

The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Southeastern Massachusetts.....	Paul Cutler, Jr.
“The Operator”.....	Paul Cutler III
Cape Cod News.....	Skip Burton
Boston <u>Herald</u> Reporter.....	Jim South
Boston <u>Globe</u> & <u>Wall Street Journal</u> Reporters	Paul Bonanno, Jack Foley
Western Massachusetts.....	Ron Clough
Rhode Island News.....	Tony Donatelli
“The Chief’s Corner”.....	Fred Lockhart
Mid-Atlantic News.....	Doug Buchanan

PRODUCTION STAFF

Publication.....	Al Taylor
	Al Munn
	Jim Ferris
	Bryan Miller
Web Page	Savery Moore
Club Photographer.....	Joe Dumas

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. ©2019
E-mail: daveclinton@verizon.net Club phone: 781-740-2000. Web page: www.ssmrc.org

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CLUB OFFICERS

President.....	Jack Foley
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Chief Engineer.....	Fred Lockhart
Directors.....	Bill Garvey ('20)
	Bryan Miller ('20)
	Roger St. Peter ('19)
	Gary Mangelinkx ('19)

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ON THE COVER: Amtrak commemorative locomotives celebrating our Veterans. Top and middle: ACS-64 “Cities Sprinter” electric. Bottom: P42 “Genesis” diesel. (Top photo by Robert L. Sartain)

FORM 19 ORDERS

MAY B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, May 27th 8 p.m.

JUNE BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, June 3rd 8 p.m.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, June 3rd after Business Meeting

DECODER/EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, June 6th 8 p.m.

SUMMER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Saturday, June 22nd

JUNE B.O.D.

Monday, June 24th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

Congratulations to **Ron Clough** on winning this month's 50/50 raffle!

This month's celebration of Amtrak's 48th Anniversary brought out some "oldie but goodie" slogans from Amtrak's earlier years:

"All Aboard Amtrak"

Jim South, Barry Doland, Paul Cutler III

"Amtrak's Getting into Training"

Dan Peterson, Al Taylor, Savery Moore

"Maybe Your Next Flight Should be on the Train"

Brendan Sheehan

"Tracks are Back"

Jack Foley

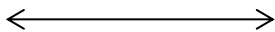
"There's Something About a Train That's Magic"

Ron Clough

"Not Everyone Was Meant to Fly"

Ye Ed's favorite

Thanks to all for joining in the fun and cake-eating!



For August: What other railroad in the U.S. is celebrating its 150th anniversary, besides the UP? Use contest sheets available on top of old display case in train room or any piece of paper—don't forget your name and good luck!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

Last week we had operations on Monday and Thursday nights and the railroad's DCC system

performed well, as I did not hear any comments in either critique sessions about throttle issues or any other electrical problems. Perhaps because during shows there are many more throttles in use and a lot more commands going through the command station, resulting in electronic collisions whereas during operations there are few throttles working at a given time. I don't know for sure but it is nice when it works as advertised. While I am on this subject, Bob England is spending a lot of time under the railroad working on upgrading the DCC system. Remember we have been building this railroad for around eighteen years and along the way the model railroad community has learned a lot about the nuisances of DCC. So Bob is looking at what we have on our earlier sections of the railroad and seeing what can be upgraded.

For the second time in as many months, damage serious enough to warrant replacement, to a piece of rail has been found on the railroad. If you are working on or over the railroad and drop something but don't see any problems, please leave me a note so we can inspect the track. Otherwise, we don't find the damage until operations are in progress and that is not when we want to be repairing trackwork.

Other on-going work continues along nicely on scenery, trackwork and benchwork, so that is it for this month. Your comments or questions are always welcome!

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer



SAMPLE BALLOTT

Absentee Ballots available from the Secretary:
daveclinton@verizon.net

OFFICIAL BALLOT OF THE	
South Shore Model Railway Club & Museum	
June 3, 2019	
<small>Instructions to voters: Vote for NO MORE THAN ONE (1) PERSON PER POSITION (except DIRECTORS--no more than TWO (2) people) by placing an "X" in the box next to the candidate of your choice. IF YOU MAKE A WRITE-IN CANDIDATE, you MUST PLACE AN "X" in the box next to the write-in candidate's name. If these instructions are not followed, your ballot will not be counted. Thank you!</small>	
PRESIDENT	CHIEF ENGINEER
<input type="checkbox"/> JACK FOLEY*	<input type="checkbox"/> FRED LOCKHART*
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VICE PRESIDENT	DIRECTORS for 2-Year Term
<input type="checkbox"/> DAN PETERSON*	VOTE FOR TWO (2) CANDIDATES
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> GARY "GUNNY" MANGELINKX*
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ROGER ST. PETER*
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TREASURER	
<input type="checkbox"/> WILL BAKER*	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
SECRETARY	
<input type="checkbox"/> DAVE CLINTON*	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<small>*Denotes incumbent</small>	

DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Dan Peterson brought his C&NW E8 by P2K back for headlight and MARS lights. These old units are a real “fuss-pot” (CF) of wires, which have to be traced and disconnected. It took him most of the evening to figure out the mess. Not to mention, one of the bulbs was burned-out, which he was able to replace from the supply we have for the clinic. The last step will be programming the bulb to act like a MARS light—he didn’t keep the instruction sheet, which came with the decoder, so this should be another fun time! (For someone who keeps all the packing material for his models, this was shocking to us all!)

Former member Ross Hall came up from the Cape to install DCC in his Bochmann “Doodlebug”. Getting the model apart was the biggest job, and took a lot of wangling, probing and cursing. When the shell came off, he found a nice surprise...an 8-pin plug, which took the DZ123PS nicely. Everything worked, including the headlight and interior lighting. Ross was pleased. He also brought a plastic steamer for the “Hogwarts Express”, to see if DCC was a possibility. We found that it is not. This foreign loco has the “split-weight” set-up, with the motor sandwiched between the two iron weights. Also, there is absolutely no room in the loco for a decoder, as the plastic is molded to cover the drive train, with no extra clearance.

Paul Cutler III also brought a “kind of a doodlebug”—the Sperry Rail Services car from Walthers; made from a former “doodlebug”. This was a hardwire job with the DH126D. Nice thing was that the headlight was an LED, already protected with the proper resistor, so he just had to wire it to the blue and white wires. A painted, unlettered, 100-ton crane from Walthers was in for a tune-up. This self-propelled crane needed some lubrication and adjustment to the cables but ran just fine, though lots of gear noise. Really no place to hide a decoder but that decision is for a future date.

Thanks to **Paul Cutler III** for all his assistance with the clinic. **Our next Clinic** will be **Thursday, June 6th**. Sign-up sheet on Bulletin Board. All are welcome!

SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

MAY 2014 (5 years ago)

- ✳️Electrical Committee up-grades receivers to UR92s; many members up-grading throttles to DT402s.
- ✳️Scenery Committee creates base for what will become “Bryant City”; Cedar Hill structures/details taking shape.
- ✳️Berkshire Scenic Rwy in Adams receives grant for planned excursion service in Hoosac Valley to N. Adams. Purchases ex-B&M RDC-1.
- ✳️”Streamliners at Spencer” event receiving beautifully-restored locomotives for festivities.
- ✳️Bankrupt MM&A Rwy lawyers and three of its former employees appear in court to face 47 counts of criminal negligence for causing July 6, 2013 derailment of oil train in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec; North America’s worst oil train disaster to date, with 47 townspeople killed.
- ✳️Sale of MM&A Railway; becomes “Central Maine & Quebec Railway”.
- ✳️Amtrak’s first new baggage car constructed by CAF USA of Elmira Heights, NY, departs plant.
- ✳️MassDOT approves 6.5% fare increase for bus, subway and Commuter Rail.
- ✳️Amtrak president and CEO Joe Boardman says two trans-Hudson tunnels between NJ and Penn Station, NY, will have to be shut down in 20 years, due to damage from “Superstorm Sandy”.
- ✳️Agreement reached between B&O RR Museum and Western Maryland Scenic RR to transfer ex-C&O 2-6-6-2 #1309 to WMSR for restoration and operation.
- ✳️Metro-North retires last four bar cars on the New Haven line. M-2 cars were built in 1970s and are last of their kind in regular service in U.S.
- ✳️Plan to move Maine Narrow Gauge RR & Museum to Gray, ME, on track, with opening date planned for 2016.
- ✳️Restoration of Springfield, MA, Union Station gets another \$16.5 million towards total cost of \$83 million.
- ✳️”Hingham Museum Day” hosts about 40 visitors at the Club, under sponsorship of the Historical Commission.
- ✳️Savery Moore joins SSMRC.

MAY 2009 (10 years ago)

- ✳️Railpower Technologies, maker of the “Green Goat” and “Green Kid”, sold to R.J. Corman.
- ✳️East Broad Top RR Preservation Assoc. formed as a non-profit to operate EBT for three years.
- ✳️Athearn switches from MRC sound to SoundTraxx by Tsunami.
- ✳️Amtrak’s *Ethan Allen* begins stopping in Castleton, VT, west of Rutland.
- ✳️GE introduces line of fuel-efficient and low-emissions “Evolution Series” with model ES44C4.
- ✳️Amtrak breaks ground for \$10 million renovation of Sanford, FL, *Auto Train* station.
- ✳️”Miniatur Wunderland” in Hamburg, Germany, introduced as the “World’s largest model train set” at \$5 million cost.

MAY 2004 (15 years ago)

- Maine Eastern RR acquires two ex-Amtrak F40s and some passenger cars, in anticipation of passenger service between Brunswick and Rockland, ME.
- The Maine narrow gauge WW&F plans on operating the first passenger train to Alna Center in 71 years.
- 61 Amfleet I food service cars being remanufactured at Amtrak's Bear, DE shops.
- Amtrak acquires TGC #10003, an Acela Express coach built to operate as a seventh car in train consist; first car in the world to measure track geometry at 165 MPH.
- Complete trackage of St. Johnsbury & Lamoille County RR to be scrapped from St. J. to Swanton, VT.
- VIA Rail Canada applies 40-ft-wide "Spider Man" decals to six F40 locos, as part of "Spot the Spider Man" contest.
- 11 SSMRC members ride the "speeders" at the Cotton Valley Rail & Train Club in New Hampshire.

MAY 1999 (20 Years Ago)

- Track being laid on new center addition spliced into Middleton Yard.
- DCC Test Bench begins operation over part of its track
- LDC decides to have one meeting a month.
- Old portable layout auctioned off.
- Amtrak changes "Custom Class" to "Business Class" service.
- Cape Cod RR equipment sold off: GP9 #1789 to Bay Colony; RDC-1 to B&MHL in Maine; B&M 2-6-0 to Danbury Railway Museum in CT.
- CSX replaces locally "common" ex-Conrail B23-7s with GP38s.
- Cape Cod Central buys 10 ex-LIRR coaches; being refurbished in Quincy Shipyard by SSMRC members Jeremy Cahill and Paul Cutler III.
- New RTE 128 RR station progressing rapidly.
- Conway Scenic RR sells Prairie #108 to Texas interests.
- South Station celebrates 100th anniversary.
- New company Cranrail Corp. plans to reopen Edaville.

MAY 1994 (25 Years Ago)

- RailTex, Inc. buys the Central Vermont Railway.
- W. Graham Claytor, dynamic 4th president of Amtrak, former SRRR president and former Secretary of the Navy, passes away.
- England-France "Chunnel" formally opens.
- State of NH takes bids for leasing former MEC "Mountain Division" for tourist operations.
- SP orders 100 Dash 9-44W locos from GE; its first new loco order in several years.
- CP Rail discontinues "dual-flag" scheme.
- Strasburg RR constructs new 45,000-sq-ft train shed to house exhibits.
- Two sides of Greenbush Line controversy agree to short tunnel option under Hingham Square.

MAY 1989 (30 Years Ago)

- Club decides to have first "Fall Open House".
- Amtrak starts *Atlantic City Express*.

- St. Lawrence & Atlantic, owned by Emons Holdings, takes over CN's Grand Trunk Eastern line from Norton, VT to Portland, ME.
- Study begins on Portland-Boston train service.
- Seashore Trolley Museum celebrates 50th anniversary.
- Poughkeepsie RR Bridge celebrates 100th anniversary but hasn't seen a train in 15 years because of a fire.
- MBTA donates one of the two side-by-side "up" wooden escalators to Smithsonian. Believed to be oldest operating in U.S., located at Chauncy St. at Downtown Crossing station. (A different experience on them...rattling all the time and so steep!-Ed.)
- New Milford-Bennington RR planned on ex-B&M trackage in New Hampshire.
- P&W acquires property in Worcester, as first step toward making the city its headquarters.
- Canadian Pacific opens longest tunnel in Western Hemisphere—Mt. MacDonald Tunnel at 9.1 miles through the Canadian Rockies.

MAY 1984 (35 Years Ago)

- Youth program voted into existence; called "The Highballers" for 13-17 year-olds.
- Conrail to single-track most of the B&A mainline in Massachusetts; not section over Berkshires.
- Guilford's East Deerfield Yard gets \$7 million grant from the State of MA for improvements.
- Cape Cod & Hyannis proposes running two round-trips each day between Hyannis and the Braintree Red Line extension station.
- SP's "Daylight" 4-8-4 #4449 steams to World's Fair in New Orleans, to be on display along with UP's 4-8-4 #844.

POTPOURRI

UP HALTED CONSTRUCTION of a \$550 million facility in Brazos, Texas, and closed two other train-sorting yards, as the railroad embraces a "Precision Scheduled Railroading", which calls for fewer but longer trains. The Brazos facility, a large hump yard, was the single-largest capital project in the 156-year-old railroad's history and was meant to help with the expected growth in rail cargo moving through the region. (WSJ)

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THE CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC Railroad will host several events during 2020 to celebrate its 50th anniversary of operation and joint ownership by the states of Colorado and New Mexico. In 1970, Colorado Gov. John Love and New Mexico Gov. David Cargo signed an historic agreement to purchase the line between Chama and Antonito, Colo., from the Denver & Rio Grande Western to

operate as a scenic and historic tourist railroad. Originally built in 1880, the railroad is part of the Denver & Rio Grande Western, San Juan extension, designed to connect silver mining towns in the San Juan Mountains with Denver. It was traveled by Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and nearly every famous outlaw and gunman in the Old West. Today, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is the nation's longest, highest, and most authentic railroad. (TN)

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WABTEC CELEBRATED the 1,000th Evolution Series Tier 4 Locomotive at its plant in Fort Worth. The milestone delivery to Canadian National highlights the commercial success of the locomotive, which set the standard for environmental performance in the freight-rail industry. "This achievement underscores our bold decision in 2013 to develop a Tier 4 locomotive," said Rafael Santana, Chief Executive Officer of Wabtec's Freight Division. "Delivering 1,000 locomotives in less than five years proves it was the right locomotive at the right time to meet market needs." The locomotive's proven capabilities, value, reliability, and industry-leading environmental performance have established it as the preferred choice among North American freight railroads. The Evolution Series Tier 4 was the first freight locomotive to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Tier 4 emission standards. It decreased emissions by more than 70 percent compared to the Tier 3 locomotive without the need for after-treatment. This Tier 4 saved railroad customers more than \$1.5 billion in urea infrastructure and operational costs. When combined with Wabtec's digital solutions, like Trip Optimizer, the added functionality enabled the locomotive to realize 3 to 17 percent savings on fuel costs and further emission reductions. "The success of the Evolution Series Tier 4 Locomotive has exceeded all of our expectations," said Santana. "That is a tribute to our employees, suppliers and customers. Their support was essential in making this locomotive such a success in the market." Since delivering the first production model to BNSF Railway, the Evolution Series Tier 4 Locomotive has joined six Class 1 railroads and two mining companies in North America. The growing fleet already has completed more than 100 million miles of revenue service, the equivalent of hauling freight from Seattle to Miami approximately 30,000 times. They also have accumulated more than 2,500 locomotive years of operation. (TN)

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AMTRAK HAS ANNOUNCED a new group discount, Share Fares, which has gone on sale today (April 24). The fare provides discounts for up to three passengers when groups of two to four travel together, with a three-day advance purchase. The first passenger will pay full price, with the second receiving a discount of 15%, the third a 60% discount, and the fourth a 70% discount. Fares are one-way (adult) and no additional discount applies. The fares are available on Northeast Regional trains between Washington and Boston, and on most national network trains. They are not available on the Acela Express or Auto Train. (TN)

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THE MBTA IS TAKING NEW STEPS to try to identify hot axles after they were identified as a factor in two recent derailments. The MBTA has applied heat-sensitive tape to axles on the commuter railroad's passenger coaches in hopes of spotting problems before axles fail. Keolis Commuter Services, operator of the MBTA trains, is also installing equipment to monitor the pitch of trains as they pass. "If there's any change in pitch ... it's another way for us to see an indication that this may be a problem," says Dan Grabauskas, executive director of MBTA's commuter rail operations. The MBTA will also install fare gates at three main stations to address fare evasion, which the agency estimates cost it \$10 million to \$20 million last year. The gates will be installed at the North, South, and Back Bay stations, involved in 90 percent of commuter rail journeys. They will be able to read plastic, electronic, paper, and Amtrak tickets. (TN)

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ASK A NEW YORKER about their opinion regarding trains and you will likely get an earful about the sputtering subway system or the less-than-reliable commuter rail lines that stretch into the suburbs. But few New Yorkers have ever glimpsed, or even heard of, the New York & Atlantic Railway, a freight train that would seem more familiar rumbling across the Great Plains, not chugging through crowded city neighborhoods in Queens and Brooklyn, bearing cars loaded with food, scrap metal, construction materials and even beer. Now the little-known railroad's profile is about to get much bigger. City officials have been working to reduce the inundation of trucks on New York's streets. The trucks carry about 90 percent of the city's freight, more than most major American cities,

contributing to the city's worsening gridlock and pouring greenhouse gases into the air. By contrast, the city's rail lines transport just 2 percent of New York's cargo. To change that, city officials are investing tens of millions of dollars to upgrade the freight train's corridors, including modernizing several rail depots. The railway will also handle more freight because another little-known piece of the region's transportation network will soon be expanded: a service that floats rail cars from New Jersey across New York Harbor by barge to Brooklyn, where they connect with New York and Atlantic's line. "That rail line has an important but unsung job of diverting truck traffic, and it is key to the future of freight transport for New York City," said Representative Jerrold Nadler, a Democrat who has long advocated rail freight, including supporting building a tunnel under New York Harbor connecting New Jersey to Brooklyn. The New York & Atlantic line now is in the surprising position of having its big diesel locomotives — and the sooty, graffiti-strewn boxcars they haul — pegged as a progressive, environmental choice for New York. "Anything with rail freight in New York City has to come through us," said James Bonner, the railway's president. "We're the conduit to a lot of growth. It all kind of hinges here." (NYT)

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MBTA IS SAYING PROBLEMS with positive train control equipment from one of the system's major subcontractors is having problems that could cause the MBTA to miss the December 2020 deadline for full PTC implementation. Siemens is having problems with both hardware and software it is providing for the MTBA and has brought in specialists to try to determine the cause of the malfunctions. If the problems can't be resolved fairly soon, MTBA officials say some commuter lines might have to be shut down for failing to meet the federal deadline. Since early February, Siemens has recalled four components of the system. They began shortly after PTC testing began on the Lowell line of the commuter rail network. Because the problems have not yet been resolved on the Lowell line, the scheduled start of testing on the Fitchburg line has been postponed. (TN)

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CSX RELEASED TWO SPECIALLY painted units from its Huntington Locomotive Shop, No. 911, a first responder's commemorative unit, and No. 1776, that salutes veterans. In keeping with CSX's "Spirit of" locomotive series, No. 911 is the "Spirit of

our First Responders," and No. 1776 is "Spirit of our Armed Forces." Both units are General Electric ES44AH locomotives. (TN) Sorry, but to me the grey on the Veterans' unit looks like "peeling paint"; I think they could have done better. -Ed.



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IN ITS EIGHTH YEAR, Penn State Altoona's Bachelor of Science degree program in Rail Transportation Engineering (RTE) remains the only one of its kind in the country. Having met the standards set by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) in goals, objectives and educational outcomes, students graduating from this program are prepared and eligible to take the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam, the first step toward becoming a licensed professional engineer. It's not difficult to understand why the RTE program has become a success. It provides in-depth teaching and hands-on course work by experienced faculty who have worked in the rail industry and continue to conduct research in the field. The program also offers immersive learning and out-of-the-classroom opportunities, plus support from an active advisory board, freight and passenger railroad, suppliers, and consulting companies. Finally, the 100% job placement rate is a big draw for students. (RA)

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THE FISCAL and Management Control Board of MBTA voted on April 29 to exercise an option with Wabtec subsidiary MotivePower (MPI) for the overhaul of 27 locomotives used on commuter rail services around Boston. MBTA awarded MPI a contract in June 2017 to overhaul 10 F40 locomotives, the first of which returned to service in March. A second overhauled locomotive is due to enter service this week and the remaining eight

units are due to be returned by August. The overhaul program includes the installation of remote monitoring and diagnostics systems, forward-facing cameras and modern brake and control systems. The option for 27 additional locomotives is worth around \$US 78.3m. The first overhauled unit from the second batch is due to return to MBTA by November 2020, with the final unit due for completion by late autumn 2021. (RA)

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CONTRACTORS WORKING for Norfolk Southern over the weekend removed the last classic Pennsylvania Railroad-style wayside position-light signals on the 131-mile stretch of main line between Harrisburg, Pa., and Altoona, Pa. On the original 1854 Pennsy Harrisburg-Pittsburgh main line, the sole survivors lie between Altoona and Pittsburgh, 117 miles. Over the summer, those, too, will be retired. The work, which began in the fall, is a lead-up to the installation of positive train control. Automatic block signals, also known as intermediates, are being removed entirely, while interlockings are being converted to Safetran four-color hooded signals. Until PTC goes live on the Pittsburgh Line, train and engine crews between interlockings are relying solely on traditional Pennsy/Penn Central/Conrail/NS cab signals to instantly show indications. In all, the cutover will have resulted in 27 interlockings with more than 100 signals being replaced and more than 60 automatics with more than 200 signals being removed. While Conrail and NS had made a few spot replacements, position-lights overwhelmingly guarded the main line until now. This style of signal has protected, moved, and stopped Pennsy, Penn Central, Conrail, and NS trains for more than a century. Installed at Paoli, Pa., as early as 1914, position-light signals mimic the action of a movable semaphore blade, the type of signal that they replaced. The railroad collaborated with Union Switch & Signal of Swissvale, Pa., an affiliate of the former Westinghouse Air Brake Co., to design position lights. Wholesale adoption on the Pennsy began in 1921. (TN)

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THE EX-B&M “TOWER A”, next to the Charles River lift bridges outside North Station was closed in late March. The operator and bridge controls were transferred to a leased trailer mounted on a scaffold/staging on the same side of the bridge. This has been in the works since last summer, due to the condition of the building; it had become

unsafe and unsalvageable. It is unknown when or if it will be taken down. (RP)

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P.T. BARNUM CALLED IT the “Second Greatest Show on Earth”. One New Hampshire legislator thought it was such an impossible folly that he dubbed it “The Railway to the Moon”. Locals simply say “The Cog”. The Mt. Washington Cog Railway rumbles up the steep slopes of Mount Washington, climbing to the 6, 288-foot summit of the Northeast’s highest peak. The steam-driven journey is an exhilarating experience, traveling one hour to go three miles, through three climate zones, and across “Jacob’s Ladder”, the steepest, highest railroad trestle in the world. At one point, the grade is so steep, that passengers must lean forward toward the floor to stay balanced. It’s a thrilling, fun ride. If you’ve never traveled The Cog, this is the year to do it, when the iconic and historic railroad turns 150 years old and will celebrate with a variety of special events and programs. To kick off the season, the 150th rider on the railway each day will receive a \$3 ticket, the price it was in 1869, when the railway opened. Biodiesel trains depart every hour on the half hour; steam trains make the first trip in the morning and, new this year, an additional trip in the afternoon. Adult \$72 biodiesel, \$78 steam. More info @ www.thecog.com or 800-922-8825. Reservations highly recommended. (BG)

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AMTRAK RECENTLY ANNOUNCED that on May 4 it would be expanding its Acela Express service with an additional round trip on Saturdays. The increase will see Train 2252 depart Washington, D.C., mid-morning and Train 2255 depart Boston in the early afternoon, Amtrak noted. Regularly scheduled weekend service will continue. Amtrak added that it is expected to introduce a new Acela fleet into Northeast Corridor (NEC) service in 2021. The new trainsets will accommodate nearly 30% more—386—passengers and are in production at Alstom’s manufacturing plant in Hornell, N.Y. (RA)

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ON MAY 6TH, NETHERLANDS Railways (NS) distributed smartwatches to 1900 of its guards with the aim of improving punctuality at stations. Shortly before departure time, the watch vibrates to tell the guard to begin the train departure process. The smartwatch then counts down the time to the train’s scheduled departure. The device is synchronized with the smartwatch worn by the train drivers and also provides the guard with passenger information, helping them to deal with enquiries. NS says the

focus on ensuring a safe and punctual departure means guards are often preoccupied with monitoring the clock on the platform when assisting passengers. The smartphone is therefore expected to improve customer service as well as punctuality. With ridership growth increasing the pressure on infrastructure capacity, NS is turning to technology to ensure platform dispatch is punctual to the second. The operator recently began testing of a new passenger information system at Utrecht Central station which provides information on train composition, stopping position and the availability of seats in each vehicle, with a countdown clock to notify passengers of imminent departure. (RA)

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AS MASSACHUSETTS PREPARES to launch an expansion of north-south passenger rail service later this summer from Springfield through Northampton, city officials say the steady increase in ridership since the service began in late 2014 proves the demand is there to support more trains. "Every year the ridership has continued to increase," Mayor David Narkewicz said recently. Since fiscal 2016, total ridership on the Amtrak Vermonter to and from Holyoke, Greenfield and Northampton has increased by 20 percent, according to statistics provided by the mayor's office. In total, 29,698 rides originated from or ended in those three communities in fiscal 2018, comprising 30 percent of the *Vermonters* overall ridership. Northampton has been the driving force behind that increase, with ridership originating from its Pleasant Street station jumping by 26 percent between fiscal 2016 and 2018, from 17,197 riders to 21,619. Trips originating from and ending in Northampton made up more than one fifth of all rides in fiscal 2018. A year ago, Massachusetts officials announced an agreement with Connecticut authorities and Amtrak to provide the expanded north-south service on a two-year trial basis. The trains will be continuations of Amtrak shuttles run from New Haven, Connecticut, as part of the CTrail Hartford Line. For Northampton, that means two additional trains in the morning and two later in the day. While Masterson did not give specific times, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments told the Greenfield Recorder that there will be 6 and 8 a.m. trains leaving Greenfield, and 10 p.m. and midnight trains returning on non-holiday weekdays as part of the program. The program also expands weekend service to Greenfield. The Vermonter is the only passenger train traveling north of Springfield now. It runs once a day in each

direction. Narkewicz and Masterson believe ridership is there to support the expansion, based on the ridership figures. "We want the (expanded) service to be permanent," Masterson said. (Hampshire Gazette)

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FORMER U.S. REP TODD ROKITA (R-Ind.), who twice voted to defund Amtrak, will be nominated to fill a seat on the passenger railroad's board of directors. President Donald Trump has announced his intention to nominate Rokita for a spot on the nine-seat board. The nomination must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Rokita spent eight years in the House of Representatives before making an unsuccessful bid for a Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate last year. Three earlier nominations by President Trump to the Amtrak board are being held up by U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) pending assurances from Amtrak it will continue to fund the Southwest Chief. Rick Dearborn of Oklahoma, a former deputy chief of staff for President Trump; Joseph R. Gruters, a Florida state representative who was co-chair of the president's 2016 campaign in Florida; and former U.S. Rep. Leon Westmoreland of Georgia, who also voted at least twice to defund Amtrak, have had their nominations placed on hold by Moran. He and other senators are scheduled to meet with Amtrak CEO Richard Anderson on May 22, according to a report in the Topeka Capital-Journal. (TN) Never ceases to amaze me what this President is trying to do to Amtrak—he must be in cahoots with Amtrak's president Anderson!-Ed.

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WITH A CALL ON THE RADIO from Union Pacific Chairman Lance Fritz as part of a Thursday morning ceremony, Big Boy No. 4014 eased into a scene that was a twist on an iconic American image of two locomotives facing nose to nose on a fine spring day in Utah. With UP's Ed Dickens at the throttle, No. 4014 moved to a spot on a stage with 4-8-4 No. 844 in front of a banner that read "#done". The two locomotives posed like the Jupiter and No. 119 at Promontory 150 years ago for a ceremony honoring the Golden Spike. Fritz, Utah Gov. Gary Herbert, U.S. Rep. Bob Bishop, and descendants of UP construction boss Grenville Dodge and Chinese laborers used hammers to tap an oversized golden spike, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869.



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 The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History will mark the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad by opening two new exhibits on Friday. "Forgotten Workers: Chinese Migrants and the Building of the Transcontinental Railroad" and the accompanying "The Transcontinental Railroad" will be on display until spring 2020. More information on the displays is available at: <https://americanhistory.si.edu/transcontinental150>.

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MBTA PUTS PRICE TAG for fixing the system at \$10-billion. The cost to fix or replace the MBTA's aging equipment and upgrade to new, modern infrastructure is now valued at a cool \$10 billion, a dramatic jump from the already eye-popping estimate cited just four years ago. The new figure, unveiled at Monday's meeting of the MBTA, accounts for nearly all things transit: trains and buses, tracks and power systems, culverts and tunnels and bridges, and more. But some elements of the system have not yet been closely analyzed, and their costs are based on best-guess placeholders — meaning the figure could still jump once the analysis is complete. (BG)

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LAWMAKERS and advocates, who for years have pushed for late-night service on the South Shore's three commuter rail lines, are declaring victory after state officials announced on the 14th that trains would begin running later starting this fall. The decision means trains will run late enough to shuttle residents back from late-night concerts, sports games and nights out in Boston. Currently, none of the lines have trains that leave Boston after 11 p.m. Beginning this fall, trains will leave South Station for Greenbush at 11:20 every night; 11:40 for Kingston/Plymouth; 11:30 for Middleboro/Lakeville. (PL)

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NEVADA HAS BECOME the second state this year to pass a law requiring at least two people in the cab of freight trains on Class I and Class II railroads. On May 15, Gov. Steve Sisolak (D) signed Assembly Bill 337 into law, just two months after Colorado's governor signed a similar law. Similar legislation has been passed in California, Arizona, Wisconsin, and West Virginia. Matt Parker, Nevada State Legislative Board Chairman for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, says the bill will improve safety for both railroaders and communities. (TN)



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 The federal government is officially pulling out of a nearly \$1 billion-deal with the state of California over building a high-speed rail network. A 25-page letter to the California High Speed Rail Authority's CEO, Brian Kelly, lays out problems with the project including: the authority "consistently and repeatedly failed in its management and delivery of the Project, and in meeting the terms and conditions of the [2010] Agreement, all of which constitute violations of the ... Agreement." The news comes amid criticism, specifically from an auditor's report that details missteps and cost overruns that California high speed rail managers inflicted on the project, almost from the beginning. A 2010 agreement between the U.S. government and the state of California had U.S. taxpayers footing the bill for \$928,620,000 for what was a \$25 billion project when proposed in 2000, but quickly grew to at least \$77 billion earlier this year. (TN)

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WITH THE RETURN OF 4-8-8-4 Big Boy No. 4014 to the roster in early May, many observers seemed to forget about its diesel counterpart, SD70M No. 4014 that helped bring the Big Boy east to Cheyenne for restoration in 2014. A source close to the railroad tells Trains News Wire that crews renumbered diesel No. 4014 to No. UP 4479 on April 10, one day before Big Boy dropped the "UPP" reporting mark to become the only No. 4014 on the railroad's diverse roster. Diesel No. 4014 was built at EMD's now-closed London, Ontario, plant; delivered in June of 2000, part of the railroad's historic order for more than 1,000 SD70Ms. (TN)

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THE WORLD'S LARGEST OPERATING steam locomotive, 600-ton Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014, derailed Thursday afternoon as it entered the yard here after an uneventful trip from Rock Springs, Wyo. The Big Boy, 4-8-4 No. 844, and 12 passenger cars in UP's heritage fleet are on the return leg of their journey to celebrate No. 4014's restoration and the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike. Driver axles Nos. 2 and 3 on the second engine of the articulated locomotive fell into the gauge as the engine entered the yard at the Washington Street underpass. The accident took place about 2:15 p.m. The engine was moving slowly when the drivers came off the rails. The front engine, front truck, rear truck, and driver axles Nos. 1 and 4 all remained on the rails. The UP steam crew worked with local track forces to fix the track under the engine and bring the locomotive's 68-inch drivers back onto the rails, which they accomplished about 5:20 p.m. (TN)

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ON A CLOUDY DAY in which much of fabled Sherman Hill was socked-in by fog, Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 and 4-8-4 No. 844 returned home to Cheyenne, WY, concluding the inaugural tour for the 4-8-8-4 in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike. (TN)

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A NONPROFIT IN ALBERTA wants to raise nearly \$1 million to start restoration work on Canadian National 4-8-2 No. 6060. No. 6060 was built in 1944 and was used in mainline excursion service in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, the locomotive is owned by the Rocky Mountain Rail Society and housed at the Alberta Prairie Railway in Stettler, about 50 miles east of Red Deer. The streamlined 4-8-2 last ran in 2011, when boiler issues sidelined the locomotive. No. 6060 and its sisters were built for passenger service and were dubbed "Bullet Nosed Bettys" for their streamlined noses. Rich Graydon, spokesperson for the Rocky Mountain Rail Society, says the group recently completed a complete evaluation of the locomotive and found that it needs both boiler and running gear work. The running gear work will happen at the Alberta Prairie and the boiler work will be contracted out. Graydon estimates the work will cost between \$750,000 and \$1 million. (TN)



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RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN narrow gauge 4-6-0 No. 20 moved on May 23rd under its own power for the first time since 1951. The 1899 locomotive moved at the Strasburg Rail Road shop on a short stretch of 3-foot gauge track. Retired Strasburg CMO and President Linn Moedinger pulled the throttle. His father, Bill Moedinger, had popularized the locomotive near the end of RGS operations with his photos that were published in Trains. Under overhaul at the Strasburg Rail Road's shops since 2006, the engine shoved the shop's Plymouth switcher, which was also supplying braking power through the shop and out the other end. (TN)

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

TRAINS

What's in Railroading's Most Famous Photo?

Making Tracks

Building 10 miles of tracks in one day

No. 119, Meet SD70Ace

Artistic design on a 150-year-younger locomotive

In My Own Words

Firing the Golden Spike Centennial Ltd. of 1969

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

Look Both Ways

An Op-Ed on Op Sessions

MODEL RAILROADER

Down by the Sea

Belfast & Vinehaven RR

DCC Corner

Dealing with shorts at turnouts

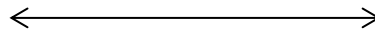
PASSENGER TRAIN JOURNAL (2019-2)

A Tale of Three Stations

An Alaskan Adventure

Passenger Trains of the Delaware & Hudson

Trip Report: To Dallas on the Texas Eagle



News sources: Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Trains Newswire, Railway Age, Progressive Railroading, Railpace, RRE "Callboy", "The 470",

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. Folks from the “**SNAP Summer Program**” will be visiting us on Thursday, July 11th at 1 p.m. This program, operated at the South Shore Country Club, is open to people living on the South Shore with moderate disabilities aged 4-22. They are paired with a high school mentor to make a connection with them to help build communication and relationship skills, by participating in activities together over the 5-week program. Hope a good group can show up to run trains and help make their visit a productive one.
2. On this **Memorial Day**, we are thankful for and remember those Veterans who sacrificed so much so that we can enjoy this wonderful hobby in freedom.
3. Next month’s newsletter will be our “**Summer Edition**”, as the staff takes the month of July off, with the following edition being the end of August. So, get your news and articles in for the June 22nd deadline!
4. Please make note this year’s “**Pool Party and Cookout**” at Jim & Alice South’s is planned for Tuesday, July 30th. Details next month.

..... *David N. Clinton*

“Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40)

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **John Sheridan** on becoming an “official” employee of Rapido Trains. John has been designing for them for several years and now will be their “new product designer”. He will not be moving to Toronto but, with today’s modern ways of sharing information, will be working from his home in New Bedford...and continuing to be a member of the SSMRC!

Bob Farrenkropf is recuperating at home from back surgery. He’s a bit frustrated with his progress

and anxious to get out and about. We miss you, Bob, and look forward to your return to the “fold”!

Bill Hallsen is recovering from double hip surgery. We wish him continued success and hope to see him soon back at the Club.

“Welcome Aboard!” to **Jesse Collins**, who lives in Abington and works for Amtrak on 3rd shift. He can’t get enough of trains, so he joined the SSMRC! Since member **Jeremy Cahill** works the 3rd shift, just across the tracks, at the Red Line maintenance facility, it would be fun if the two of them could get together some evening during a “break”.) Just a suggestion and, Jeremy, he’s about 15 years younger than you and very fun to talk with.) We’re so glad you were finally able to join with us, Jesse, and look forward to seeing you when you have time off!

Bill Garvey is recovering from foot surgery at the Brockton VA Hospital. Visits are welcome but please call first: 781-424-5042. Keep up the good PT recovery work and we look forward to your quick return, Bill!

Note: The “Health & Welfare Committee” (Ye Ed.) would like to hear of any member who is ill or hospitalized, so that we can help “cheer them up” and keep their fellow members advised.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The following members have made it through another year and deserve congratulations on their special day:

Al Munn.....	June 7 th
Matt Sisk	June 10 th
Dave Clinton.....	June 13 th
Rich Herlihy.....	June 14 th
Barry Doland	June 20 th
Savery Moore.....	June 20 th

RUNNING EXTRA

PSR: Short-term gains, but at what cost?

(Written by Dennis R. Pierce, National President, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen 4/21/19)

Much is being made in the railroad industry and transportation media about the Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) wildfire sweeping from coast to coast.

Proponents of PSR will tell you that it will prove to be the industry's savior. But it also begs the following question: Just what does the industry need to be saved from?

The combined operating income of the Class I railroads topped \$16 billion for the first half of 2018, based on company reports. The carriers are now well into their second decade of ever-increasing profits, setting new records virtually every year. So, why the stampede toward PSR? And what does PSR really mean for railroad workers, shippers and the nation as a whole? While there are many slightly different definitions of PSR, there are a couple of common threads in all of them.

The PSR crowd is in unanimous agreement that the process will be driven by maximization of every single asset. That includes even fixed-point shippers, as how Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific eliminated more than 425 domestic and nearly 100 international origin-and-destination intermodal interline pairs in just the first six weeks of the year. As a result, hundreds of locomotives and cars already have been mothballed, and that number will increase into the thousands in the next few years. Dozens of shops and yards have already been closed or are slated to be shuttered.

And where a line doesn't pass muster under the profit maximization test, it will be sold off or leased to some short line or regional.* NS did just that last year with an entire operating division, and CSX has been trying to do it with its main line along the Florida Panhandle since last fall.

While all this is unfolding, thousands of railroad workers already have been furloughed. For BLET members, there are signs beyond yard closures, demotions and furloughs. For example, increasing numbers of Distributed Power locomotives are used to run trains of dangerous lengths in order to eliminate road jobs, vastly exceeding the train lengths that current communication technology can manage.

Of even more concern is that many railroads refuse to consider the introduction of actual scheduling for our work shifts in road freight service.** There is no consistent "precision scheduled railroading" insofar as BLET members are concerned. Predictability for road freight crews on many railroads is all but non-existent, creating avoidable fatigue risks every day. And the carriers continue to complain about crew size even when a single crew of two is moving hundreds of truckloads hundreds of miles every day across America. All of this

combined creates the potential for a much-less-safe workplace, all in the name of short-term profits.

What is the purpose of all this asset maximization? At its investor conference held in Atlanta in February, NS identified three key targets. First, it plans to reduce its operating ratio. The carrier's operating ratio was 65.4% in 2018. NS vows to slash that ratio by more than 8% in just three years' time. Second, NS plans a dividend payout ratio of 33%, where one out of every three dollars in profits will be paid to shareholders as a dividend. Third, NS plans to continue share repurchases using free cash flow and borrowing capacity. In other words, much of the two dollars in profit that are not paid out in dividends will be used to buy back stock, and if there isn't enough money to do that, the railroad will borrow money for buybacks.

These financial goals reveal PSR for what it really is: a scheme to suck up as much of the railroad's revenues as possible and distribute it to investors, particularly to the hedge funds that own an ever-increasing stake in the industry. PSR is nothing more than what many industry observers call "vulture capitalism," with good reason. Hedge fund investors swoop into a company and drive down operating costs in order to wring out every possible dime in profits, but don't share those profits with the workers who created them. They buy back stock to pump up the price, and when they run out of cash, they borrow against the company's assets to buy back more stock and pump up the prices some more. At the same time, operational downsizing cuts are removing much more than "fat." They cut into the muscle and bone of the operation and are much harder to repair when the hedge fund investors move on to greener pastures.

What happens when this merry-go-round stops? Just ask the folks who used to work for Sears, Kmart, or Toys 'R' Us, to name just a few of the more recent victims of vulture capitalism. Their companies were cannibalized in the name of making wealthy investors even wealthier.

To be sure, it is very unlikely that CSX or KCS or NS or UP will disappear from the economic map the way those companies did. But history instructs us on what happens when vulture capitalist schemes like PSR have squeezed all of a railroad's assets dry.

In 1968, the Pennsylvania and New York Central railroads merged to become Penn Central. When it became apparent that the two operations were not a good match, a system-wide cannibalization and liquidation of assets began so that stock prices could be

maintained and dividend payments continued. Penn Central's shippers and workers were mere afterthoughts. Less than two and a half years after the merger, the Penn Central became the largest corporation in U.S. at that point in history to declare bankruptcy ... and the carcass of the railroad was dumped on the nation's taxpayers to rebuild.***

Significantly, BNSF, which is the only privately owned Class I railroad in the country, has said "thanks, but no thanks" to PSR. Perhaps BNSF understands this history, or maybe it knows that short-term gain for a few ultra-wealthy investors at the cost of long-term pain for everyone else is not a plan for long-term success.****

Former Republican President Theodore Roosevelt said in 1913, four years after he left the White House, "Of all forms of tyranny, the least attractive and the most vulgar is the tyranny of mere wealth, the tyranny of a plutocracy." Time will tell if PSR is what the railroad industry needs. Unfortunately, much harm could come to the nation's railroad infrastructure by the time that question is answered.

[* Presumably a non-union operation. It should be noted, however, that many Class II and Class III railroads have been successful with non-union employees, substituting profit-sharing and other incentives. One example is the Reading & Northern, a three-time Railway Age Regional of the Year.

** This is beginning to change.

***The Penn Central bankruptcy, as well as the bankruptcies of several other Northeastern railroads, led to the formation of Conrail, and was a key part of a series of events that eventually led to the 1980 Staggers Act, which largely deregulated the rail industry, to the benefit of carriers, shippers and employees, as well as shareholders. Since 1980, U.S. Class I railroads have invested more than \$500 billion in capital for plant and equipment, according to the Association of American Railroads.

**** BNSF has the distinct advantage of responsibility to a single shareholder, Warren Buffett, whose investment strategy is based on long-term value, sustainability and growth. —William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief, *Railway Age*.]

South Coast Rail project clears two major hurdles

By Cody Shepard
THE ENTERPRISE 4-22-19

BOSTON — The South Coast Rail project, which would restore commuter rail service between Boston and southeastern Massachusetts, hit two "critical" milestones, the state Department of Transportation and the MBTA announced Monday.

A finance plan is complete and will be fully funded in the state's capital investment plan, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has approved the final federal permit required for the project to advance.

Transportation Secretary and Chief Executive Officer Stephanie Pollack called the finance plan the last major hurdle for Phase 1.

"Phase 1 of South Coast Rail will be funded 100 per-

cent by the commonwealth and the MBTA will not be required to provide any capital funding or issue any revenue bonds that might otherwise impact the MBTA's future operating budget," she said. "We are now well on our way to offering passenger rail service to the South Coast in a few short years with the financing secure, major permits in hand and infrastructure being built."

Phase I is expected to cost \$1 billion. Officials say they now expect South Coast Rail service to begin in late 2023.

Phase I will include extending the existing Middleboro line service using diesel-powered trains to New Bedford and Fall River; reconstructing 17.3 miles of the New Bedford main line and 11.7 miles of the Fall River

secondary line; upgrading the Middleboro secondary track from Pilgrim Junction to Cotley Junction; building two new layover facilities; and building six new stations (including two in Easton and one each in Raynham and Taunton).

State officials say preliminary work is underway, including infrastructure work and the acquisition of land for stations.

"Providing rail service between the South Coast and Boston will increase access to economic opportunities in both regions," Gov. Charlie Baker said. "After decades of promised service, today's announcement moves the project further than it's ever been before, and our administration is proud to continue advancing South Coast Rail."

SOUTH OF BOSTON

South Coast rail service in sight

State will pick up tab for extension

By Johanna Seltz
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

The state, and not the MBTA, will pick up the estimated \$1 billion tab for the first phase of extending commuter rail service from Boston through Middleborough to New Bedford and Fall River — with diesel trains now projected to begin running on the new routes by late 2023.

The long-stalled project had been scheduled to provide train service to the South Coast starting in 2022 and can now move ahead, having received its final federal permit and secured a finance plan, according to an April 22 statement from the Department of Transportation.

Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack said the state would finance the project by issuing a combination of bonds under an existing Rail Enhancement Program.

"The MBTA will not be required to provide any capital funding or issue any revenue bonds that might otherwise impact the MBTA's future operating budget," Pollack said.

"We are now well on our way to offering passenger rail service to the South Coast in a few short years with the financing secure, major permits in hand, and infrastructure being built," she said.

Governor Charles Baker praised the announcement, saying, "providing rail service between the South Coast and Boston will increase access to economic opportunities in both regions. After decades of prom-



JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Bedford and Fall River commuters will no longer have to get to stations in Middleborough or Plymouth or to the Greenbush station in Scituate (above) to get a train into Boston.

'We are now well on our way to offering passenger rail service to the South Coast in a few short years.'

STEPHANIE POLLACK, state transportation secretary

ised service, [this] moves the project further than it's ever been before, and our administration is proud to continue advancing South Coast Rail."

The first phase of the project includes reconstructing 29 miles of rail line, upgrading 7.1 miles of existing track, building two new train layover facilities — one in Fall River and one in

scend \$3.4 billion on the second phase of the project, which involves extending service through Stoughton on electric trains and building another four stations. No timeline was set for that work.

Supporters of South Coast Rail say it will be an economic boon for the region, which last had train service in the 1950s.

Opponents, including Middleborough officials, have said the project is too expensive and worry that station parking lots will create traffic problems and threaten local wells.

Johanna Seltz can be reached at seltzjohanna@gmail.com.

EDITED FROM THE PORTLAND FORECASTER, APRIL 17, 2019

Rail officials seek new Portland station for Downeaster

By David Harry

PORTLAND — A new depot for the Amtrak Downeaster could be coming down the line. "We are trying to determine with factors at hand if relocation is even feasible," Patricia Quinn, executive director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, said April 12 about a possible new station.

Since Boston-to-Portland service began in 2001, trains have arrived and departed from Thompson's Point. The setting is now known as the Portland Transportation Center and shared with Concord Coach Lines bus service.

Expanding service and ridership are factors in the desire for a new station, Quinn said. "There are constraints at the existing location, including parking, location, and because it is on a branch line," she said. Edited from Courant.

Downeaster service has already expanded north to Freeport and Brunswick. A pilot program to assess service to Rockland was considered last summer, and there have been discussions about connecting with commuter rail service from Lewiston-Auburn.

Quinn said the Portland station's location adds 15 minutes to each trip because trains must pull on and off the main line to get to the station. All five weekday roundtrips, and four of five roundtrips on Saturdays and Sundays, begin and end in Brunswick. The other weekend roundtrip begins and ends in Portland.

"There are no places under consideration, (but) we want to be on the main line," Quinn added. "We'd want a location with good vehicular access, pedestrian access, and proximity to downtown."

The search parameters are not fully defined yet, either. "(We) want to be as collaborative as possible," Quinn said, adding that NNEPRA will work with the city, Maine Department of Transportation, and the Greater Portland Council of Governments as it moves forward.

Considering a new station also comes as NNEPRA looks to make the Downeaster a more viable local option for travel, as opposed to just an alternative way to get to Boston and back.

The Downeaster set a record last year with 534,000 passengers, according to NNEPRA. In the first quarter this year, ridership exceeded the first quarter of 2018. Last month, NNEPRA Board Chairman John Melrose said 87% of riders are going to and

from Boston, placing Portland seventh on the regional list for highest Amtrak use.

Melrose said the Downeaster has been affected by inadequate stations that lack parking. Six miles of additional track near Wells will also improve travel time, because trains will not be required to sit at sidings while freight trains pass.

While the Downeaster may get a new home in the city, developers of the mixed-use Rock Row in what was a Westbrook quarry are also looking at a rail link to the city, using the track running to the Portland Transportation Center.

[Contributed by Len Bachelder]



The Callboy comments: About the only viable location for a Portland station that meets Ms. Quinn's criteria would be the site of the Old Portland Union Station on St. John Street, now occupied by a nondescript one-story shopping plaza. Union Station was designed by Bradley, Winslow and Wetherill of Boston, and opened on June 25, 1888. Commissioned by the Maine Central, it was shared jointly with the Boston & Maine and Portland & Ogdensburg Railroads. Its destruction in August, 1961, to make way for the existing shopping center marked a turning point for historic preservation in Portland.



OPERATION REVIEW

By Paul A. Cutler III

Welcome to the March Operations review. Yeah, we're running a little behind. We just had the May Operation and here I'm talking about the March one. All I can say, is "Patience, grasshopper."

Operations Review – Sunday, March 24th, 1st Trick

We had some staffing issues on this one. For those that don't remember, this was the first nice weekend day we'd had for months (dry and 60°F...woohoo!). People were out and about...just not at the club. As a result, we had the smallest ever operations crew with just 8 qualified operators (plus two trainees) for the 1st Trick. Watching from above, **yours truly** was in the tower as dispatcher, wondering why the Jumbotron was not working...again (it worked after the operation was over after I turned the layout power off and on).

Since our last operation was back in November, the long layoff meant that we were all a little rusty. "Bad things" tend to happen after long gaps between sessions, and this one was no different. We started 15 minutes late at 11:15AM due to my futile hope that another operator would waltz in.

Chris Barlow ran train 34, the CB&Q Zephyr. This train derailed three times on its journey across the layout (Minot, White River and Bryant City). With train 58, the L&N E-units, had some trouble getting out of Cedar Hill due to the sound locos and lit passenger cars tripping the overload breaker. HB-2, coming down the mountain to West Middleton, found the coal tipple switch open. He got half way to the bumper before he got the train stopped. *Good thing he was paying attention!* **Chris** ran nine trains.

Engineer **Ed Carter** had problems leaving Boston with the C&O coal train (BS-5) that delayed him over 2 hours. First, the train was MU'd to the rear unit, but the Train Order had the leading unit address on it. That took a while to figure out. Then the lead unit derailed leaving the yard and shorted. *Sigh...sometimes you can't catch a break.* When **Ed** ran the TOFC train out of Cedar Hill, every 3rd car or so derailed going through E-342, but otherwise the train ran fine. Then he had to bad order a derailing car on a third freight. **Ed** also ran several other trains that I don't have the records for.

As an aside, **Ed** would like to know if we're going to be ordering new radios and headsets anytime soon. Well, it has been a while with several new members in the club since the last order. **Dave Clinton** said he is looking into it.

Dan Peterson ran 8 trains. He had to switch out the power on train 100, the mail train because the Overland DL-

109 "B-unit" had a slipping gear train...again. *Sigh.* **Dan** said he had some throttle problems at first, but otherwise said he had no complaints. **Dan** was the first to tell me that the signal at E-7 was dark after he ran into E-6 thrown against him. *Surprise!* He also had a fireman applicant, now new member, **Jesse Collins**. **Dan** had **Jesse** run the last train and said he did quite well. Welcome, **Jesse!**

Our fourth and final engineer was **Bryan Miller**, who I forced out of his comfy local freight job. *Sorry, Bryan!* He was run ragged 'round the layout like the other three engineers, getting six trains across the pike. He didn't leave any notes, so if he had any accidents, he didn't have any witnesses. ☺ This is a skill most members can only dream of having.

Jay Pease ran all of Middleton. Yes, *all* of it. He ran MX-3 and was Yardmaster at the same time, which **Jay** said was "Hell." I *think* he's exaggerating. Fortunately, **Jay** had the assistance of **Stan Rydell** who helped **Jay** keep the paperwork straight. He finished MX-3 and got all the trains in and out...but only the first train out was on time. He reports that the track in the West Middleton Team track area has high ballast causing derailments. **Stan** said that several LED's in the new East Middleton panel aren't working properly (he's working on that) and that there's a dead spot through switch Red 4.

Cedar Hill Yardmaster / Stationmaster was **Paul Cutler, Jr.** He said that other than all the trains being late (coming or going), he had no real problems. But he did have a freight (CH-2) slo-o-owly run away from the yard. The ECL RSD-15 consist had its' throttle left at 1%, and it silently creeped out of the A/D Yard until it shorted at E-64 at the Steel Mill. After the short, all three trailing units lost the MU, and had to be removed by heavy lift helicopters before the lead unit could back the train into the yard.

Trainmaster **Bob Farrenkopf** said that he had "No troubles with the finest group of engineers he's ever worked with." In response, one engineer said, "That twenty bucks was worth it!"

My only *real* complaint about the 1st Trick is that when the lunch bell rang, three of the engineers took off for beans even tho' we still had two more trains to run. These trains have to be run during the 1st Trick to be used again on the 2nd Trick. This meant that instead of prepping the layout for the 2nd Trick, I had to run one of the trains. Keep in mind that since we were 15 min. late starting, I only had 45 min. to run a train, turn ~30 other trains, and have lunch. Let's just say I had to eat my lunch during the 2nd Trick, which sort of muffled my radio calls during the time my mouth was full.

Still, we carried on and made it through.

Operations Review – Sunday, March 24th, 2nd Trick

For the second trick, we had a few more operators come through the doors.

Bob England ran HX-1 in Larson. He said it went pretty good, and he got all the switching done.

Dave Clinton had missed the early session, but arrived in time to get the lunch order for everyone. He stayed for the 2nd Trick and engineered seven trains. **Dave** said he didn't have any complaints with the equipment. *It's a miracle!* But he doesn't like his DT500D throttle; he had to constantly plug in the throttle for it to work.

Dan Peterson ran six trains, and said all trains ran well. He said he had a weird throttle problem where he acquired the train and was just sitting there waiting to go. Suddenly the train takes off at 65% throttle. He stops it, and it's fine. Later, with a different train, it happens again at 65% throttle, only with the same DCC address on both sides. **Dan** shut off his throttle and turned it back on, and it was fine the rest of the day.

Ed Carter returned to run six more trains. Since he ran more commuters than freights this time, he had fewer derailments (less wheels). However, he did have to dive under the layout to couple up the C&O steamers to the hopper train behind the Steel Mill. More on that with...

...**Chris Barlow**, who had to bail me out at the Steel Mill. Since things were a little rushed between sessions, I never got a chance to turn the two trains around behind the Steel Mill. **Chris** volunteered, only he left the caboose behind when he ran MS-9 out of there and the C&O engines on SB-6 didn't couple (see above). **Chris** had to crawl under to snag his crummy and helicopter it to his train in White River Jct.

Bryan Miller was our fifth engineer who ran a several trains before fading due to a cold and going home. His most entertaining train was the NH stainless steel job that shorted out at E-58 in Highland Oaks. When the slack ran in, the train uncoupled, and what was a 12-car train became a 6-car train. **Bryan** ran the shorter-than-usual consist all the way to Boston. The cars left behind were fortunately on the siding, and several trains passed before someone contacted me to ask why the cars were sitting there. The passengers onboard were, shall we say, irate. But it was okay; they were just coach passengers (hey, the first class cars made it to Boston just fine!).

Jay Pease continued his reign over all things Middleton. He switched out MX-4 in between his Yardmaster duties. One move of his in particular was a pain to me: he asked to come out on the mainline to switch the REA building. I said, "I dunno, there are a couple trains coming..." **Jay** hits me with, "Well, that's what real railroads would do." *Challenge accepted.* So I let him out; and naturally not two trains passed, but four! *Grumble, grumble...* **Stan Rydell** helped out **Jay** once more, keeping track of when each train was due in or out.

Dave Galbraith ran JX-2 in Hudson Falls with his friend, **David Richardson**. They got all the cars switched out and spotted in just 90 real minutes (it's much easier, he says, with two people). They said they had a lot of fun. **Dave**

reports that Switch #4 in Hudson Falls is sticking and has to be pushed over manually.

Up in Cedar Hill, **Paul Cutler, Jr.** kept the trains rolling as both Yardmaster and Stationmaster. The first one out, the Alaska RR job, lost the B-unit MU between the sessions (it worked when it came in). They had to be re-MU'd. **Dad** also had some spare time and did most of the pick-ups for HX-4 except for the RIP track; switch 15 was fouled by scenery. He also reports that switch SET 2 in the engine terminal would not throw, either.

Bob Farrenkopf handed out the Train Orders as Trainmaster once more. He says that during the 2nd Trick, there were a couple engineers who thought they could do his job for him. ☺ They were beaten with a club. ☺

As Dispatcher, I thought radio comms were good other than **Ed Carter's** old club radio at the beginning (it really needs a rubber band around the plug). We did have one doozy of an error. Seems that when **Dan** was given a Train Order with DCC address #3337 (NH EP-5) in Cedar Hill passenger, he looked at a train he had run during 1st Trick, which was DCC #3375 (NH DL-109). Instead of taking the correct EP-5 train (which was a commuter train), he talked the Stationmaster into giving him the DL-109 (which was a milk train with one coach). The passengers were all crammed into lone coach or freezing their rear ends in a milk car.

Oh, and **Dan** had one more "Oops!" moment out in the parking lot when an antique fire truck hit his car and creased the hood. As the guy who was parked next to him, thank you, **Dan** for protecting my car. ☺ Important safety tip: don't park in the number 1 spot next to the triangle.

So we actually had 12 people for the 2nd Trick vs. 10 for the 1st. It's amazing how much difference those two extra people can make. Five or six engineers are just about right; four is too few to stay on schedule and with seven you have long wait times between trains.

I was a very nervous dispatcher to begin with. We only had three engineers until I pulled **Bryan** over. I shudder to think of what a three engineer operation would look like; it would not have been pretty. Still, we ended up having a bunch of fun, and isn't that why we're all members? See you next month for the May session!

Paul Cutler III 