant the wife of a union boss deeply involved in Amtrak labor issues. As for Amtrak’s inspector general, charged with sniffing out waste, fraud and abuse, he serves at the pleasure of the Amtrak board.

While Amtrak's White House-nominated and Senate-confirmed board of directors to which Moorman reports no longer is larded with political hacks, its oversight, given the above examples, is arguably weak. Moreover, it has passively allowed Amtrak senior management to ignore the loss of significant numbers of Northeast Corridor passengers to intercity bus operators offering more frequent departures and competitive trip times. Nor is there effort to partner with Uber—the world's most valuable startup—to create a seamless “first” and “last” mile using an app to summon a car.

This all should be enough to make a preacher cuss, but Moorman, with his private-sector background, understands fully the tragedy of the commons—that when everybody owns something, nobody takes an ownership interest. Surely Moorman can encourage public-private partnerships injecting greater market-based disciplines.

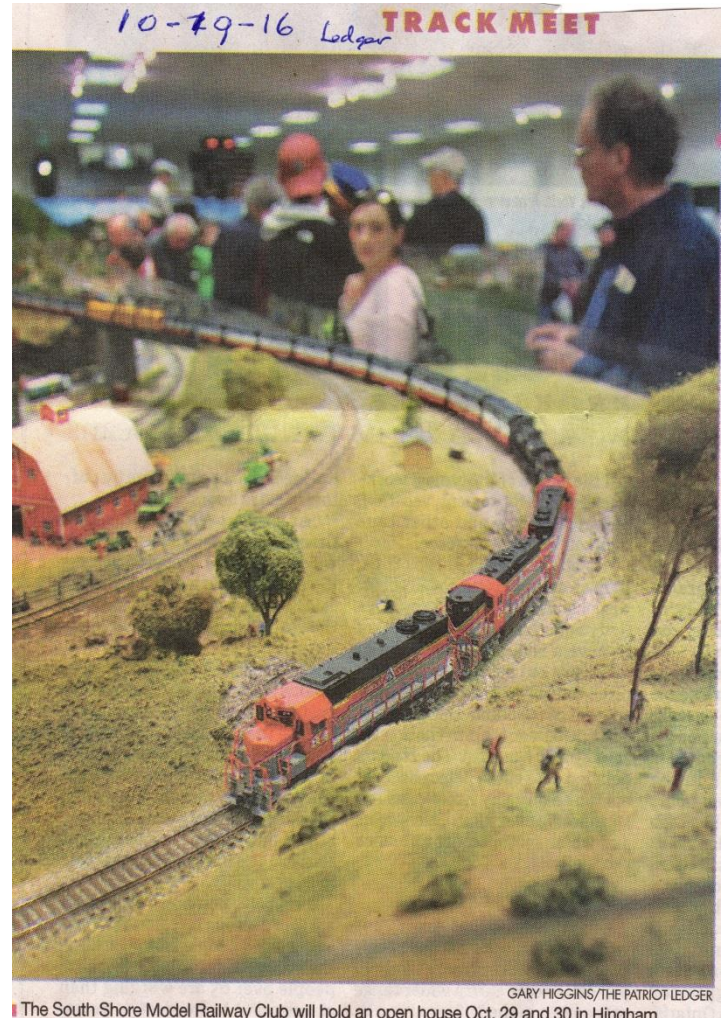
The Federal Railroad Administration is writing rules to implement a congressional urging that up to three Amtrak long-distance routes be privatized—a pilot program to transfer, for up to eight years, 90% of Amtrak's existing subsidy for that route to a responsible applicant proposing equal or better service.

Yes, it's risky. Amtrak supporters fear that even limited privatization will further erode congressional support for a national interconnected rail passenger network. The reality is that Amtrak is an island of socialism in an American sea of capitalism, and the status quo cannot much longer endure.

Privatization also may be a viable solution for the 450-mile Northeast Corridor, whose price tag for renewal of century-old infrastructure, capacity expansion and increased train speeds conservatively exceeds \$50 billion. Only an irrational romantic assumes Congress, which starves highway and other critical domestic infrastructure projects, will appropriate the funds.

The American Intercity Rail Network for the 21st Century (AIRNet-21), a public-private partnership prepared to invest \$60 billion in NEC infrastructure renewal and expansion over 50 years, with zero from

congressional appropriations, deserves Moorman's attention, along with other responsible market-based alternatives to the status quo. Moorman has opportunity to transform a winter of discontent into a Casablanca-movie moment: Wick, this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship with Congress and the American people



In Moulton, an energetic Rail Link promoter

Lawmaker seen as key to getting federal funding

By Jon Chesto
GLOBE STAFF

Until recently, former governors Michael Dukakis and Bill Weld were the most high-profile champions for a seemingly quixotic quest to get the North South Rail Link built.

They're well respected in Boston, but neither has much power in Washington these days.

That's changed now that Representative Seth Moulton, the up-and-coming congressman from the North Shore, has called construction of the multibillion-dollar tunnel to connect North and South stations a top priority.

Moulton stepped up his efforts on Wednesday by seeking support from the New England Council, a business group, and calling the project "the most significant infrastructure project contemplated for the New England region."

He argues that the link would significantly increase the capacity at South Station by allowing trains to continue to North Station and points north of the city, instead of having to back out of their parking spac-



THE PITCH

The North South Rail Link is 'the most significant infrastructure project contemplated for the New England region,' Seth Moulton said.

es and go in reverse. The link, he said, would have the added benefit of stitching together the MBTA's two separate commuter rail systems.

"It takes longer to get from North Station to the South Boston Seaport than it does to get all the way from Salem to North Station," Moulton said.

The project would also create a seamless rail route from Maine to Washington. Given its regional impact, Moulton said, the link would likely attract crucial federal funds.

The congressman also sought to draw a contrast between the project and Governor Charlie Baker's push for an expansion of South Station.

Speaking to reporters after the New England Council speech, Moulton said the South Station expansion would be "a historic mistake for the state," adding that the money should instead be set aside for the Rail Link.

That money question, of course, is a big one. Critics of the link suggest the tunnel

needed to connect Boston's two main transit hubs could cost as much as \$8 billion.

Moulton contends the expense would be closer to around \$2 billion, based on the costs of similar tunnels in other countries. That would put it near the price tag for the South Station expansion, an estimated \$1.6 billion project that would add seven tracks to the station.

And Moulton described the project as a big real estate move, because it would avoid the need for additional railyard space near South Station to park trains. That space, he said, could be better used for new developments. Trains, meanwhile, could be stored away from the city, in less expensive real estate.

Several prominent Boston developers have already lined up in support: Moulton's office cites Robert Beal, the recently retired president of Related Beal; HYM Investment Group managing director Tom O'Brien; and Boston Proper-

ties' Bryan Koop as examples.

O'Brien said he became more interested when he saw the strong support from Weld and Dukakis. O'Brien knows many in Boston are gun shy about big infrastructure projects because of the Big Dig's ultimate price tag. But he said the Big Dig has transformed parts of the city in important ways, including opening up the South Boston waterfront for big developments.

"Every once in a while, a region needs to think of a major infrastructure investment like this as a way to move the city forward," O'Brien said. "There's a growing group of us who are convinced that the North South Rail Link is one of the next projects we should think about in the same manner."

But Moulton still needs to persuade the Baker administration — and his colleagues in the state's congressional delegation.

Baker has expressed skepticism about the Rail Link, although his aides say he is keep-

ing an open mind. A spokeswoman for the state Department of Transportation said her agency plans to move ahead with a \$2 million feasibility study once the "scope of the work" can be finalized.

As far as the delegation goes, Moulton's presentation showed that Representative Nikki Tsongas of Lowell is on board. Moulton said he's getting hopeful signs from others. But Representative Stephen Lynch of South Boston could be a tough sell, particularly if it means giving up on the South Station expansion, a longtime priority of Lynch's.

Many business people in

Boston still consider the Rail Link to be a long shot. Michael Rubin, a real estate lawyer at Posternak Blankstein & Lund, is among them. But Rubin said the fact that Moulton is now championing the cause helps its chances.

"It makes a tremendous difference having a sitting congressman involved," Rubin said.

"No matter what you do, you have to get Uncle Sam involved with this. It can't happen without federal funds."

Jon Chesto can be reached at jon.chesto@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter @jonchesto.

