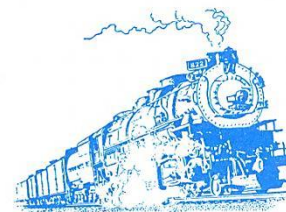


The Semaphore

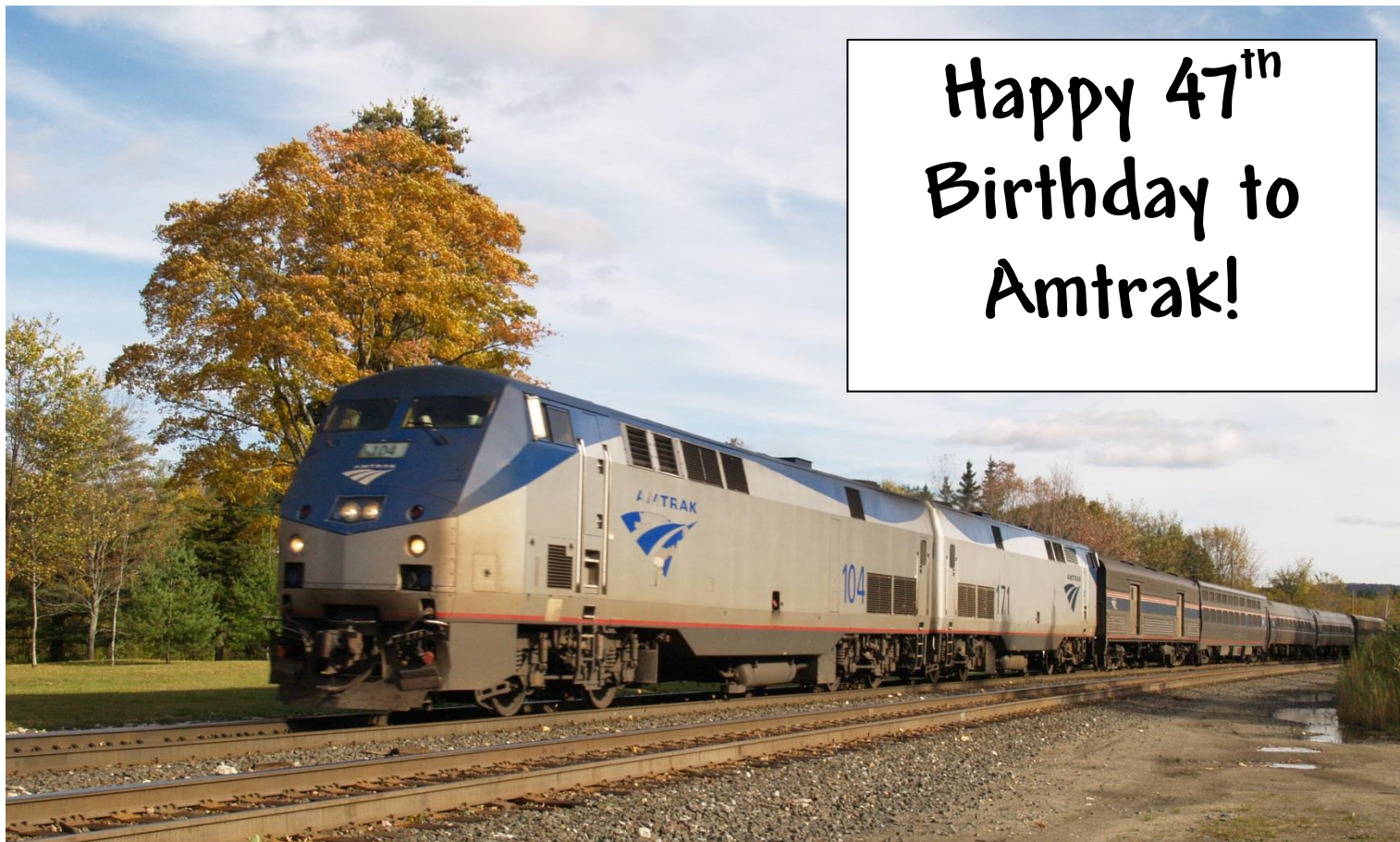
South Shore Model Railway Club

NEWSLETTER

Home of the "East Coast Lines" since 1938



APRIL 23, 2018 ■■■■■■■■■■ VOLUME 38 ■■■■■■■■■■ NUMBER 4



Happy 47th
Birthday to
Amtrak!



The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



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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. ©2018
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VOLUME 38 ■■■■■ NUMBER 4 ■■■■■ APRIL 2018

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ON THE COVER: TOP: #449, the *Lake Shore Limited*, at Hinsdale, MA, 2009. (Dave Clinton).
BOTTOM: “40th Anniversary Display Train” at Palmer, switching onto NECR rails, 2011. (Kevin Burkholder)

Amtrak’s P42 “Genesis” locomotives have served as the “workhorse” for Amtrak, since 1992, as long as the F40PHs which served from 1976-2004.



Richard A. Kozlowski

May 6, 1942-April 4, 2017



Our friend “Dick” passed away, due to complications with Parkinson’s disease, while in the area, after traveling to participate in our Spring Show and Open House in March.

I met “Dick” during my first Show as a member, in March 1979. In fact, for several years in the ‘80s he stayed at my house, (along with his friend Dick Davis, who was also an Honorary Member at the time) while attending our Shows, since he had a long drive from his home in Saratoga Springs, NY. He stayed with Al Taylor and Doug Buchanan for the past 30+ years.

Such a likeable and generous fellow, not to mention a great modeler. He was the first to have sound-equipped locomotives. He would bring a unit, which would plug into the South Division cabs (Weymouth) and would make railroad sounds come out of his specially-equipped locomotives—and this was in the DC era of model railroading. Dick was never a Regular Member of the SSMRC but he always supported the Club, year after year. He was always willing and ready to help members with their locomotive lighting and painting. In fact, many of the ECL-painted equipment was done by Dick over the years and donated to the Club. Besides attending every spring and Fall Show, Dick attended our Summer Pool Parties at Jim South’s and brought interesting RR slides to show after the eats. Dick’s contribution to the party was his famous, fresh melons for desert. He was a great photographer, too. In later years, trips to Amsterdam, NY, with Doug Buchanan, and others, were frequent and “fruitful” for catching the action.

His favorite railroad was the Delaware & Hudson, which was very close to his home and of which he had many models. I feel very fortunate to have acquired a beautiful



sound-equipped, painted and weathered (by Dick) D&H Challenger, which he sold several years ago when he was “thinning the herd”. Dick was proud of that railroad, which stayed out of Conrail and which he railfanned frequently over the years. He shared his railfanning activities with several members of the Club, including a never-to-be-forgotten cab ride in the famous Alco PAs with Al Taylor from Mechanicville to Portland and back. Being around the railyard frequently, Dick got to know the crews and arranged and shared special trips like that.

Dick was born in Troy, NY and lived in Scotia, NY, when he first started coming to the Club. It is unknown how he got started visiting the SSMRC but he was made an “Honorary Member” sometime in the early ‘70s. He was also involved with the Adirondack Live Steamers and would occasionally attend the “tugboat roundup” at Waterford, NY, on the Hudson River. He was a member of a model railroad group that met at various members’ homes, where they would work/operate on their railroads. He was an active participant in the Red Cross Disaster Relief Teams for a number of years and active in his Church of St. Peter. He was also an animal lover. His wife of over 50 years, Mary, had to be a “Saint”, to put up with all his railroading! He also leaves a daughter, Theresa, and two sons, Scott and

Brendon, four grandchildren and his brother, Robert.

Dick touched many lives during his visits with us, and always made us laugh at him and his “Pollack” jokes...and at ourselves, too. His attitude towards the hobby will be missed; his friendship and smiling face will be missed. He was always smiling when trains were involved. I’m sure there is a special place for him past the “Pearly Gates” at that big model RR in the sky. Rest in peace, my friend. We shall never forget the fun you gave us.

David N. Clinton

FORM 19 ORDERS

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, April 23rd, 8 p.m.

APRIL B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, 30th 8 p.m.

DECODER/EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, May 3rd 8 p.m.

MAY BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, 7TH 8 p.m.

MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Saturday, May 26th

MAY B.O.D.

Thursday, May 31st 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

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

FOR May, to celebrate Amtrak's 47th birthday, we will have the traditional Beech Grove Shops cake and prizes will be related to Amtrak. Question: **What airline did Amtrak's present CEO and president come from and what is his name?** Any paper works or answer forms on top of old wood display case in the train room. Don't forget your name and good luck!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

Starting out this month with my usual updates: The Scenery Committee continues to work on the Cedar Hill engine terminal Scenery work, if done right, is a slow, tedious process; building up the land form so the track does not look like well profiled mainline track is a chore and when it is done all you have is a blank canvas. Ballasting the track is also very time-consuming and tedious, especially around the turnout points so they don't get glued in place. We, the Club, are fortunate to have a leader of the Scenery Committee in Savery, who has the patience and ability to do this work and guide others to achieve



the realistic finished product. I have asked this before and will continue to ask, because we have a lot of track to ballast: please give some of your personal time and help out with the ballasting, Savery will be glad to teach you his methods if you have not ballasted before, it is not that difficult. You just need to take your time with it and do a few feet at a time. Enough said, but please help out, it's your railroad.

The Narrow Gauge Committee, since before the show, has been putting in time on that part of the railroad to finish some trackwork, repair some turnouts and improve reliability in the yard area. The yard lead may have to be rebuilt to make it reliable.

The Trackwork Committee has been installing turnouts on the Trolley line. New roadbed had to be installed first in some areas before the work could begin, but is now progressing very well. As mentioned before, the original plan was revised to add more industries to make it more interesting, rather than having trolley cars just making loops. The area can be an extension of the Larson local job or cars can be forwarded to the trolley line and an electric motor (locomotive) can switch out the industries.

The Electrical Committee continues to make improvements. They have separated some of the original LocoNet cables into separate runs to improve performance and make problems easier to trouble-shoot. Work continues on the work in Middleton installing the "model boards" in the operator's pit for the Yardmasters. I want to mention that a few weeks ago part of the railroad did not start up. When Bob England looked at it the first thing he did was shut down the main power switch and turned it back on and everything was fine. We have experienced this before with just one booster. If you find this condition or a circuit breaker that is shorting for no reason, shut down the power, wait about a minute and turn the power back on. Hopefully, that will take care of it. Every once-in-a-while we get a fluke in the electronics. Really! If that does not work, call Bob.

I think that covers it for this month. Any questions or feedback, I would like to hear from you.

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer

SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

APRIL 2013 (5 years ago)

- Measurements and plans being made for “Corner City”
- Work begins on R-O-W to extend Green Line from Lechmere Station in Cambridge to Somerville.
- Cape Cod to again have Boston connection, after 25 years, with *Cape Flyer* beginning operations May 24th.
- Strasburg RR to restore Long Island RR G-5s 4-6-0, built by PRR shops in 1929, to operation. Strasburg Township Planning Commission approves design of 6-stall roundhouse for RR Museum of PA.
- Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority begins plans for indoor train layover facility in Brunswick, Maine.
- Amtrak’s *Auto Train* last train to ban smoking on board
- ACF Industries re-opens plant in Milford, PA, to build tank cars for burgeoning natural gas industry; closed in 2009.
- East Broad Top RR offers 100 3’-gauge hopper cars for sale at \$7,500 each.
- FRA releases report outlining more than a dozen plans for improving Northeast Corridor.
- Grand Central Terminal in NYC to celebrate 100th anniversary with “Parade of Trains” festival.
- G&W introduces their usual paint job to first Cape Breton & Central Nova Scotia unit, a GP40 #3022.
- Rhode Island D.O.T. to spend \$6 million to revitalize Providence station, which handles over 1 million passengers a year.

APRIL 2008 (10 years ago)

- Quincy Bay Alco S4 #17 sold to Claremont Concord RR. Unit originally D&H #3036.
- Canada Allied Diesel in Montreal begins rebuilding VIA Rail Canada’s F40PH locomotives.
- Mass begins talks with CSX about selling Boston-Worcester line for Commuter Rail expansion.
- VT Agency of Transport takes another look at diesel multiple units for *The Vermonter*.
- CSX begins decentralizing dispatching from Jacksonville, FL. 300 positions involved.
- Local businessman purchases 25-mile Massachusetts Central from Canadian investor.
- Maine Senate approves amended rail funding to expand passenger service to Brunswick.
- Grafton & Upton RR gets ex-BAR caboose.
- 40th Anniversary of the United Aircraft “Turbo Train”, which ran in the U.S. between NY & Boston.
- MBTA Board votes to purchase 75 bi-levels from Rotem USA (Hyundai Motors Group), to be delivered in 2011.
- MBTA requests bids for 28 new locomotives.
- Last of abandoned Portland Terminal tracks on Commercial St. in Portland, ME are ripped up.
- Amtrak to celebrate first “National Train Day”; the second Saturday of May.

• Group called “Over the Hudson” receives \$8 million from State of NY to let contracts to turn New Haven RR Poughkeepsie Bridge into walkway, after many years of lobbying and promotion.

• Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), in San Francisco, switches from wood to plastic ties made from recycled grocery bags, milk bottles and car tires.

APRIL 2003 (15 years ago)

- Show attendance down 50% to 855.
- Amtrak replaces *Night Owl* with *The Federal* between Boston and Washington.
- GE introduces “auto engine start/stop to reduce fuel consumption of idling locos.
- Amtrak increases service between Springfield and New Haven with five trains.
- Athearn introduces SD70MAC in “Genesis” line; a kit.
- MBTA signs 30-yr dispatching agreement with Amtrak.
- Cog Railway makes first ever trip up Mt. Washington in the winter (March).
- Connecticut Eastern RR Museum in Willimantic receives NH FL9 and Budd SPV2000 for collection.
- Three former Amtrak F40s go to Grand Canyon Rwy.
- First rebuilt Turboliner (of seven to be done) makes run from Albany to NYC.
- State signs 99-year lease with Town of Falmouth to turn rail line into bike path.
- Final coal train from “Tumbler Ridge” mines in British Columbia. End of electric BCR line.
- Kawasaki signs \$64 million contract with MBTA to build shells for 28 double-decker coaches & cab cars.

APRIL 1998 (20 Years Ago)

- Bathrooms in Bldg. 51 become operational.
- Dismantling of old layout in Weymouth begins.
- Ocean Spray reefers from Athearn arrive.
- Amtrak replaces FL9s and F40s in “Empire Service” corridor with new “Genesis” dual-mode locomotives.
- Army Corps. of Engineers submits \$28 million proposal to rehab Cape Cod RR Bridge at Buzzards Bay
- Geeps replace Alco M630s on CB&CNS in Nova Scotia—last holdout for the big units in Canada.
- MBTA celebrates 20 years of Commuter Rail operation, after B&M and New Haven gave up service.
- MBTA Board agrees to spend \$5 million to study New Bedford/Fall River Commuter Rail extension.
- MBTA Commuter Rail maintenance facility on site of old Boston Engine Terminal (North side) opens.
- First Operation in Weymouth without South Division, which had been ripped out.

APRIL 1993 (25 Years Ago)

- Ray Welliver moves to Maine; made honorary member.
- SSMRC tours Amtrak’s South Bay facilities, courtesy of member Richie Schmeir (D).
- Amtrak *Sunset Limited* becomes America’s first “transcontinental” train—Miami to Los Angeles.
- Bids taken for Old Colony RR Bridge over Neponset.
- Town of Carver considers taking over 5+ miles of Edaville track and leasing trains from the Maine Narrow Gauge Museum in Portland.

- BN places first order for 350 SD70MAC locomotives from EMD.

- Construction begins on \$81 million bus terminal over South Station railroad tracks.

- Amtrak's X2000 experimental Swedish train makes trips between Boston and New Haven, hauled by F40s, since no electrical overhead catenary.

- Rail link between North and South Stations recommended to Weld Administration, while "Big Dig" in planning states; cost \$1.6 billion.

APRIL 1988 (30 Years Ago)

- "The Gov", John Governor (D), writes special "50th Anniversary Operator" for newsletter.

- Amtrak files papers with ICC to seize Guilford's Conn. River line, which had deteriorated so much that Amtrak had to annul *The Montrealer* train.

- World's longest rail tunnel, at 33.5-miles, opens in Japan.

- Honorary Members Dick Kozlowski and Dick Davis donate 50th Anniversary "East Coast Lines" locomotives.

- Boston-Providence Commuter Rail service restored, with ridership exceeding projections by 50%.

- Six-car trains start running on Red Line rapid transit.

- Framingham Commuter Rail line starts serving new Fenway Park station on game days/nights.

- Al Munn starts "tradition" of popcorn and 16mm movies after the Show.

APRIL 1983 (35 Years Ago)

- 2,024 people attend on-day Show at St. Jerome's Church and lined-up 15-20 minutes in rain to get into Club for Open House, which occurred both Sat & Sun.

- First "Employee Appreciation Night" held at Club with movies, slides, popcorn and cake.

- Steamtown decides to move from Vermont to Scranton, PA.

- Soo Line and C&NW in bidding war for Rock Island RR.

- Amtrak certifies F40s for speeds up to 110 MPH between Boston and New Haven.

- Amtrak's *San Francisco Zephyr* becomes *California Zephyr*, when train re-routed onto D&RGW, at that RR finally bought into Amtrak for its passenger trains; one of three "holdouts", when Amtrak was formed.

- Mt. Washington Cog Rwy sold to group of Littleton, NH businessmen, who had substantial renovation plans for the 114-year-old railway.

- B&M's bankruptcy reorganization plans approved by creditors and trustees.

- Conrail reports \$39 million in profit on \$39 billion in revenue and considered saleable by June.

- New Club passenger train (knick-named "the sled") donated by Honorary Members Dick Kozlowski (D), Wally Chase, Al Thurston (D), Dick Davis and Bob Mosher.

- Editor buys used mimeograph hand-crank machine from church for printing *The Semaphore*.

We had a "full house" this month, granted two of the participants aren't members.

Three members: **Ed Bulman**, **Will Baker** and **Don Pierce** worked on their new Rapido Parlor Cars, decorated for various schemes of the New Haven RR. These cars came fully-assembled without interiors installed. All parts were included to make the cars a full Parlor or Parlor/Lounge. Full lighting was also included, with power from both trucks already wired. It's kind of fun to make the car the way you want, and a good time to install passengers! The factory-built cars have all the parlor seats facing in to the middle of the car, which is foolish—imagine no one looking out the window or speaking with the person next to them? So, putting the interior together yourself allows you to make "groups" of chatting passengers and shows off the nice "antimacassars" (white seatback protectors), that railroads used to keep men's hair tonic from soiling the seatbacks, and which Rapido modeled. All three members were very pleased with their cars and they roll and light-up so nice!

Barry Doland continued his work on the New Haven cab car, which he has kit-bashed from a Walther's passenger car. Tonight's project was installing a decoder for the proper lighting—whether the train is in push or pull mode. The car is painted in black with red stripe, a-la McGinnis. Paul III offered his "Shoreline East" locomotive for power, which would be very appropriate to go with this cab car.

Former member **Ross Hall** brought another B&M E7 from P2K. This was from the original run and didn't have an 8-pin plug, as the newer versions do. Fairly-easy "hard-wire" job, though, using the DH123D. This decoder includes a wiring harness, so it's a matter of isolating the motor and putting it in series with the decoder. The original 16v bulb can be used by attaching to the white and blue leads. This loco would pull the wall down, if given a chance, so we sent it on its way before it got any ideas!

A long-time friend, from the now defunct "Down East Model Railroad Club" (Carver), **Jim Joubert** asked if he could attend and brought an IHC 2-8-0 loco, with thoughts of installing DCC. After taking

the loco apart, and viewing the interior wiring, Jim decided that this would be a good “park exhibit”, especially seeing the “cookie-cutter” flanges on the drivers....anyone have a pizza that needs to be sliced? ☺ Jim will return with something more apropos to today’s model railroading.

Paul Agnew, our most dependable participant, first worked on the Club’s Central Jct. RR 23-tonner, which is gauged for HOn3 track. This GE 23-tonner by Grandt Line took the DZ126T taped to the front of the motor and there are no lights available. His other project was his Stewart/Kato U25b dressed in Erie-Lackawanna’s handsome colors. He used the DH165KO, especially for Kato drives, and installed LED-lighting, along with a 4-pin connector between the shell and chassis. This makes it so much easier to remove the shell and work on it, without having to drag an attached chassis along for the ride.

Our next clinic will be **Thursday, May 3rd, 2018**. Sign-up sheet on Bulletin Board. Everyone is welcome!



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THERE WILL BE NO PASSENGER train service between Brunswick and Rockland this summer. Amtrak was unable to conduct a risk assessment of the 58 miles of track along the route, which is necessary before service can resume, Patricia Quinn, executive director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, said late last month. Quinn said Amtrak had other existing routes to tend to before it could review the Brunswick-to-Rockland line, and there was not enough time for the assessment to be done to start this summer’s proposed pilot program. Amtrak must make sure the track is able to handle the speeds of passenger trains. Quinn said she hoped, however, that a more robust schedule could be in place for the summer of 2019. “We want to take the momentum started this year and roll into next year,” Quinn said. Gordon Page, executive director of Rockland Main Street Inc., said that the news was disappointing to the downtown business district. He said, however, that he expects a lengthier schedule to be offered in subsequent years. The Northern New England

Passenger Rail Authority Board voted on Feb. 26 to proceed with a three-week pilot program for passenger train service between Brunswick and Rockland in 2018. The trains were expected to run for three weekends, including during the Maine Lobster Festival and the Maine Boats, Homes & Harbors show in August. (Mainetoday.com)

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AMTRAK ANNOUNCED on March 28th that special trains and certain private varnish moves will no longer be allowed on Amtrak routes. “Generally, Amtrak will no longer operate charter services or special trains. These operations caused significant operational distraction, failed to capture fully allocated profitable margins and sometimes delayed our paying customers on our scheduled trains,” the notice reads. “There may be a few narrow exceptions to this policy in order to support specific strategic initiatives, for example trial service in support of growing new scheduled service. Otherwise, one-time trips and charters are immediately discontinued,” the notice adds. (TN) Not a good policy. It’s the freight railroads delaying Amtrak trains—not special trains! –Ed.

●●●●●●●●
BRIDGTON & SACO RIVER No. 7, a two-foot gauge Baldwin 2-4-4 Forney, was fired up on March 31 for the first time since 2003. The locomotive has been under overhaul since. The test fire took place at Maine Locomotive & Machine, a contract railroad repair shop. The test fire not only confirmed repairs to the boiler including new flues, it included testing the injectors, air compressor, and dynamo. The whistle was also tested, being blown as trains on the adjacent Wiscasset Waterville & Farmington Railway Easter Eggspress trains passed. Near the end of the testing, the locomotive was moved back and forth a short distance on temporary track outside the shop. Boiler work included major firebox repairs, partial replacement of the front flue sheet, and a new smokebox. The cab was rebuilt, as it had sustained fire damage, and work on the running gear also took place. An inspection by a Federal Railroad Administration official will take place shortly, after which the locomotive will return to Portland for final testing, jacket installation, painting, and adjustments. The locomotive sustained damage in a fire at the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad & Museum in Portland while it was in the early stages of an overhaul there. Volunteers at Maine Narrow Gauge disassembled the locomotive and began the process. The locomotive's boiler was lifted off the

frame and moved to Maine Locomotive in 2008, followed by the rest of the locomotive a couple of years later. (TN)

●●●●●●

THE OPERATOR of an embattled New York State short line says he'll cease operations after this week amid a controversy over storing tank cars in the Adirondacks and missing payments to local governments leasing the line. The Glens Falls Post-Star reports that Iowa Pacific owner Ed Ellis, whose company operates the Saratoga & North Creek Railroad, will cease Saratoga operations after an April 7 train. The Post-Star reports that Ellis told Warren County, N.Y., officials in late March that mounting losses would mean Saratoga's closure unless Iowa Pacific can sell a different branch line in Warren County. The news from Ellis comes weeks after officials declared the rail operator in breach of a contract because, officials say, Iowa Pacific has been late with lease payments. Warren County owns the Saratoga rail line with the Town of Corinth, N.Y. The railroad operator has lost money as a result of a local and state campaign to get freight car companies to remove tank cars from the Saratoga & North Creek, which lies in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains. Ellis has said storage payments on the tank cars helped fund operations and maintenance on the line. (TN)

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DID YOU KNOW that B&M's purchase of Budd RDCs in the mid-'50s revolutionized the B&M's passenger service and extended it for years? The RDCs paid for themselves "out of the fare box" in just a year and a half, allowing the B&M to retire all of its steam locomotives and over 400 passenger cars, along with all steam service facilities. Between 1952 and 1958, the B&M acquired 108 of the stainless steel, air-conditioned, self-propelled "Budd Cars". They traveled system-wide, to places as far away as Montreal (355 miles), Troy, NY (190-miles) and Berlin, NH (244 miles). The last B&M "Budds" would soldier on until 1983, when all that were still left in service were retired by the MBTA, having been replaced by "push-pull" trains with new EMD F40s, F-10 s and new electrically-heated/cooled coaches—which were the last cars built by Pullman Standard before they went out of business. (RRE)

●●●●●●

A FORMER WESTERN MARYLAND Railway boxcar has returned to its home territory on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad at Cumberland, Md.Boxcar No. 26634, with faded "Western

Maryland" speed lettering still visible on its sides, had been used for storage at a grain mill in this western Ohio town since the late 1980s. The car was loaded on a trailer on March 28. The trucks were loaded on a second rig. It was unloaded earlier this week at the railroad. Bruce Kuck, owner of Ginn Grain, told local media the car's roof had begun to leak so it was no longer useful for storage. The car will join a number of other WM cars on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, where they are used in photo freights, but that is not all that is in store for this car. WM Executive Director John Garner says the car will be used to carry bicycles for passengers who want to ride back downhill from Frostburg to Cumberland on the trail with rail path next to the tracks. He said the car the railroad was



using until 2016 had structural issues. The railroad carries as many as 75 cyclists and their bikes per train from June through October. Garner says the car will carry graphics to promote tourism in Allegany County and eventually be returned to its 1947 appearance to run with restored Chesapeake & Ohio 2-6-6-2 No. 1309. (TN)

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THE ENTIRE BALTIMORE Metro system closed for a month from February 11, after safety inspections showed sections of track needed emergency repairs that couldn't wait until this summer. (RRE) Guess our MBTA isn't so bad after all!-Ed.

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THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO is considering making the famous Cable Cars "cashless" in 2019, with riders having to buy passes ahead of their ride. (RRE)

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THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA D.O.T. is considering scrapping their six streetcars, built by the Czech Republic in 2004, in favor of a design

with more easily replaceable parts and compatibility with proposed extensions of the system. They cost \$21-million new. (RRE) Why did they buy them in the first place, without considering those issues?-Ed

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VIA RAIL CANADA will spend \$46 million to upgrade 25 of its 1950s-era, Budd-built, stainless steel passenger cars for continued use on its flagship train, the Canadian. VIA announced a contract with Cad Railway Industries to do the refurbishment. Cad will do the work at its Montreal facility. The refurbishment program will include



updated interior design and new seats, installation of Wi-Fi equipment, mechanical upgrades, and replacement or upgrading of electrical and

heating components. VIA previously announced a contract to upgrade 17 cars of the same vintage to meet current accessibility standards. It also has 33 other cars under renovation at its Montreal Maintenance Centre, and has begun the process of acquiring new cars for its Quebec City-Windsor, ON corridor. (TN)

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CANADA'S VIA RAIL has followed up on news that Ottawa will help fund replacement of locomotives and rolling stock on its most heavily-traveled route. The passenger service operator issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) on April 16 for a contract to supply 32 new trains to replace the current fleet on its flagship Quebec City-Windsor corridor. Through its Corridor Fleet Renewal Program (CFRP), VIA Rail is seeking a fleet of push-pull trains to provide a total of 9100 seats, with enhanced accessibility for passengers with reduced mobility. The trains will be equipped with Tier 4-compliant diesel engines “with the option to operate on electrified infrastructure as it becomes available.” The RFQ specifies the trains must have a “service-proven design and/or platform that meets the requirements of the CFRP.” The contract includes a technical support and spares supply agreement for an initial 15-year term, with an option for an additional 15 years. (RA)

●●●●●●●●

DEMOLITION BEGAN in earnest March 5th on the last remaining New Haven Railroad building in Woods Hole. It is expected to take two to three days to level the building — built in the 1950s and the authority’s main terminal since 1961 — and several weeks to remove the debris, according to a statement from Woods Hole, Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority. Built in 1950 as a railroad-ferry freight terminal, the building was modified to house Steamship Authority reservation and administration offices in 1959. (CRD)

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EXECUTIVE BRANCH HEADS on April 9 signed a memorandum agreeing to coordinate a “One Federal Decision” policy to streamline the paperwork needed for infrastructure projects. The initiative aims to reduce to two years a permitting process that in the past has taken 20 years of more. President Donald Trump issued an executive order to create the policy last August. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao and several other cabinet secretaries, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were among the signatories. According to the White House, the policy will “provide a more predictable, transparent, and timely federal review and authorization process for delivering major infrastructure projects,” establish standard operating procedures, and eliminate duplication of effort among agencies. The policy will make one agency responsible for a given project. In the past environmental reviews, for example, federal agencies would sign off on a project, and then pass it to the next agency for review. Railroad industry leaders in the past said that accelerating the permitting process was their highest priority in any new administration infrastructure program. “Bringing infrastructure projects to completion quickly and efficiently is critical for generating economic growth, which is why we made permit streamlining a cornerstone of our infrastructure plan,” Neil Bradley, U.S. Chamber of Commerce chief policy officer, said in a prepared statement. “Simply put, it shouldn't take longer to approve a project than to build it. Reviewing and approving infrastructure projects in the most efficient way possible is critical to our nation’s efforts in building a 21st century infrastructure,” House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster, R-Pa., said in a press release. “Today’s announcement is a positive step forward in the fight against inefficient, bureaucratic permitting.” (TN) About time!-Ed.

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BNSF RAILWAY EXECUTIVE Chairman Matt Rose says Tuesday his company hopes to extract efficiencies out of positive train control implementation, but added that he is not about eliminating crews from cabs. He also says that BNSF is less interested in natural gas as a locomotive fuel than it is in exploring battery-powered locomotives. The railroad executive made his remarks during the closing session of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association annual meeting in Nashville. In a wide-ranging interview-style format with short line association President Linda Bauer Darr, Rose spoke about challenges to the railroad industry from autonomous trucks and efforts to increase truck sizes and weights, railroad service issues, the focus on operating ratios, and opportunities for the railroad industry in the midst of a robust economy. With regards to PTC, Rose says BNSF will make the Dec. 31, 2018 deadline, but that the practical deadline will be 2020 because many other railroads that connect to BNSF will still be working on the crash avoidance technology. Rose says the company is running many of its trains with PTC now, as many as 75,000 in the last 30 days. He says the system has already prevented several potential accidents and that the railroad has installed it on subdivisions that it was not required to equip, saying that could be a transition to automation. He called PTC the stepping stone to train automation, although he said BNSF has not yet determined what that would look like. He said some form of automation will be essential if truckers continue to gain efficiencies such as running robotic trucks in platoons. "Some railroads have said they want to go to a one-person crew and others man-less cabs ... that is not our focus." He says the railroad has to have PTC technology in place before looking in that direction. Darr says 90 to 100 short lines of the nation's almost 550 lines will have to implement PTC. Responding to an audience question about interest in natural gas-powered units, Rose says he is more interested in battery power. He said BNSF has two Caterpillar and two GE natural gas units but the low cost differences between oil and gas do not make it possible to invest in natural gas. He says battery powered locomotives may be the next step, especially in California where environmental regulators are asking for zero-emission locomotives. In another question from the audience, Rose was asked what it is like to work for

Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffet, whose company purchased BNSF. Rose quipped, "It's good." (TN)

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THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO is committing \$11 billion to develop a high speed rail line in the Toronto-Windsor corridor, beginning with a segment between Toronto and London. Provincial premier Kathleen Wynne announced the plans Friday at Info-Tech in London. The line would feature trains with a top speed of more than 150 mph, and would cut Toronto-London travel time from the current best time of 2 hours, 8 minutes to 73 minutes. There would be intermediate stops in Kitchener and Guelph. It would be the first high speed line in Ontario and just the second in North America. California currently is building the first phase of a high speed line to connect Los Angeles and San Francisco. (TN)

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"SAFETY INSPECTOR," "safety specialist," and "program analyst" are three job classifications Federal Railroad Administration officials say they have more than 100 slots for nationwide to fill as they search for qualified applicants. In a recent statement from the FRA, about 20-percent of the job vacancies to be filled are related to the railroad industry's implementation of positive train control, but all posts are tasked with ensuring rail safety. (TN)

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AMTRAK PLANS TO SEEK PROPOSALS from manufacturers and award a contract by the end of 2018 for the delivery of new diesel locomotives and coach and cafe cars to replace its current fleet of GE P42DC diesel locomotives and Amfleet passenger cars, according to a statement by President and CEO Richard Anderson at an employee town hall event in late March. "These are two big programs for us," Anderson is reported to have told employees. "We want to get a [request for proposals] completed and contracts awarded this year. There is no reason why we can't." The passenger railroad will seek "more modern, lightweight, environmentally sensitive, [Americans with Disabilities Act]-compliant equipment that will give us a completely different product," Anderson continued, citing the diesel multiple-unit trainsets used on commuter services in Fort Worth, Texas, and Santa Rosa-San Rafael, Calif., as models for the "modern way of train travel. If we want to appeal to a Millennial generation in high-density urban markets, we need the same kind of modern

unit trains we see operating in Europe and Asia,” he said. “Making these investments now will benefit the next generation of Amtrak.” (TN)

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A LABOR UNION OFFICIAL says Norfolk Southern’s lawsuit against two railroaders following a head-on collision in Kentucky earlier this year is “crazy.” John Risch, national legislative director for the SMART Transportation Division, says he believes the lawsuit against the two railroaders will never succeed and if it did it would set a dangerous precedent. NS filed a lawsuit earlier this month in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky alleging that Engineer Kevin Tobergte and Conductor Andrew Hall failed to stop at a signal near Georgetown, Ky., on March 18. That failure, NS alleges, put the men’s train in the path of another causing a collision. Four employees were hurt in the wreck. In years past, a crew that failed to stop at a signal and caused a major wreck would probably lose their jobs. But Risch says suing the crew is a bridge too far. “It’s outrageous behavior by Norfolk Southern,” Risch tells *Trains* News Wire. “They’re going to have to start paying railroaders \$1 million or \$2 million annually so they can pay for when their employer sues them.” Risch says a railroad suing an employee over a mistake at work is not unheard of, but as far as he knows, none of those cases have ever succeeded. Dennis R. Pierce, president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, wrote in February that the increase of lawsuits and criminal cases against railroaders is concerning to him. Three former Montreal Maine & Atlantic Railway employees stood trial recently for their involvement in the fatal 2013 oil train disaster in Quebec and an Amtrak conductor was charged after a fatal derailment in Philadelphia in 2015. “In the wake of recent dramatic and highly visible railroad accidents in the United States and Canada, there has been a trend to criminalize railroad workers and prosecute them as the sole cause of these tragedies,” Pierce wrote. Mike Blaszak, an attorney who specializes in railroad legal issues and is a long-time *Trains* correspondent, says lawsuits against railroaders are rare for a number of reasons. “The reasons you don’t see such suits very often are that employees generally do not have sufficient assets to offset the cost of the suit, they can declare bankruptcy to avoid any judgment, and such suits can have a devastating impact on the morale of the employer’s other employees,” Blaszak says. Risch says relations between management and labor has

always been tense in the railroad industry but that it seems to have gotten worse in recent years. He says he hopes that changes in the future. “I want an environment where railroaders are not living in fear of losing their jobs or worst getting sued and being forced into bankruptcy,” he says. (TN)

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GE CORP. EXECUTIVES are looking to make GE Transportation a separate public company or merge it into another company that will ensure GE shareholders keep control of the business. Sources tell the Wall Street Journal that GE executives may look to GE Transportation — a world leader in manufacturing diesel electric locomotives, large diesel engines, and a supplier of digital services — as a model for restructuring other divisions. Analysts say the company is under pressure from investors and the market to break-up the century-old industrial conglomerate amid years of declining profitability and new concerns over questionable accounting practices. (TN)

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CONNECTICUT WILL SOON begin operations on a long-delayed interstate commuter rail line connecting the capital and one of the state’s largest cities. The upgraded Hartford Line will open operations June 16 from Hartford to New Haven and Springfield, Mass. Planning for the 62-mile, \$700-million high-speed line began in 2004 as an alternative to congested I-91. Operations originally scheduled for late 2015 were repeatedly delayed as the state searched for funding. Trains will run for free the weekend of June 16-17 to mark the commencement of service. With a top speed of 110 mph, the 81-minute trip from New Haven to Hartford will cost \$8, compared to \$20 or more under Amtrak’s variable pricing, said James Redeker, the state transportation commissioner. New Haven to Springfield will cost \$12. Construction on the Amtrak-owned line, where track conditions limited operating speeds to 20 mph in some areas, involved new roadbed, track, bridges and culverts. The project was funded through a combination of state funds and three federal grants, including one for \$121 million in 2010. There have been questions about the project, since the state will subsidize fares for gamblers traveling to the MGM Resorts International casino in Springfield, slated to open in September. The Hartford Line will triple existing service from six daily round trips under Amtrak to 17 daily round trips from New Haven to Hartford, and 12 trains from Hartford to Springfield. The Hartford Line will

operate 16 trains leased from Massachusetts, at a cost of \$4.45 million. Connecticut plans to buy new equipment in the coming years. (RA)

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NEARLY 100,000 SIGNIFICANT IMAGES of railroading will be preserved for future generations thanks to the Madison (WI)-based Center for Railroad Photography & Art. The nonprofit has acquired the collection of New York-based photographer Jim Shaughnessy. The collection includes about 60,000 black-and-white negatives, 30,000 color slides, and some glass plate negatives. "This is why we're working so hard to institutionalize the Center," President and Executive Director Scott Lothes says, referencing the group's efforts to build a foundation for such acquisitions. "We couldn't be more excited to take on the Shaughnessy collection and make it available." Lothes made the announcement at the group's annual Conversations conference held at Lake Forest College in suburban Chicago April 13-15. The acquisition started more than a decade ago, Lothes says, and comes from the work of several of the Center's board members, including Jeff Brouws, Bon French, and Kevin Keefe, who worked with Jim and his wife Carol to secure the collection for the Center. The Center's holdings include images from Wallace W. Abbey, John F. Bjorklund, J. Parker Lamb, Ted Rose, and other photographers. Shaughnessy is known for his coverage of the Northeast U.S., living near Albany, N.Y., for much of his life, giving him considerable coverage of the Delaware & Hudson. He made several trips out West, including to Sherman Hill to document the last of the mighty Union Pacific Big Boys in the 1950s and, and to New England and Canada to see the end of Canadian Pacific steam operations in the early 1960s. The organization will receive the collection in batches; the first is expected to arrive later this spring. Center staff will start with an inventory of the collection as they begin to process the images. Lothes expects that the staff will prioritize the oldest works first and notes that the Center will keep the collection intact. "He really has a fire for publication that burned bright all his life," Lothes says. (TN)

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AFTER YEARS OF DEBATE about restarting train service between Pittsfield, Mass., and New York City, a Massachusetts study outlines three main ways to connect the New England town with New York Penn Station. The Massachusetts D.O.T. report was the brain child of Massachusetts State

Sen. Adam Hinds, D-Pittsfield, who envisioned a *Berkshire Flyer* using the former Penn Central-New Haven line over the Berkshire Mountains. Hinds would have the weekender train follow a business model similar to that of the Boston to Cape Cod *Cape Flyer*. Passenger train service to Pittsfield (from NYC) ended in 1971. Several distinct plans have been set forth, each with resultant pros and cons, although all would provide a one seat ride between Penn Station and Pittsfield. One plan would use current Amtrak trains from Penn Station Friday afternoons to Albany, N.Y., with a new schedule to Pittsfield and on Sundays, the reverse. The next plan would involve a new schedule from New York to Pittsfield on Friday afternoon and back on Sunday afternoon. (TN)

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A new report from Regional Plan Association (RPA) calls for the merging of Metro-North Railroad, New Jersey Transit and Long Island Rail Road into a single integrated network. RPA says the \$71 billion overhaul to integrate the rail network would be implemented in three phases over the course of several decades and would result in increased capacity, expanded options and reduced travel times. "The-New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region has an opportunity to support sustainable and equitable economic growth for future generations by building on a unique asset —the region's extensive commuter rail network. This network, if optimized, can boost job and population growth both in the region's core and in major centers throughout the region that have both the capacity and need for growth," states the executive summary of the report. The report, which is part of RPA's Fourth Regional Plan, points to the commuter rail network's age and inadequate configuration as potential pitfalls to harnessing its full economic development potential. The report lays out how strategic investments can improve mobility throughout the region. Rich Barone, transportation planner at RPA, said via Twitter, "The one network that we have that's huge is our commuter rail network — yet it really doesn't connect people throughout the region. It all dead-ends in Manhattan." (RA)

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THE STRASBURG RAILROAD, one of the oldest railroads in North America dating its charter to 1832 and still primarily steam powered, has been hit by one of the most technologically advanced forms of crime: The company was the victim of a cyber-attack last week that siphoned \$80,000 from its

accounts. Steve Barrall, the railroad's stationmaster, told local media the April 11 theft was "elaborate and sophisticated." He said company employees noticed unusual activity in corporate files on-line and Pennsylvania state police were notified. The railroad declined to elaborate for Newswire. Barrall said the thieves gained access to corporate files and information, by which they were able to transfer funds out of an account. "At no time was any customer information or financial information compromised," he stated. The railroad's information technology specialists thwarted further attacks. Although Barrall said the railroad did not know where the funds had gone, they were working with its banking institutions to recover as much as possible. (TN)

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All About the Pocket Watch

If you were in the market for a watch in 1880, would you know where to get one? You would go to a store, right? Well, of course you could do that, but if you wanted one that was cheaper and a bit better than most of the store watches, you went to the train station! Sound a bit funny? Well, for about 500 towns across the northern United States, that's where the best watches were found. Why were the best watches found at the train station? The railroad company wasn't selling the watches, not at all. The telegraph operator was. Most of the time the telegraph operator was located in the railroad station because the telegraph lines followed the railroad tracks from town to town. It was usually the shortest distance and the right-of-way had already been secured for the rail line. Most of the station agents were also skilled telegraph operators and it was the primary way they communicated with the railroad. They would know when trains left the previous station and when they were due at their next station. And it was the telegraph operator who had the watches. As a matter of fact, they sold more of them than almost all the stores combined for a period of about 9 years. This was all arranged by "Richard", who was a telegraph operator himself. He was on duty in the North Redwood, Minnesota train station one day when a load of watches arrived from the East. It was a huge crate of pocket watches. No one ever came to claim them. So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches. The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they wired Richard to see if he could sell them. So Richard did. He sent a

wire to every agent in the system asking them if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit. That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph operators to set up a display case in the station offering high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travelers. It worked! It didn't take long for the word to spread and before long people other than travelers came to the train station to buy watches. Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watchmaker to help him with the orders. That was Alvah. And the rest is history as they say. The business took off and soon expanded to many other lines of dry goods. Richard and Alvah left the train station and moved their company to Chicago - - and it's still there. YES, IT'S A LITTLE KNOWN FACT that for a while in the 1880's, the biggest watch retailer in the country was at the train station. It all started with a telegraph operator: Richard Sears and partner Alvah Roebuck! Their first store:



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WITH THE OPENING of Connecticut Department of Transportation's new "Hartford Line" commuter service pushed back a month from May until June 16, the agency showed its ongoing progress on April 19 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at its new station in downtown Meriden. Gov. Daniel P. Malloy, Transportation Commissioner James Redeker, Meriden Mayor Kevin Scrapati, and local and state elected officials addressed a large gathering on a cold and wet morning. The station is one of three newly constructed high-level facilities alongside the 62-mile route between New Haven and Springfield, Mass. The new service, to be operated by TransitAmerica Services, will offer 17

New Haven-Hartford round trips each weekday, with 12 of those pairs continuing to and from Springfield. Both Malloy and Redeker stressed the convenience of added service frequency with lower fares that currently are charged on Amtrak's shuttle trains on the line. (TN)

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

TRAINS

The Independents

About 6 shortlines stay that way

Map of the Month

Genesee & Wyoming

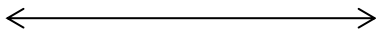
Somewhere West of Laramie

Sunnier Days for the Good Spring Branch

In My Own Words

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

Signs of the Times



News sources: [Boston Globe](#), [Boston Herald](#), Amtrak "News", [Trains Newswire](#), [Railway Age](#), [Railpace Newsmagazine](#), RRE "Callboy", "The 470", [Patriot Ledger](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), Cape Rail "Dispatch".

A BOYHOOD DREAM

Barry Doland

"So what do you think Dad?" What did I think? To put it simply, I was speechless! What my daughter and her husband were proposing was the filling of a boyhood dream.

When we're young children, we play out our dreams with games. We played in the dirt with toy trucks and bulldozers, raced cars down sidewalks, and flew kites and balsawood gliders. Some of us played with toy trains. We loved the far places they took us, the fun of taking passengers or needed goods to their destinations. When we grew up some were able to live their dream, we became construction workers, driving the big bulldozers, pilots flying planes, and yes some of us became locomotive engineers.

I loved trains. I read books, watched movies, played with toy trains when I was young. When I grew up, I went into the retail field moving up into store management. I never lost my love of trains. In

1982 at the age of 32 I joined the South Shore Model Railway Club and Museum. At last I was able to act on my dreams. I worked on helping to build the club's Weymouth layout, and when the club moved to Hingham I again worked on our new layout. I happily joined the club's operation sessions.

But I would still look up at the cabs of the real freight or passenger engines and wish I was up there running it. So when my daughter and her husband told me that they had arranged for me to join the "Hands on the Throttle" program, run by the Valley Railroad of Essex Conn. I was speechless! This was not to be just a cab ride with the engineer handling the controls. No...I would be actually running the engine from the engineer's seat! As my trip on the engine was to be on Thursday April 12, 2018 my wife, daughter, and son in law, drove down on the day before. We stayed in the Griswold Inn in Essex, A very nice Inn reminding me of the Wayside Inn of Sudbury Mass.

We arrived at the Valley Railroad station in time for the 12:00 safety class. The railroad takes safety very seriously. The class consisted of the instructor going over the safety rules, and the basic theory of how a steam engine functions. I was shown a model of how the steam pistons on the engine work. I was also shown how the brakes were applied on the engine. At this time, I learned that the engine to be used for the "Hands on the Throttle" was to be #3025, a coal fired hand shoveled engine. Ending the class I was given a safety exam with an expected score of 100%, in order for me to be allowed to run the engine. (I passed.) I also learned that no photos could be taken in the cab. This was due to the increased federal safety concerns.

Now for the good stuff: After climbing up into the cab of #3025, a 2-8-2, I sat in the engineer's seat as the engineer went over the controls and gauges. Beside the boiler was the throttle; at the front of the engineer's side of the cab were the steam gauge, the brake pressure gauge, the brake stand, the bell control, and the reverser. A lot to keep track of! The engineer was very patient with me and reviewed all the various controls and gauges and what their purpose. While we were still in the yard, he had me practice the whistle signals. I then started the engine and applied the brakes so as to get a feel of how they worked. After about ten minutes, he stated that we were ready to go out on the main

line, up to Deep River! I blew the proceed signal on the whistle and we were off! One of the things which involve timing is the blowing of the signal for road crossings. The signal is two longs, then a short, then another long. The federal regulations state that the last long blow of the whistle must sound as the engine enters the crossing. This takes careful timing of the engineer, me. I didn't get the timing right on all the crossings, a total of some twenty crossings, but I blew most of them on time.

Under the instruction of the engineer I did a better job on the throttle and applying the brakes. I smoothly accelerated and brought the engine to a slow stop. In fact, applying the brakes is all by feel. There are bumps and grooves the brake handle goes over or drops into, as you use it. Backing up, when we returned to the yard, we were required to watch the track rather than the controls.

After returning to the yard and smoothly stopping the engine, a ground crewman radioed us that we needed to hook on to the dinner train and move it so it could be worked on. The engineer at that point asked if I wanted to get off or stay with him and the fireman as they did this work and as they put the engine in the engine house for the night. I took no time to think and said "yes"! (The crew already knew that this would be my answer.) With the ground crewman flagging the public crossing at the end of the yard, we backed up; the track was switched for us, and we coupled up with the dinner train. Before we could move the train, we had to pump air into the brakes for the passenger cars. On my trip, we traveled out the other end of the yard, up to Deep River, but we had no passenger cars hooked behind us. Because of this our engine brake was strong enough to stop the engine. We had a gauge that told us how much air pressure was in the system to use for braking. This pressure was being increased by the air pump



on the engine. While we waited for the brake pressure to come up, the fireman explained how he prepared the fire for the night. He told me that he was using a rake to thin the layer of hot coals close to the door end of the firebox and banking it up at the far end, under the boiler. This was to provide a bed of hot coals he could rack out in the morning. This allowed the water in the boiler to stay warm and to make it easier to restart the fire.

By now the pressure in the brake was high enough to move the cars. After uncoupling the engine, we again backed over the public crossing, switched tracks, and drove the engine into the engine house. There is nothing to compare with the feeling of running a steam engine! The smells, the noise, the wind in your face! It was pure JOY!

As we got down off the engine I was asked if I had a good time. I had a long day and was tired but I stated that I would like to "run away and join the railroad!" I was then told that the railroad was hiring. Hmm...it's not that far to drive to Essex, is it?

MEMBER NEWS

Our condolences to **Al Munn** on the passing of his wife Barbara, after several years of medical issues. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Al and his daughter.

Member **John Holmes**, who moved to the St. Louis area last fall, has resigned from the SSMRC in good-standing. He wants the Semaphore email version to continue, and will keep in touch. Good luck to you, John, we miss you!

Welcome aboard **Joe Corsaro**, who was voted into membership at this month's Business Meeting. We have enjoyed your enthusiasm as an applicant and hope it continues as a member. Glad to have you with us!

Welcome to two new applicants, who started their applicant status this month: **David Galbraith**, from Weymouth, and **Jesse Collins**, from Abington. We look forward to getting to know you fellows, with your membership as the goal in a few months.

Gary Mangelinkx has donated the new flag, now flying outside the building, in memory of his dad, Henry J. Mangelinkx, who served in the U.S. SeaBees in WWII. Thanks, Gunny!

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

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

Brendan Sheehan..... May 6th
John Sheridan May 11th
Coley Walsh May 15th
Paul Cutler, Jr..... May 18th
Doug Buchanan..... May 22nd
Jim O'Brien (H)..... May 27th
Steve Peers..... May 30th

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. Nominations for next FY officers and directors will be held at the May Business meeting, with elections in June.
2. As Fred has mentioned in several of his columns, it would be great to see folks devoting some of their time to working on the railroad, as well as working on their personal modeling. There are many small to medium projects, especially in the scenery area, where your assistance is needed.

..... *David N. Clinton*

RUNNING EXTRA

Want airline food? Take Amtrak

by [William C. Vantuono](#), Editor-in-Chief, [Railway Age](#).

Ex-Florida Congressman John Luigi Mica, a foodie who spent a considerable amount of time when he was Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee questioning Amtrak's food service costs, must be very pleased with Amtrak's announcement that it's getting rid of dining cars on two long-distance trains.

Yes, you heard me right, and I believe it's part of a plan to dismantle the National Network—shutting

down most, if not all, long-distance trains, to focus on the Northeast Corridor, Midwest (Chicago) and California short- and medium-distance services, and state-supported trains. More on that later.

This morning (April 19), I received a press release with the following headline: **New and Contemporary Dining Soon on Two Amtrak Routes. *Capitol Limited* and *Lake Shore Limited* sleeping car customers to be offered fresh choices for meals this summer.** Right away, I smelled corporate-speak rotten fish. Read on:

“Amtrak will offer contemporary and fresh dining choices for sleeping car customers, instead of traditional dining car service, embarking aboard its *Capitol Limited* and *Lake Shore Limited* trains starting June 1. Sleeping car customers will choose meals delivered to their Bedrooms or Roomettes—or eaten in a private café or lounge car—and entrees such as:

- Lunch & Dinner: Chilled beef tenderloin, Vegan wrap, Chicken Caesar salad, or Turkey club sandwich.
- Breakfast: Assorted breakfast breads with butter, cream cheese and strawberry jam; Greek yogurt and sliced seasonal fresh fruit plate.

“These meals will continue to be included in the sleeping car fare and are delivered to the trains just prior to origination, eliminating on-board preparation. Customers will also be offered unlimited soft beverages, a complimentary serving of beer, wine or a mixed-drink and an amenity kit. A Kosher meal continues to be available with advance notice. Our plan is to provide new and fresh food choices in a contemporary way for these overnight trains,” said Bob Dorsch, Vice President of the Amtrak Long Distance Service Line. “Our continued success depends on increasing customer satisfaction while becoming more efficient.” “Dorsch said this enhancement ‘will continue to be refined, and we look forward to hearing from our customers.’”

Gag me with a plastic spoon! Why don't you just come out and say it: “Amtrak is getting rid of dining cars.” No BS. No dancing around the issue. Tell it straight up. It's what's happening, right?

Anybody want to eat in a roomette? No thanks, not me. I'm not *entirely* antisocial.

Am I right? You tell me, President and CEO Richard Anderson, the former Delta Airlines chief executive. (By the way, Delta, I'm told, is a pretty good airline, thanks to you. I'm a regular United customer, and it's pretty good, too, at least for now. But Amtrak is a railroad, not an airline. Different animal. Different service expectations. Different type of customer. Just sayin'.) Is what we have here "Amtrak as airline," complete with—as if you're flying first-class—meals delivered to your seat? At least the airline meals are hot. Amtrak's offering is stone cold. Seated in coach class? You're only choice will be the café car, if the train has one. Goodbye dining car service, one of the pleasures of traveling by rail? Is this all part of becoming "lean and mean" (which is perhaps how the food will taste)?

Already gone are the *Coast Starlight* parlor cars, in-train tour guides on some western trains, most charters, and private railcars bringing up the markers (for a hefty fee, of course). The "cross-country café" is replacing, I'm told, full dining service on Superliner trains: One crew member runs the microwave, another delivers the meal. Gag me with a plastic spoon! Anderson himself has reportedly mothballed the *Beech Grove*, the private Amfleet office car used on inspection tours. That's all well and good, but does this mean he's going to travel with his customers when he wants to see what's going on across the railroad? Or, does it mean that, before long, there won't *be* any national network to inspect?

I've been hearing about internal plans within Amtrak to discontinue long-distance trains. The best way to do that, of course, is to make the service so unpalatable that people stop riding them. Are we looking at a veiled attempt to drive passengers away? I believe we are. (Rather disturbing, to say the least.-Ed.)



EDITED FROM *TRAINS NEWS WIRE*, MARCH 21, 2018

GE's Texas plant regears for rebuilding locomotives

By Hayley Enoch

FORT WORTH, Texas—General Electric has pulled back the curtain on a year's worth of upgrades intended to change its Fort Worth locomotive production plant into a facility specializing in modernizing aging locomotives.

Upgrades typically include new controls systems, crash-worthy cabs, improvements to the electrical components, DC to AC conversions, refurbishment of any other equipment that has become worn, and new paint. The upgrades can be customized to the needs of specific customers and can include the installation of PTC technology, trip optimizers, or other software technologies.

The Fort Worth facility has already refurbished several dozen locomotives, some up to 25 years old. Refurbishing locomotives of that age typically yields a 50 percent increase in haulage capabilities, 25 percent improvement in adhesion, 40 percent better reliability, and 20 percent decrease in overall maintenance costs.

At the time of the tour, the Fort Worth facility had the first of 100 Norfolk Southern locomotives due for modernization in site. NS CMO Doug Corbin says that another benefit of the upgrades is that they help standardize the maintenance of locomotives in the fleet.

"GE does a good job of making this a modular rebuild," Corbin says, "[The modernized locomotives] are basically Evolution [brand units]. Our mechanics are already very used to seeing those."

To facilitate the transition, GE rearranged aspects of the factory floor and added some new components to the production line, like an enclosed space where incoming locomotives can be thoroughly washed and drained of fluid. GE typically receives batches of up to 10 locomotives to modernize at a time, the limit of what it can store. Because of the need to partially deconstruct each locomotive, the modernization process takes about nine weeks, compared to five

EDITED FROM *THE BOSTON GLOBE*, MARCH 25, 2018

First of 24 new Green Line cars has arrived

By Adam Vaccaro, Globe Staff

After so many years of delay, the MBTA finally has something to show for the Green Line extension.

The first of 24 new Green Line cars has arrived in Massachusetts for testing and is expected to join the Green Line fleet this summer, with a second car expected later this spring. More trolleys are expected to arrive through 2018 and 2019, said Jeff Gonneville, the T's deputy general manager.

Purchased as part of the \$2.3 billion light rail expansion through Somerville, the new trolleys will go into service on existing Green Line branches. After several false starts, the extended line from Lechmere is slated to open in late 2021.

And since the new trolleys will be into service long before they're running to Tufts University or Union Square, that will allow the MBTA to take others out of service for maintenance without losing capacity on the system.

The new trolleys, known as "Type 9," differ slightly from existing Green Line cars: They can fit about 10 percent more passengers, and inside they have bright yellow handrails, intended for better visibility, for passengers to hold onto, compared with the usual chrome. Also, the doors open by sliding to the side rather than pushing outward, which should be less disruptive for passengers on platforms.

The Green Line cars are being built by Spanish company CAF for \$175 million, with the shells made in Europe before being shipped to Elmira, N.Y., for final assembly.

They come as the Red and Orange lines prepare for a full replacement of the subway fleet over the next five years. Most of the estimated 400 subway cars will be built in Springfield, with the first new Orange Line car set to enter service late this year.



A new Green Line trolley arrived at the T's Riverside station earlier this month. (MBTA)