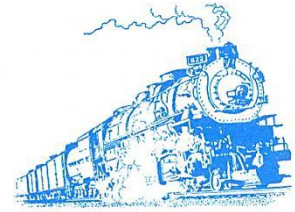


The Semaphore

South Shore Model Railway Club

NEWSLETTER

Home of the "East Coast Lines" since 1938



DECEMBER 19, 2016 ■■■■■■■■■■ VOLUME 36 ■■■■■■■■■■ NUMBER 12



Happy Holidays from Your Editors!

The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



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“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

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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

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VOLUME 36 ■■■■■ NUMBER 12 ■■■■■ DECEMBER 2016

CLUB OFFICERS

President.....	Jack Foley
Vice-President.....	Dan Peterson
Treasurer.....	Will Baker
Secretary.....	Dave Clinton
Chief Engineer.....	Fred Lockhart
Directors.....	Bill Garvey ('18)
	Bryan Miller ('18)
	Roger St. Peter ('17)
	Rick Sutton ('17)

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ON THE COVER: Blasting out of State Line Tunnel on the Mass-NY border, one of the famous NYC “Mohawk” types (4-8-2) hauls “The New England States” towards Boston over the Boston & Albany main in December 1947. In memory of our recently-passed member Rob Cook, a *real* B&A aficionado. Original painting by Howard Fogg.

Robert A. Cook

April 13, 1959-December 5, 2016

Our friend and SSMRC Brother passed away suddenly two weeks ago in his sleep. “Rob”, as we called him, was our newest member, having joined 18 months ago. I had met him 30 years ago, while running my Amtrak train from Cab 5 in the “Southern Division” during an Open House in Weymouth. He took out an application at that time, but with family and work he was not able to complete the requirements for membership.



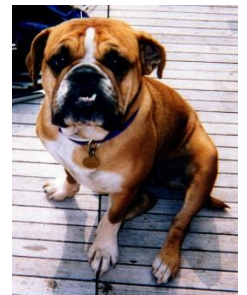
It wasn't until late in 2014 that he applied for membership again. Things had settled down in his life and he was ready to build a railroad. He had amassed a collection and built a room over his garage, especially for his railroad. His idea was to “infiltrate” the SSMRC for a few members to assist him. The truth of the matter, though, as he related several times, was that the SSMRC infiltrated him! This started with Paul Bonanno grabbing him in his early applicant days and teaching him scenery and building miniature buildings---he was hooked on helping to build the “East Coast Lines”, and his ideas of building his own railroad fell to the side of the road of life.

“His railroad” was the Boston & Albany and, man, was he a devotee! Many times I thought how sorry it was he had never met Bob Buck, who was equally devoted. Bob passed away five years ago and I bet they have met now. Rob tried hard to get others interested in the B&A and I think he succeeded to some degree, at least as far as I'm concerned.



Rob was so excited in contemplating the construction of the next legs of the RR. He was big into making his own turnouts and had acquired most of the “Fast-trax” templates and tools for his prospective railroad. When Fred Lockhart asked him to be the “main man” for building the turnouts for future construction on the RR, I thought he was going to burst with pride.

Rob loved the Club and told me on several occasions how lucky he was to have joined because of the friendships he found here; he loved coming to the Club. His personal life had become troubled and I invited him to stay with me, until things got better. Rob loved all animals, too. I got a scolding for killing a cricket at the Club one night—I should have put it outside. To add to his sorrows, his Bulldog of 13 years passed away in October; “Martha” showed him such unfaltering love through thick and thin. He and my “Kitty” were instant companions. He nicknamed him “Big Boy” and fed him and loved holding him, which was right up Kitty's alley; he loves attention. Rob loved eating and was a great cook. He would text me, while I was at the gym, “when are you coming home—I'm hungry”. I'd get home and find him working the pots and pans and preparing some delicious concoction. I'm surprised I didn't put on weight, as I wasn't used to that!



It was always fun being with him. Such a crazy, silly guy; you had to laugh at and with him. Rob was looking forward to the “Big E” and being a part of the team. He loved going places in my Mustang. “Let's go out in the Race Car!” he'd say...must have been from letting him drive on several occasions. He took to the 6-speed manual, as if he'd been driving one for years; he was like a teenager again, enjoying the ride and speed and shifting through the gears (and putting some rubber on the street occasionally).

I'll miss his goofy questions and actions and companionship; he made life fun. We'll all miss him for one reason or another, mainly because he was a kind, loving person. Being fairly religious, one day we were comparing our favorite passages and sayings that we carry in our wallets. One of his was: “The faith inside of us is stronger than the fear in front of us.” I now carry that in my wallet and heart. God bless you, Robert, you're now at peace in a beautiful place of happiness...until we meet again, my soulmate.



David N. Clinton

FORM 19 ORDERS

DECEMBER B.O.D. MEETING

Thursday, December 29th 8 p.m.

DECODER & LOCO TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, January 5th 8 p.m.

SCOUT AND FAMILY NIGHT

Friday, January 6th 6-9 p.m.

JANUARY BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, January 9th 8 p.m.

SHOW COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, January 9th, after BM

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Saturday, January 21st

OFFICIAL OPERATIONS

Sunday, January 22nd 11 a.m.- 4 p.m.

AMHERST TRAIN SHOW @ BIG E

Saturday & Sunday, January 28th -29th

JANUARY B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, January 30th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

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

Answering this month's correctly:

Jack Foley	Coley Coleman
Dan Peterson	Ross Kudlick
Will Baker	Rick Sutton
Savery Moore	Roger St. Peter
Doug Buchanan	Fred Lockhart
Al Taylor	Barry Doland
John Holmes	Ron Clough
Jim Ferris	John Sheridan
Skip Burton	

They knew that Amtrak's new president and CEO is "**Wick**" Mooreman, who was in that position at **Norfolk Southern**, until his retirement two years ago. Congratulations to **John Holmes** on winning the drawing for the B&M S2 from P2K!



FOR **JANUARY**: Our **ANNUAL CALENDAR CONTEST**. A tradition started many years ago with prizes being Train-related calendars going to all who successfully answer the contest question. Also a tradition is members supplying the winning calendars. So, if you're a member of a RR organization which produces calendars, or you're shopping for a RR calendar for yourself, please consider adding one for the contest. Here's the question: **What was the only "Streamlined" steam locomotive built for a New England-based railroad? Name the locomotive type, or wheel arrangement and the Railroad it was built for.** Newsletter contest answer forms or any piece of paper works. Don't forget your name and good luck!



For **MARCH**: One of Al Taylor's famous "word find" puzzles. "All Aboard Amtrak" can be found near the back of the newsletter and extra copies available in the contest answer rack, just inside the door to the train room, on top of the old wooden display case. Don't forget your name and good luck!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

Last month I reported that we were having problems with the internal switching failing on the Tortoise switch machines that control power to the turnout frogs and the LEDs, even though the motors



themselves were still functioning. Since then, Bob England and Stan Rydell have been working on solutions to this problem that would allow us to avoid replacing the Tortoise machine. Bob has designed a small, very inexpensive circuit board that takes over the function of powering the frogs and the Leds. He has installed several and we are testing them to make sure that they will stand up to the job. Stan has been building these boards for Bob. Stan also has taken a tortoise that has been removed and is working on adding external contact switches that would control power to the frogs and LEDs instead of the internal switches. If this can be done, this would allow us to re-use the switch machines that have already been replaced, saving the club quite a bit of money as I believe a 12 pack of Tortoises is about \$170.00.

The Scenery Committee continues to work on their projects: Bob Farrenkopf is re-building the rolling mill, at the steel mill, with a larger footprint, to accommodate the interior details of the mill. In the process, he has put on his track-laying hat to re-align the leads into the mill, so everything will fit to the new building.

I want to pass on to our members something I have discovered with a couple of sound-equipped Atlas locomotives. A few months ago, I purchased two NYC RS3s. On one of the units, the sound was not as good as the other unit, and I checked the CVs for the sound adjustments and found they were set the same, so I assumed maybe the unit's speaker was not up to par. Recently I have been working on a new Atlas undec RS3, so I had taken off the shell to add detail parts. In the process, I noticed a small screw held against the speaker cone by the speaker's magnet. It is the same as some screws Atlas uses to assemble their units. That got me thinking about the NYC unit, so I removed the shell and there was a screw stuck against the speaker cone on that one also, and it was the same type of screw, Two for Two, makes me think Atlas needs to check its quality control. I mention this because if any of you run into a similar sound issue, I don't think the first thing one would think of is a screw stuck to the speaker!

That is it for this month. I hope that everyone has a very Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukah and best wishes for the New Year.

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer

SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

DECEMBER 2011 (5 years ago)

- ✱ STB gives final approval to Alaska RR to build new 35-mile line to Port MacKenzie.
- ✱ Pan Am Railways painting GP9 in heritage scheme honoring Maine Central RR.
- ✱ UP kicks off year-long celebration of 150th anniversary.
- ✱ Revealed that the Federal government spent more on highways in 2010, than it has on Amtrak in its entire 40-year history.
- ✱ Model Railroad News closes down, after 15 years of publication. Later picked up by White River Publications.
- ✱ MBTA provides special car on its "Ski Train" to hold ski gear. Train runs to Princeton, with shuttle to Wachusett Mountain Ski Resort.
- ✱ Alaska 2-8-0 returned from Everett, WA to be rebuilt for eventual operation.
- ✱ Saratoga & North Creek Railway, which expected 38,000 passengers its first year, saw 60,000.

DECEMBER 2006 (10 years ago)

- ✱ GN's SD45 "Hustle Muscle" restored to original 1966 special paint job by GN Historical Society.
- ✱ NS becomes country's largest transporter of automobiles, originating 1/3 of all traffic with over 4,000 autoracks on the roster.
- ✱ New England Central modifies its tunnel under Fellows Balls, VT, to accommodate double-stacks.
- ✱ Super Steel Schenectady rolls out first batch of hybrid diesel-electric locos, called "Green Goats", for U.P.

DECEMBER 2001 (15 years ago)

- ✱ Passenger rail service returns between Boston and Portland, after 40-year absence, called *The Downeaster* and run by Amtrak. It was noted that getting service took longer than construction of the transcontinental railroad opened in 1869!
- ✱ Cape Cod Chapter NRHS signs lease to restore 1912 West Barnstable Station.
- ✱ Super Steel Schenectady restoring Amtrak's French-built Turbo trains.
- ✱ Regional and shortline operator Genesee & Wyoming acquires Emons Transportation Group, which owns St. Lawrence & Atlantic between Portland & Montreal.

- ✳️ Bangor & Aroostook RR placed into Chapter 11.
- ✳️ Amtrak's *Kentucky Cardinal* reaches revitalized Louisville Union Station.
- ✳️ BLE votes overwhelmingly to reject merger with UTU.
- ✳️ Norfolk Southern "mothballs" its famous route over Saluda Mountain, with its 4.7-5.1%, 3-mile grade, the steepest mainline grade in America.
- ✳️ SSMRC produces Quincy Wholesale Grocery ice reefer as "Club Car".

DECEMBER 1996 (20 Years Ago)

- ✳️ Amtrak restores names to its trains in the Northeast Corridor and Empire Service.
- ✳️ Hobo RR restores two winged snowplows for service on the MBTA.
- ✳️ CSX offers amended bid for Conrail.
- ✳️ Green Mountain RR takes trucks from Bay Colony RS1 #1064 for use under its famous RS1 #405, one of the original Rutland locos still running on Rutland tracks.
- ✳️ Weekend Commuter Rail service begins between Worcester and Boston.
- ✳️ *Pacific Rail News* and *Passenger Train Journal* magazines combine to form Rail News, a monthly.
- ✳️ First year for SSMRC collection of "Toys for Tots", thanks to Bill Garvey's efforts.
- ✳️ Army Corps of Engineers resurrects idea of tunnel under Hingham Square for Greenbush Line.
- ✳️ Trains stop running at Edaville, as operators unable to come up with lease payment and are evicted.

DECEMBER 1991 (25 Years Ago)

- ✳️ Last of MBTA's new F40PH locos arrive on property.
- ✳️ Last ex-MEC U25b #226 scrapped by Guilford.
- ✳️ Willimantic, CT, becomes stop for Amtrak's *Montrealer*
- ✳️ George Barfolemew trying to sell Edaville for \$3.5 mil.
- ✳️ Quincy Mayor Sheets changes stance and now supports restoration of Old Colony lines, as long as Quincy gets a station.

DECEMBER 1986 (30 Years Ago)

- ✳️ Budd Company closes Red Lion, PA passenger car plant.
- ✳️ Amtrak becomes #1 carrier of passengers between New York and Washington, D.C.
- ✳️ West Side freight line becomes Amtrak's property, allowing Empire Service trains to enter Penn Station, ending all intercity passenger service from Grand Central Terminal.
- ✳️ New co-generation plant opens in the ex-New Haven Cos Cob facility.
- ✳️ 100+ car train arrives in Middleboro, and takes 24 hours to switch out.
- ✳️ Central Vermont Railway runs first "Santa Trains" from Palmer to Monson.
- ✳️ NYS&W reopens mainline between Sparta Jct. and Butler, NJ, after 20 years of disuse. SeaLand double-stack trains to use connection.

DECEMBER 1981 (35 Years Ago)

- ✳️ SSMRC original "portable layout" (switching) goes to train show in Stoughton, MA railroad station.
- ✳️ 15 members attend Wally's train show in Auburn the previous month. ("Wally World")
- ✳️ O-gauge locomotive operated down blocks 110/111 in Middleton Yard in South Division.
- ✳️ Coal trains start serving Mt. Tom Power Plant in Holyoke, MA.
- ✳️ VIA Rail Canada drops many passenger trains, including the *Atlantic Limited* between Montreal and the Maritimes, running across northern Maine.
- ✳️ Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited* drops "cafeteria-lounge" car on Boston section; replaces with "Amdinette".

ENGINE TUNE-UP CLINIC

Only four of us again this month. **Paul Cutler III** installed the DH123P into his Fairbanks-Morse Trainmaster, H24-66, dressed in the Demonstrator scheme. This Atlas model has been out a long time, but he was only able to find #1, until a friend found #3 for him. Both ran on the New Haven, though the railroad never bought any. #1 has sound and #3 is soundless, so he might have to "speed-match" the two units. They are massive machines with diesel engines used in submarines!

Will Baker brought his new Alco HH660 from Atlas, dressed in New Haven; one of the "exclusive" paint jobs done for the New Haven RR Historical & Technical Association. This unit, complete with sound, only needed the crap-u-mate couplers replaced, as all Atlas equipment needs to have done to it, no matter what the cost of the model!

Paul Agnew brought a custom-painted Atlas RS1 in New Haven paint and needed to replace the original decoder with a DH126. After the successful replacement, he turned to his Athearn R-T-R SD40-2, decorated for the Milwaukee, Racine & Troy. This was Model Railroader's layout and the magazine brought this loco out for the 70th anniversary of publication. He had picked it up on Ebay, as it is a collector's item, and installed the DH166. He installed 5 LEDs and the "keep-alive" circuit. He separately-lit the front number boards,

and can turn them on or off with the command of F1.

Ye Ed brought a recently-released RS1 in Rutland colors from Atlas. The sound is terrific for the 251 engine and all the model needed was replacement KDs (“whiskers”) and clean the factory-supplied dirty wheels! A very common thing from Atlas—always good to clean your brand-new Atlas locos, right out of the box.

Thanks to **Paul Cutler III** for his assistance and for preparing the Model Shop beforehand. Our next clinic will be **Thursday, January 5, 2017**. Sign-up sheet on Bulletin Board. Everyone is welcome!



PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP has named Elaine Chao as his choice for U.S. Transportation Secretary. Chao is a former Deputy Transportation Secretary and a former Labor Secretary, and wife of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) since 1993. Chao served as Secretary of Labor under President George W. Bush from 2001 through 2009, the longest tenure in the position since World War II and the only Bush Cabinet member to serve all eight years of his Presidency. She was also the first Asian-American woman to serve in a Cabinet position. According to *The New York Times*, “While enjoying the praise and admiration of her colleagues, she also invited scorn from organized labor, whose leaders accused her of being too cozy with business interests.” “The nation’s rail industry welcomes the President-elect’s selection and looks forward to working with Ms. Chao on the many critical surface transportation issues key to U.S. economic growth and prosperity,” said Association of American Railroads President and CEO Ed Hamberger. “We know based on her prior tenure at the Department of Transportation that she has a full appreciation of the vital role freight and passenger rail play in America. On behalf of the AAR and member railroads, we congratulate Ms. Chao.” (RA)

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AFTER YEARS OF WORKING in tandem with the MBTA on the South Coast Rail project, the state Department of Transportation this week assumed full oversight of the project, according to state Rep. William Straus, who described himself as “excited and very, very happy.” The oversight now is being led by James Eng, the state’s deputy administrator for rail. The move takes the rail project out of the hands of MBTA at a time when the T has its hands full of problems with maintenance and financing. And since it is the state, with its expert rail staff, taking on debt for this rail project, the state wanted to be in control, not the T, said Straus. State Sen. Mark Montigny, D-New Bedford, said the transfer is a relatively small matter like many others. “There is no big deal coming out of South Coast Rail until we see railroad cars,” he said Wednesday. He said he is frustrated with the MBTA for not answering questions that he posed to them a year ago. He said he welcomes the change as a small but positive development, particularly since removing the MBTA leaves a direct link to Gov. Charlie Baker’s cabinet. Straus said that the T and its Finance Control Board, formed after the blizzards two years ago, was starting to become distracted by proposals including questions about bus service that were answered years ago. The DOT and MBTA in September held a series of public meetings to update the public on the project and explain what is being done about studying a Middleboro alternative to the preferred route through Stoughton. The Baker administration opened up the possibility of the Middleboro route after it was disclosed that the Stoughton route would cost \$1 billion more than anticipated and take seven years longer. But the project managers said that any consideration of Middleboro has barely begun the review and planning process. In the meantime, opponents of that idea said in September that the Middleboro route would add significant time to the commute and reduce the number of trains per day to two, while Stoughton has the capacity for dozens. (NARP)

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AFTER TWO YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT and testing, Indiana Rail Road (INRD) SD90-43MAC no. 1919, the first heavy-haul freight locomotive equipped with a Cummins 16-cylinder, 4,400-hp, Tier 4-compliant QSK95 high-speed diesel power plant, is operating as a “mobile laboratory,” according to INRD Senior Vice President

Operations and Business Development Bob Babcock. 1919 is a joint venture of INRD, Cummins, TMV Control Systems, which supplied the microprocessor control system, and Brookville Equipment, which handled the engine installation and performed system integration. At 4,400 hp (3,281 kW), the QSK95 "achieves the highest output of any 16-cylinder high-speed (1,800 rpm) diesel," Cummins said. "Combining our latest-generation Modular Common Rail Fuel System (MCRS) with quad-turbocharging, the QSK95 delivers reduced noise, excellent response and ultra-low-emissions capability." (RA)

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THE MODEL TRAIN STORE Caboose Hobbies plans to reopen next month in Lakewood. Caboose Hobbies announced this summer that it's leaving its longtime location on South Broadway. In October, the store announced it was under new ownership and relocating somewhere in the Denver metro area. "Our retail location of the past 35 years, at 500 S. Broadway in Denver, closed on Sept. 11, 2016. But we will be reopening in early December as Caboose at 10800 W. Alameda Ave. Lakewood, Colorado," the store's website states. The business was owned by Duane Miller's family since 1951. The new owner is Evergreen resident Kevin Ruble, according to the store's Facebook page. (Atlas Rescue Forum)

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STATE DOLLARS will help fund the expansion of Alstom's manufacturing facility in upstate New York. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently announced \$30 million in state funding to support Alstom's \$66.8-million expansion project at its Hornell, N.Y., manufacturing facility. The funding comes after Alstom's winning bid earlier this year to build high-speed Avelia Liberty trainsets for Amtrak on the Northeast Corridor. That contract is valued at \$2.5 billion. The expansion is expected to add nearly 200 new jobs in Hornell beyond the 1,000 workers who are there now. In preparation for the Amtrak order, Alstom is renovating existing space at the Hornell facility and is adding 60,000-square feet of new production and engineering space, as well as 10,000 feet of new track. The Alstom contract with Amtrak includes the design and production of 28 next-generation high-speed trainsets, as well as technical services and spare parts for up to 30 years. The new trainsets will have the ability to operate up to 160 mph and

will feature one-third more passenger seats than Acela trainsets currently in use. (TN)

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A CHINESE RAIL CAR MANUFACTURER is planning to build a plant at the former General Electric dewatering facility in Fort Edward, NY, and hire 150 to 200 workers. But development of the Fort Edward plant is contingent upon winning a contract to build New York City subway cars. The bids will be opened Dec. 15. CRRC, the Chinese Railway Rolling Stock Corp. company, is bidding the contract, in hopes of building 1,025 subway cars. From the Fort Edward Industrial Park, it could ship the cars by rail directly to the city. The park is also large enough to build a two-mile test track, which is required for the MTA contract. (Dick K)

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AMTRAK IS EXTENDING its popular pet program to include the Vermonter route. Passengers traveling from Washington, D.C., to St. Albans will now be able to take small dogs and cats onboard for the journey. More than 15,000 pets and their human companions have used the railroad's pet program since its debut on the Northeast Corridor in October 2015. Fares are \$25 per pet per person and the animal's weight must not exceed 20 pounds. Five pet spots are earmarked per train, which are available on a first-come, first-served basis. (TN)

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THE MOUNT WASHINGTON COG Railway's owners have proposed building a new upscale hotel near the summit of Mount Washington accessible only by the line's trains. In the past, such hotels were a hallmark of Mount Washington, the highest peak in New England. The owners of "the Cog" are considering a 35-room, 25,000-square-foot hotel and restaurant about a mile from the line's summit, at the location of a siding known as Skyline. The hotel would be completed by July 3, 2019; the 150th anniversary of the railway's opening, according to press reports. The current accommodations at the summit are Spartan, consisting of an Appalachian Mountain Club hut and the Mount Washington Observatory, featuring bunk beds and cafeteria food. The three-mile cog railway, which opened in 1869, once operated the 91-room Summit House atop the 6,288-foot mountain. That hotel burned in 1908. It was replaced years later by a smaller hotel, which was replaced by a visitor center when the state

purchased the site in 1964. The hotel would be open from April through November in conjunction with the railway. Trains would pass through the proposed structure to shelter passengers from the mountain's sometimes ferocious weather. The Cog is owned by the Presby and Bedor families, which recently renovated and restored the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods. The Skyline project would be funded by the families. The railway annually carries about 300,000 people to the summit. (TN)

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THE MBTA Board of Directors this month approved replacing all current cars on the Red Line, a massive and costly effort meant to streamline the system and replace many cars that are decades old. The no-bid, nearly \$280 million buy would be from the same Chinese company currently manufacturing Red and Orange Line cars in Springfield. The decision to replace, rather than refurbish existing cars, comes down in part to price: it's cheaper to buy the new than fix up the old, according to Mass. Department of Transportation spokeswoman Jacquelyn Goddard, who attended the meeting. The replacement means the T can run up to 20 trains per hours, as opposed to the 13 per hour currently. It takes the Red Line's fleet from 120 to 134. Of those 120, Goddard said in a tweet, 76 have been in use since 1969. (Boston Patch)

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IN NEW YORK, four Capital Region counties are getting new emergency response trailers, designed to help them deal with any incidents involving oil trains or oil spills. The specialized trailers are full of absorbent materials, booms and other equipment needed to fight an oil spill, whether it occurs on a regional rail line or on a highway. (Dick Kozlowski)

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THE FOXBORO Board of Selectmen voted last week to give its blessing to a pilot program for regular Commuter Rail service to Foxboro. The plan would involve extending Fairmount Line service through Walpole to Foxboro, ending at the stop at Gillette Stadium, that is currently utilized only for Patriots games and select events at the Stadium. The pilot program would begin in 2018 and last for 11 months. It would include at least three peak commuting round-trips and a few mid-day trips. Weekend service is not planned. (FR)

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THE PROMOTING TRAVEL, Commerce and National Security Act of 2016, a bill that will facilitate travel across the Canadian border, was passed by Congress last weekend. This legislation will improve the future performance of Amtrak's Adirondack, and is an important step in extending the Vermonter to Montreal. The bill could also have positive ramifications for additional frequencies on the Cascades service, which terminates in Vancouver, B.C. However, passengers on the Maple Leaf between New York City and Toronto will still have to detrain at Niagara Falls for inspections. The bill was supported by a bipartisan, bicameral coalition, including Senators Pat Leahy (I-VT) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Representatives Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21) and Ann Kuster (D-NH-2). "This agreement has long been a priority for Vermonters," said Senator Leahy. "It would make it possible to restore Amtrak service between Vermont and Quebec in the future. It's a win for Vermont's economy, and for Canadians who visit Vermont to sightsee, ski, shop and dine. This process has been a true bipartisan effort, at every level of government in both the United States and Canada have been fully supportive and engaged. Now, at last, we can confidently move to the next stages of getting passenger service to Montreal up and running. Many of us can't wait to hear those first whistles blow." The Canadian government will need to pass matching legislation before the bi-national treaty agreement can go into effect. Canada's Liberal party has introduced a companion bill, C-23, and it enjoys broad support in the House of Commons. This will allow both governments to ratify the underlying treaty. (NARP)

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TRANSIT POLICE in British Columbia are reminding potential SkyTrain passengers to ride inside Vancouver's light rail system cars. Police in Vancouver say they've arrested three people this month who decided to ride on the outside, CBC News reports. On Dec. 4, two teenage boys were arrested when they were found riding the outside of a SkyTrain at Stadium Station. Five days later, a 20-year-old man was arrested and fined after he was found riding the front coupler at the Royal Oak Station. Police say they 20-year-old had been drinking. (TN)

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

TRAINS

Time to "Wick it" at Amtrak

Editorial

The Split that Works

Conrail

Memories of a C&NW Railroader

Railroading's New "Silver Bullet"?

Customer Service

MODEL RAILROADER

Changing Seasons on a Finished Layout

Build a Signal System with Arduino Micro-Controller

Large Industries in Limited Space

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

Non-Flicker Lighting

Look Both Ways

News sources: Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Amtrak "News", Trains Newswire, Railway Age, Railpace Newsmagazine, RRE "Callboy", "The 470", Patriot Ledger, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Conway Daily Sun, Foxboro Reporter.

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. "**Junk Food Jollies**" was another fun time, with 18 members, and Kevin, enjoying various sweets, chips and dips, SOS, Kilbassa and hot, mulled Cider from the Dickins Cider Farm. After stuffing ourselves, we retired to the movie room for great steam slides from Al Taylor, fun memory slides from trips to "Chessie Country" by Club members taken by Doug and interesting slides from Kevin Linagen on progress with his ex-PRR 1:1 caboose, that he's restoring at his work at the Fore River RR shops. Thanks to all who came over to enjoy the camaraderie and for the goodies! By the way, started in 1984, this was our 36th "JFJ"...a happy "tradition"!
2. We had a very successful **Annual Auction** this month, thanks to the hard work of Barry and Paul III, and the members who brought in food and trains

to be auctioned off. A record of over \$2000 gross was declared. Thanks to all who participated in this highly-anticipated Club activity!

3. I hope that you and your family have a **wonderful Christmas and Holiday** time and may you have safe journeys to return to us for a better New Year. Thanks for your support this past year and especially your kind words on the death of our friend Rob.

.....*David N. Clinton*

MEMBER NEWS

Condolences go out to **Jim Fabyan** on the death of his father, James E. Fabyan over the weekend. He was also **Peter Palica's** brother-in-law. Our thoughts and prayers go out to both families.

Birthday Celebrations

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

Paul Cutler Jan 7th
Fred Alexander..... Jan 16th
Eric Tedeschi Jan 25th

We wish **Bob Knapp** good luck and speedy recovery, with knee surgery after the holidays. We will be keeping you in our thoughts and prayers, Bob.

We are glad to hear that **Ed Sisk** is recovering nicely from his recent surgery and happy to see **Savery Moore** back in the fold, after his operation.

Jack Bryant remains in our thoughts and prayers, as he struggles with his illness at South Shore Hospital.

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ALL ABOARD AMTRAK!

NIGHT OWL
MONTREALER
CARDINAL
CONGRESSIONAL
CAROLINIAN
WALL STREET
SENATOR

LAKE SHORE LIMITED
ATLANTIC CITY EXPRESS
SILVER STAR
SILVER METEOR
GULF BREEZE
AUTO TRAIN
WOLVERINE

12-16-16 ledger

Amtrak's Downeaster marks 15-year anniversary

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Fifteen years after passenger train service resumed between Boston and Portland, Amtrak's Downeaster has been a runaway success, with increased speed, ridership and service.

Thursday was the anniversary of the resumption of service between Massachusetts and Maine. It took a decade of lobbying and more than \$50 million for track upgrades for the first trains to run since the 1960s on a cold rainy morning 15 years ago. In the years since, more than 6 million passengers have avoided busy Interstate 95 by riding the rails.

Wayne Davis, a banker and rail advocate who pressed for the service, said he doubts that

the service could've been created in the current political climate.

"We're proud of it, but it couldn't be done today. It's a case of being in the right place at the right time," said Davis, founder of TrainRiders Northeast.

Davis hatched the idea for restoring passenger rail service between Portland and Boston and sold then-Transportation Commissioner Dana Connors on the idea in the late 1980s. TrainRiders Northeast proceeded to collect more than 90,000 petitions demanding the rail service.

Then-Sens. Olympia Snowe and George Mitchell secured tens of millions of dollars to

upgrade the tracks that carried slow, heavy freight trains for high-speed passenger trains.

Lionel and Marilyn Caron, of Lisbon, rode the train on the inaugural run so they could visit Boston's Quincy Market. And they've ridden it several times since.

"I was hoping they'd make it," said Caron, who said he and his wife prefer to ride the train so they don't have to fight for a parking space in Boston.

The service started at 60 mph for a top speed. The speed even-

tually increased to 80 mph and more trains were added. Service eventually expanded north to Freeport and Brunswick in 2012. Just last month, a garage opened in Brunswick to allow trains to stay overnight, increasing efficiency.

These days, there are stops in Boston, Woburn and Haverhill in Massachusetts; Exeter, Durham and Dover in New Hampshire; and Wells, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, Portland, Freeport and Brunswick in Maine.

What's in a name? Don't ask Amtrak

Written by Frank N. Wilner, Contributing Editor, [Railway Age](#)

Notwithstanding this era of fake news, there remain stories you just cannot make up—instances where truth is, indeed, stranger than fiction.

For railroaders, the better examples most always involve federally owned Amtrak, perennially counted upon to perform a seamless theater of the absurd that began with its inaugural run 45 years ago, on May Day—a date long celebrated by international communists; and, no doubt, inspiring Republican Congressman John Mica's frequent depiction of Amtrak as “a Soviet style railroad.”

In debating Amtrak's creation, its supporters called it “Railpax,” a term soberer heads feared would be corrupted to “Railpox.” A second naming attempt, “Amtrax,” was equally troublesome, as Washington wags started pronouncing it “Anthrax.”

Shortly following choosing the less problematic name “Amtrak,” a new logo was unveiled—a blunted arrow in red, white and blue that immediately created another public relations crisis. To its detractors, Amtrak became “The route of the pointless arrow.”

Above the ruckus of banjo players and self-congratulating politicians on hand for Amtrak's initial run north from Washington's Union Station, May 1, 1971, Transportation Secretary John Volpe shouted, “This is an act of profound public responsibility.”

But by the time the 127 mostly male and soused honored guests exited the train at Manhattan's Penn Station, fewer than half chose Amtrak for the return trip. Blame the sudden loss of interest not on a less-than-well-stocked bar car, but fake news trending in official Washington at the time—that scantily clad Playboy bunnies were to be aboard the inaugural run.

In future years, successive Amtrak Presidents Tom Downs and George Warrington created and perpetuated a fiction of Amtrak's “glide path to self-sufficiency,” with Warrington resigning in 2002 after Amtrak's inspector general confessed that Amtrak had just lost the most money in its history and its debt had more than tripled.

Another president, David Gunn, responded to a perennial toilet problem aboard Amtrak trains by declaring at a news conference, “You'd think that after 170 years of railroading, you could have a crapper door that works.” Gunn earlier had questioned a swollen headquarters staff, including a multitude of vice presidents he inherited post-Warrington: “What are we, a bank?”

Then there was Amtrak's *Acela Express*, heralded as Amtrak's “deus ex machina” (god from the machine), notwithstanding that the decaying Northeast Corridor infrastructure limits the *Acela*'s average speed, Washington-to-Boston, to roughly 65 mph and seven hours.

The Italian News Agency called us some 16 years ago upon receiving Amtrak's giddy first press release announcing *Acela Express*, confounded that “Acela” closely resembles the Italian word “ascella,” translated to English as “armpit.” They wondered if the new Amtrak train being promoted to Italian travel agencies was really to be named “Armpit.” We responded, “It's complicated, like the Italian Parliament.” They understood.

So, when the call came last week, we weren't surprised that, following our “hello,” our fellow journalist barked with some glee, “I see Amtrak is still as complicated as the Italian parliament!” In his accented but flawless

English, he went on that the name of Amtrak's chosen successor trainsets to *Acela Express*, "Avelia Liberty," has as part of its name a word, "Avelia," strikingly similar to the Italian word "avello," translated to English as "tomb." Is Amtrak, he asked, "seriously trying to sell Italian tourists on riding a train named 'The Tomb?'"

Following an animated discussion on the merits of a Starbucks double-shot espresso, he related that his ex-spouse, who translates from the Latin for the Holy See in Rome, had emailed him that "Avelia" sounds much like the Latin word "avellere," which translates to "separate by force, take away, wrest, tear off, pluck or wrench away"—hardly a comforting thought at even an average speed of 65 mph. "Arrivederci," he chuckled in signing off. "Even our Prime Minister Renzi's resignation, or not, is less complicated than your Amtrak. Capisci?"

Note to Amtrak's newest president, Wick Moorman:

"Yes, dollars are scarce, and Amtrak's overhead likely is bloated, but maybe—just maybe—there could be room at Amtrak for a Vice President of Linguistics? Forget, for a moment, about the unfortunately named *Acela* and *Avelia*. Consider that when the Trump-reinforced Scrooge-on-steroids Republican congressional majority summons you to discuss your budget request—especially the semantics within seemingly creative footnotes in Amtrak's financial statements—it may be too late to place the help-wanted advertisement."

Editor's Note: Why not simply revert to the tried-and-true, timeless "Metroliner" name? If it looks and feels and acts and sounds like a train, shouldn't it at least be named like a train?—William C. Vantuono



