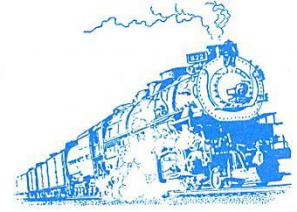


# The Semaphore

South Shore Model Railway Club

## NEWSLETTER

Home of the "East Coast Lines" since 1938



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MARCH 23, 2020 ■■■■■■■■■■ VOLUME 40 ■■■■■■■■■■ NUMBER 3

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# MARCH 2, 2020

# The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



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“The Operator”.....	Paul Cutler III
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

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	Jim Ferris
	Bryan Miller
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Guest Contributors.....	Brian Solomon

*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. ©2020  
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## CLUB OFFICERS

President.....	Jack Foley
Vice-President.....	Dan Peterson
Treasurer.....	Will Baker
Secretary.....	Dave Clinton
Chief Engineer.....	Fred Lockhart
Directors.....	Bill Garvey ('20)
	Bryan Miller ('20)
	Roger St. Peter ('21)
	Gary Mangelinkx ('21)

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**ON THE COVER:** As you can see by the smiles, we’re so happy to be members of the South Shore Model Railway Club! (dnc photo)

# FORM 19 ORDERS

## Activities suspended until further notice

### APRIL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

## CONTESTS

Congratulations to **Joe Corsaro** on winning this month's 50/50 raffle!

For the May Business Meeting: "Word Find" puzzle 20-4; another favorite by Al Taylor. Extra copies in contest rack in train room. Good luck and don't forget to include your name!

Hopefully, we will have a May Business Meeting and be able to celebrate Amtrak's 19<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

## CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

Since the last newsletter the club has spent most of its time preparing, having and cleaning up afterwards from the March Open House and Show, so there is really no new progress to report on. Because the shows bring in the revenue we need to support the club, they are a necessary interruption to modeling. As for the railroad during the show, we had some problems with the DCC system, as far as acquiring locomotives at times. Other nuisances, such as "steal Zap", would pop up on the throttles to further frustrate us; I would love to zap that one, but otherwise the railroad ran well. We will continue to work on the throttle issues and see if we can't resolve them.

As we are in unprecedented times with this Corona Virus, I'm not sure how much will get done on the railroad in the near future. The prudent thing, of course without question, is to avoid groups and maintain social distancing to stay healthy. And with the report this week on how long the virus can last in the air and on surfaces, it was a little surprising to me, so I personally will be at home "hunkering down" with some kits and other projects during this time.

I hope all of you avoid this damn virus and stay healthy and we will see you when it is safe to do so.

Any questions or comments are always welcome, so please email me at [lock46@verizon.net](mailto:lock46@verizon.net) or call me at 781-799-7458, if you would like.

Fred Lockhart  
Chief Engineer

## DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

**Jim Ferris** was first in the door and first with his loco apart. A B&M RS-3 from Atlas in the as-delivered handsome maroon/yellow scheme. This was a "classic" without plug, so the drop-in DH126AO, for "Atlas and Other", decoder was perfect. As recommended, he did away with the plastic "wire clips" and soldered all wires to the board. This is for guaranteed electrical connection. Since he used the original 12v bulbs, he cut the proper trace on the board, as it comes with build in current-limiting resistors, so that you can use 1.5v mini-bulbs or L.E.D.s without resistors. Jim put new couplers on his model and away he went, ready to pull freight or passenger with his "new" loco, which I believe, he was given gratis.

**Savery Moore** brought his UP 4-8-2 from Broadway Limited, which had a defective headlight. After much digging around inside the smokebox front, he found that the either the L.E.D. or the light circuit board had gone bad. He planned on calling Broadway, to see if they offer a replacement board, as the L.E.D. is soldered tight on the mini board, which is screwed to the boiler casting inside the smokebox. If they don't, he will have to make a new L.E.D. to fit inside and hardwire it to the supply wires coming through the boiler.

**Ross Hall**, former member who now lives on the Cape, came back for more help with his B&M "Atlantic" brass loco from LMB, a company out of business in the 1970s. Paul Cutler III assisted him all evening, by first re-soldering a loose eccentric crank in the valve gear, than hardwiring the DH126D decoder. The Pittman DC70X open-frame motor had to first be isolated from the loco chassis, in order to put the decoder in series with the motor and power supply. Paul found that the rubber coupling between the motor and gearbox was split

and should be replaced but, miraculously, still worked!

**Roger St. Peter** brought his unusual Southern Pacific "calf", made by Athearn but outfitted with a replacement can motor isolated from the chassis. So, the biggest job in converting typical "Blue Box" Athearn to DCC, which is motor isolation, was not needed here. He was successful in hardwiring the DZ123 inside the tight quarters and now he has a "conversation piece"!

**Eric Tedeschi** brought his UP Challenger by Athearn Genesis to, hopefully, speed up, as it runs too slow for a passenger loco. He was disappointed to learn that the decoder used at the time, I believe an MRC, has no CV6 to enable higher speed.

**Will Baker** brought his ailing New Haven RDC1 by Rapido. Seems only one truck was powered, and that's not sufficient for an RDC. Could be two problems: drive shaft has fallen out of universal or motor power contacts are poor. With the expertise of Paul 3, after taking apart the RDC completely (all the drive parts are UNDER the car floor), it was found that the motor wasn't getting power. Luckily, Paul had this problem on several of his RDC1s, so he knew exactly what to do: crimp the wires onto the motor contacts! It seems that this problem is only in the RDC1s, and not in the 2s or 3s. Will was very happy to have one of his favorite pieces of equipment back in service!

Thanks to **Paul Cutler III** for preparing the Clinic space for the crowd and for his assistance in making successes happen!

**Our next Clinic**, hopefully, will be **Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>**, but who knows at this point. We'll take "one day at a time" and keep you informed via Internet and Newsletter.

## SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

**MARCH 2015** (5 years ago)

- Many snow storms causing all kinds of problems in transportation and organizations. 112" of snow total. Road to Club closed for 2-weeks in February.
- Quebec government lays out plan to restore rail service to Gaspé, Quebec.
- Conway Scenic 0-6-0 begins 15-year overhaul and inspection.

- C&O H6 2-6-6-2 completes major disassembly in Cumberland, MD shops of WM Scenic RR.
- Siemens delivers 35<sup>th</sup> Amtrak ACS-64 loco, completing ½ the order of 70 units.
- VIA Rail Canada begins running high-end "Prestige Class" cars on its flagship *Canadian*.

• **MARCH 2010** (10 years ago)

- Amtrak begins replacement of Niantic River Bridge in CT.
- Talgo, S.A. announces it will locate its U.S. "High speed" rail manufacturing facility in Milwaukee, WI.
- Grafton & Upton RR takes delivery of two GP9r locomotives; largest locos to grace its rails.

• **MARCH 2005** (15 years ago)

- Electro-Motive Division of GM spins off to become Electro Motive Diesel.
- Ex-Amtrak F40s painted in Maine Eastern livery returned to Morrissetown & Erie home base, due to being "diesel hogs".
- UP unveils RailPower "Green Goat" hybrid locomotive resplendent in full UP color scheme.
- "The 470 Restoration Project" formed to address serious deteriorated condition of MEC's last steam located in Waterville, ME.
- Decision made to replace original Winton engine in Flying Yankee, with state-of-the-art traction system. (After wasting all kinds of money trying to fix Winton-Ed.)
- Joint operations with the Worcester Model Railroaders as our guests.

• **MARCH 2000** (20 Years Ago)

- B&M Mogul #1455 moves from Hyannis to Danbury, CT museum site.
- Two Cape Cod Central MLW M420s returned to lessor.
- MBTA rules out Attleboro routing for New Bedford/Fall River Commuter Rail service.
- Acela Express trains in testing at Pueblo, CO.
- State Transportation officials break off negotiations with Hingham, indicating that they will no longer consider a tunnel under Hingham Square for Greenbush trains.

• **MARCH 1995** (25 Years Ago)

- MBTA votes to purchase 100 "low-floor" trolleys from Breda in Italy.
- MBTA awards contract for new Boston Engine Terminal on north side.
- Canadian American RR forms, after purchase of BAR by Iron Road Railways.
- Amtrak runs its last train with dome cars.
- CPR in unsuccessful bid for CNR. Government-owned CNR to go public with stock shares, as what previously was done with Conrail.
- B&M, MEC and Portland Terminal railroads officially merged into the Springfield Terminal Railway.
- Amtrak begins equipping Auto Train with Superliners.
- WW&F steamer #9 returns to home rails in Wiscasset, ME, after spending 58 years stored on a farm in CT.
- Locomotive 15 Corp. purchases two ex-VIA, ex-CNR FP9A locos to lease to Conway Scenic RR.



● MBTA decides to move Mansfield station to W. Mansfield, due to parking problems. (never happened-Ed.)

**MARCH 1990** (30 Years Ago)

● Conway Scenic RR for sale. State considering taking R-O-W for “bypass road” around North Conway.

● First MBTA Kawasaki “double-decker” coaches assembled at former GE plant in Pittsfield, MA.

● MBTA experiments with one-way, double-fare collection on Lowell Commuter line.

**MARCH 1985** (35 Years Ago)

● MA Governor Mike Dukakis calls the abandonment of Old Colony Commuter Rail “the dumbest thing the State had ever done” and commits to the \$20-million project to restore the three lines.

● Cape Cod & Hyannis RR plans to restore service between Braintree Red Line and Hyannis.

● In preparation for restoration of South station, abandoned, turn-around tunnel is discovered.

● Ex-Milwaukee 4-8-4 #614 hauls coal trains in West Virginia, in tests for American Coal Enterprises (ACE).

● MBTA transfers “stranded” Commuter Rail equipment on flatbed trailers, caused by Danvers River Bridge fire.

● MBTA stops using leased Toronto “GO” cars, due to fire problems and buys 9 used SEPTA coaches.

● New Harvard Red Line station dedicated.

● Proposal to move PRR K4 #1397 from Horseshoe Curve to be restored to operating condition.

● Belfast & Moosehead Lake RR for sale.

## POTPOURRI

**BNSF RAILWAY** has improved its profit margins without having to adopt Precision Scheduled Railroading, Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett said in a televised interview recently. Buffett told CNBC that Berkshire Hathaway’s railroad has gained market share and that its profit margins have improved. “But they haven’t improved as much as some other railroads,” Buffett said. Buffett noted that the late E. Hunter Harrison was “enormously successful” with his Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model, which dramatically improved profit margins at Illinois Central, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and CSX Transportation. Publicly, BNSF remains the lone Class I railroad holdout as the rest of the industry has adopted Precision Scheduled Railroading. Will BNSF follow suit? “Well, we’ll see,” Buffett says. “I mean we’ve watched it plenty. It makes the customers adapt to the railroad more than the railroad adapting to the customers and practically everybody’s done it.” Rail shippers have

complained to federal regulators about PSR-related changes at CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific. Shippers have been critical of the three railroads’ stricter demurrage and accessorial charges as well as changes to local service. “Our margins are close to ... the better railroads,” Buffett said. “And then we’ve gained share because apparently the railroad customers like us better. Over the long term we’ll see. But it isn’t like it’s something we can’t do.” BNSF’s operating ratio improved 2.3 points last year to 64.6%, its best performance since 2015. Rival Union Pacific was more profitable, however. UP posted a record-low operating ratio of 60.6% in 2019 and has a long-term target of a 55% operating ratio. But BNSF has grown revenue and traffic volume, while UP’s revenue and volume have fallen. Since 2012, BNSF’s revenue has increased 12.9% as traffic volume grew 5.5%. Over that period UP’s revenue declined 3.3% as traffic slumped 1.8%. (TN)

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**MORE THAN \$56 MILLION** in public and private fundraising begin transforming the Pullman National Monument on Chicago’s South Side. The goal is to create a working replica of the company town that revolutionized passenger railcar manufacturing more than 130 years ago. Reconstruction of manufacturing facilities is part of plans announced at a ceremony commemorating the fifth anniversary of the site’s designation as a national monument by President Barack Obama. Richard Wilson, the architect leading the project for the firm of Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture, says the plan is to rebuild “a maze of buildings set up like an early conveyor, built along a narrow strip facing a transfer pit.” The first step calls for opening a Visitors Center in the Romanesque-styled clock tower main building in early 2021. Wilson displayed an artist’s rendering showing how the manufacturing complex would eventually look. “We lost much of the original character, but we were able to re-establish the transfer pit geometry,” Wilson says. A transfer table straddling the pit moved cars among six tracks leading to specialized bays, where woodwork, electric, and glass installation took place. “With the building reconstruction we will have interpretive signage and demonstrations showing how the factory operated,” he says. Former Federal Railroad Administrator Joe Szabo recently became president of the Historic Pullman Foundation and will lead fundraising efforts. He once worked as an Illinois

Central conductor on what are now Metra Electric trains stopping at the nearby 111th Street station. (TN)

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**WILLIAM FLYNN**, chairman and former CEO of Atlas Air Worldwide and a former CSX executive, will succeed Richard Anderson as Amtrak CEO. Amtrak confirmed the hiring with a press release late Monday morning. The passenger railroad says Flynn will take over as CEO on April 15, with Anderson remaining through the end of the year as an advisor to Flynn. “Bill is the right executive to lead us into the future,” Amtrak board chairman Tony Coscia said in the release. “We’ve never been stronger as a company than we are today. We are modernizing the customer experience and delivering our service to more people. Bill has a consistent track record of growing and improving complex transportation businesses. We are confident he will build upon the strong foundation of record-setting growth and improvement set by the board, Richard, and the entire Amtrak team.” Flynn will become the third Amtrak CEO in a little more than three years, and the second from the airline industry. Anderson, the former CEO at Delta Airlines, became the passenger railroad’s sole CEO on Jan. 1, 2018, after a period serving as co-chief executive with former Norfolk Southern CEO Wick Moorman. “Amtrak’s future is incredibly bright and I’m excited to join the team,” Flynn said in the press release. “Amtrak service is vital to millions of Americans across the nation and by improving the customer experience, driving safety, and strengthening our partnership with states and other stakeholders, we can do much more for the American people.” Flynn was at CSX Corp. from 2000 to 2002, holding positions including Senior Vice President of Strategic Planning and Senior Vice President at CSX Transportation. He also spent time in senior management positions at CSX Corp. subsidiary Sea-Land Services. (TN)

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**NORFOLK SOUTHERN** (NS) announced that it has achieved a breakthrough in track inspection technology that will enhance railroad safety and operating efficiencies. Combining ingenuity and innovation, the company is the first North American freight railroad to develop and deploy an autonomous track geometry measurement system that is mounted on a locomotive. In contrast, autonomous track-inspection systems commercially available today are installed on converted freight or passenger rail cars, which require an external

power source to operate and occupy space on a train that could be used to move revenue-producing freight. The system is mounted in a ruggedized box under a six-axle road locomotive between the snowplow and the first set of wheels. A computer that powers the system is housed inside the electrical locker in the locomotive cab. (RA)

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**AMTRAK** and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) released the long-awaited master plan for Sunnyside Yard, a 115-acre transit-oriented and 100% affordable housing project set on decking above the current train yard. With a focus on New Yorkers earning less than 50k per year, Mayor Bill de Blasio stated that Sunnyside Yard presents a “once-in-a-generation opportunity” to create a new model for affordable housing and equitable development. The master plan came together after 18 months of analysis, community engagement, and blueprinting. When constructed, the decking structure over the yard will support new open space, streets, and numerous commercial and residential buildings - all while creating thousands union jobs for those working on the overhaul. As part of the overall plan, a new multimodal station would be created that would connect Queens with Midtown Manhattan via rapid bus lanes and a future new Queens Subway line. The station would also connect Queens with the rest of the Northeast via regional rail and Amtrak intercity passenger service. (NARP)

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**MASSACHUSETTS** Department of Transportation will study a possible extension of commuter rail service to the Cape Cod community of Bourne, Mass., CapeCod.com reports. The area already has summer-only weekend passenger service via the CapeFlyer, a collaboration of MassDot, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, and the Cape Cod Regional Transportation Authority that began in 2013. (TN)

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**AMTRAK** and other passenger rail services say \$1 billion is needed to help recover from the coronavirus pandemic sweeping through the U.S. Last week, it was reported that Amtrak cancellations were down 300 percent and bookings have dropped 50 percent. Amtrak believes the reduction in ridership will continue for some time, and the passenger rail service says it needs federal aid to make up for the drop in riders and to also minimize employee and service impacts. (RA)

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Norfolk Southern is still working on the cave-in at the Hoosac Tunnel in Florida, MA. It isn't planned to be re-opened until the end of this month. All normal traffic through the tunnel is being re-routed.

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**WITH DONATIONS** to steam America's last Baldwin from Trains readers topping \$71,000, Western Maryland Scenic Railroad said yesterday that it is within \$10,000 of wheeling 2-6-6-2 No. 1309. "On behalf of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, I want to share a genuine "thank you" to the readers of Trains Magazine and other faithful supporters of No. 1309," Executive Director John Garner says. "Since the start of the final appeal in mid-February, you all have donated over \$71,000 to the restoration project's goal. To share that I am excited to see this quick financial progress is an understatement; I must add, I am completely humbled that supporters have stepped forward to complete the restoration of the last Baldwin locomotive built for domestic service." The railroad has purchased all 12 of the driving boxes for the locomotive. The railroad had 11 journal driver boxes in place on the axles but we were missing the final driver boxes, pending final payment. The next phase is to get the Baldwin re-wheeled. In order for that to happen, the railroad needs a total of \$28,000 per the final cost scope created by Diversified Rail Services. This includes \$16,500 for labor services and \$11,500 for two cranes to lift the locomotive. This is a huge lift and the locomotive requires two cranes to perform it safely. "With that shared, we need to raise \$9,500 to complete this phase of the locomotive. We are excited to see that donations arrive each day for the project. With the faithful readers of Trains magazine and other supporters of the project, we can lift this locomotive onto the next phase by raising the funds needed and have the locomotive re-wheeled by June." (TN)

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

**TRAINS**

Railroad Vision 2020: Artistic Legacy

RR photography

50 Years of Burlington Northern

Burlington Northern Power

Cascade Crossing

Operations through Cascade Tunnel

Amtrak's Capacity Crisis

Preservation

It's time to steam the last Baldwin

**RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN**

John Russell's Rock Island Line  
Baggage and Express Ops: Part 2

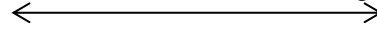
**MODEL RAILROADER**

Taking Scenery into the Isle  
Model an Abandoned Right-of-Way  
How to Model White Birch Trees  
DCC Corner

Soldering at the small scale

Step by Step

Build an HO scale freight car kit



News sources: Boston Globe, Boston Herald,  
Trains "Newswire", Railway Age, Progressive  
Railroading, Railpace, RRE "Callboy", "The 470",  
Patriot Ledger, Wall Street Journal, Attleboro Sun  
Chronicle.

**EDITOR'S NOTES**

1. **Bryan Miller** wishes to thank all of those folks, who helped with "**Jack's Red Tail Café**". Your assistance was much appreciated!
2. **Thanks for your efforts** to stay well and contain this awful disease. I will, like all, miss the in-person friendships, camaraderie, and fun we have together. This unprecedented situation shall pass, with our conscientious efforts to be separated and lots of hand-washing and cleaning. We will be especially thankful and happy to be able to greet each other again in person when the times are safe to do so. The Newsletter will still be published and I would welcome any thoughts and comments you might have in "letters to the editor" about how you are being affected, coping--like maybe you are digging out some kits/models you've had on the "project shelf" for a long time and starting them? Email me: [daveclinton@verizon.net](mailto:daveclinton@verizon.net). Jack and Jeremy have posted some really neat "Rail cam" Websites for "virtual railfanning". Best wishes to everyone--keep safe and healthy...and the phone still works, along with emails. **Let's keep in touch!**

..... *David N. Clinton*

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

# MEMBER NEWS

**Bill Garvey:** Continues his stay at a rehab center in Brockton.

**Coley Walsh:** Continues his cancer treatment at home. He has felt the same for the past month and hopes to start chemo again soon.

We wish these two members, along with Alice South, who was recently diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer, the best possible care and hold them in our prayers and thoughts.

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:

Dave Galbraith ..... April 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Chip Mullen ..... April 7<sup>th</sup>  
Bob Knapp..... April 8<sup>th</sup>  
Rick Pearson..... April 20<sup>th</sup>  
Jack Doyle..... April 27<sup>th</sup>



## YOUTUBE Railroad Cams

Compiled by Jeremy and Jack, use this link to find all the neat Webcams with trains!

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLR9jbUvWYyULtPyoHboYuDOMHQLp0YzD2t>

There are 24 of 'em! Including La Plata, MO, Horseshoe Curve, and Revelstoke, BC. For some reason, Rochelle, IL is not included...the original Webcam! Maybe because it's not a "YouTube".

Here's the link for that:

<https://trn.trains.com/videos/webcams/2014/09/bnsf-and-union-pacific-in-rochelle-il>

Meanwhile, I've heard from quite a few folks on what they're doing; here's who:

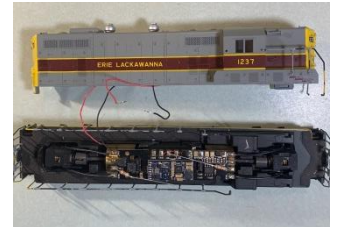
**Kurt Kramke (H),** who writes: "I have been building some kits, working on locomotives (I found some I need to sell), and started to build the HO layout. Just got the roadbed, and roundhouse kit with two extensions, I will finally get the SS Limited turntable built and installed. Everyone keep safe and I hope to see you in the spring."



**Bob Farrenkropf:** Alice and I have decided to stay in as much as possible for as long as need be. I have as many basket cases and unfinished projects as anyone. These should keep me from going wacky for a while. I assume the club is still open to members who might want to drop in to run a train. (It is-Ed.) Good Health to All."

**Eric Wilde:** >Stay safe and healthy< "You too. This should be a good time for you to put together all of those boxcar kits you've been saving up over the years. (Ya, right!-Ed) I know that I'm looking at a few projects that were never going to get done and thinking, "Hmmm"."

**Al Taylor:** "Hi Dave, What I'm doing is just finishing up installing a sound decoder in an EL SD-45 and GP7. Sounds good on my test track. Hope others are getting some modeling done."



**Savery Moore:** "Finally working on this!!!"



**Ed Carter:** "Speed-matching locos at the club all by myself tonight. Good times!"



**Jack Foley:** "Watching trains at my (computer-sic.) desk."

**Fred Foley:** "Not train related but I do love your emails about train activities. While social distancing in Vero Beach Florida, I picked up a hobby of flying remote control airplanes. This is a 60 inch wing span battery powered. I get about 8 minutes of flight time per battery. The club is called Airmasters in Sebastian, Florida. Stay safe and well. All the best to everyone."



**Jeremy Cahill:** "As for me I don't have that much time to work on model trains, I have to spend my time working on the 1:1 scale trains."



**Chip Mullen:** "I do have a couple projects underway however, the first of which is finding appropriate cars to build a manifest freight train for a Norfolk & Western 2-8-8-2 Y3 class by Proto 2000 that I got from Don Black for a song. The second project stems from putting a Soundtraxx Tsunami in that Y3. I had a lot of hesitation problems with that engine so I acquired a TCS KA1 Keep Alive and found a way to attach it to the Tsunami. Problem solved! I was so impressed with how effective the KA1 was considering how small it is, (about the size of an old time lady finger firecracker or less), so I decided to start installing Keep Alives in all, or most, of the engines I have retrofit sound into. I have installed KA1s and KA2s in a couple engines mounted to Soundtraxx Economi PNPs, and I plan to install them on QSI and ESU 21 pin outfits as well as several more Tsunamis in the coming month. At about \$25 a pop that will eat up most of my loose cash if not all my available time."

**Dan Peterson:** "I'll be working on my house."

**Fred Lockhart:** "I'm working from home, I have a turnout to build for the railroad, after that I will get back to working on putting together my stash of kits that I started this winter, and hope this virus passes quickly."

**Stan Rydell:** "I'm sort of keeping a low public contact profile. A few days ago I went to the club and stocked up on components that Bob England had ordered for building relays that replace the ones in the switch motors that have become unreliable. While the parts last I'll have fun and keep busy in my new home/office/workshop. Keep healthy!"

**Ron Clough:** "In response to this situation I am trying to keep my sanity by adjusting to the fact that my Legion Post bar has been closed until at least 4/6, thus allowing me more time to do other stuff. I am still receiving book orders for the BSRA and filling and shipping them. I am also catching up on reading older newspapers, (yes, the ones that are even fading into a yellow at the bottom of the pile) etc., making more recycling for the "dump", along with reading long over-due books and other publications. I am not going "stir crazy" yet, but it in the near future, if things don't change soon. I also am concerned about my Mom, as I still visit her often, but don't want to infect her, if I am. As of yesterday, she was okay."

**Brendan Sheehan:** "Train-wise, I am not doing anything, except for writing a dues check. BJ's hasn't slowed down; as a matter of fact, I'm in the essential worker category. Toilet Paper is guarded by managers!"

**Jim O'Brien (H):** "I am hold-up in my townhouse in Richmond but luckily I have my RR hobby. In a

spare bedroom I am building a 9' x 3' switching layout. The whole layout is able to tilt so I can work under the layout without crawling on the floor. The layout is DCC using a Raspberry Pi and a \$20. Cell phone purchased on eBay. Note, the layout has two breweries.



I also just purchased a Muse Laser Cutter, hoping to make my own laser cut models. Hope all is well up there. Say hi to all the guys. Stay safe."

**Bryan Miller:** "I'm working on a group of Roundhouse coal hoppers that I got from Barry's collection. There is a lot of filing to be done on the white metal chassis of each car."

**Roger St. Peter:** "I'm working on restoring the trolley/bus Fare Box, that's been sitting upstairs for years. I hope to make it a real museum piece!"



**Peter Palica:** "I am continuing work on painting and detailing my Z scale Helmsley Building (formerly known as the New York Central Building). Z scale will work just fine for my N scale endeavors. This was a 34" tall 3D printed plain white plastic model in 3 parts. It demonstrates the great potential that 3D printing offers to our hobby. My wife tells me I have enough unassembled kits to fill two life times. Stay well all of you."



**Tom Wylie:** "I am still going in to the office so I have the La Plata, MO webcam running on one of my monitors. It's fun watching the trains go by and reading the railfan chat. I can tell when a train is coming because I can hear the train horn through the speakers. My co-workers like to give me a hard time: "Do you have trains running through your office?" Not sure how much longer I'll be going in though."

**Ralph Weischedel:** "Fortunately, I can work from home. With the time saved from not having to commute, I am getting more time to read railroad related books. Just finished the book on Metroliners. I'm 30% through Triumph VII, which covers the Pennsylvania Railroads line and branches running north out of Harrisburg."

**John Sheridan:** "I'm building some of those Intermountain, Red Caboose & Branchline freight car kits. I built around 10 over the weekend. Plan on building more. Also, Of course, I am taking this quiet time to design new Rapido Products as well. Keep on building!"

**Ed Bulman:** "Working from home online. Will be picking out which locomotives should be getting decoders next and which I will be planning to paint and detail."

**Ross Hall (FM):** "Having read in the March Semaphore that the East Broad Top RR has finally been saved from oblivion, I am celebrating by assembling a La Belle EBT caboose kit, which I have had for years and never built."

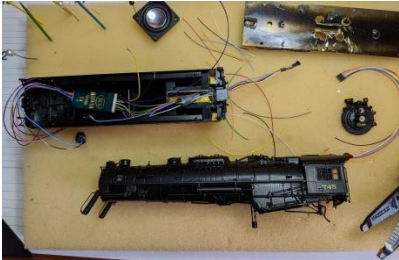
**Paul Cutler III:** I am working on:

- 1) Creating the next issue of the Shoreliner magazine, and I still need photos of Brockton from 1945-1968 if anyone has any.
- 2) Trying to re-gear an MDC/Roundhouse Atlantic 4-4-2 for Paul Bonanno, and learning to use a Unimat to do so.
- 3) Drawing Tony Donatelli's layout in CAD (3rdPlanit) for a possible layout article.
- 4) Converting a Rapido 48-seat diner into a 36-seat diner for a future SpeedWitch magazine article.
- 5) Building some Accurail kits I had picked up at our Spring train show.

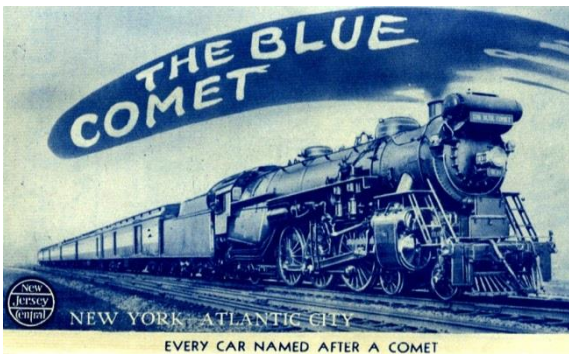


- 6) Assisting Atlas in fixing their new H16-44 model paint scheme by sending them photos of what they should be doing.
- 7) Running the NHRHTA Facebook page and answering NH-related questions from random strangers online.

**Ye Ed:** I've been putting off putting a sound decoder in my NKP Berkshire. Steam is a pita because of having to put the electronics in the tender and run the wires into the boiler, and hope there's enough room. When I finish with this project, I'm going back to scanning my slide collection into my computer. Slide projectors and slide shows are becoming a thing of the past and this is a time-consuming project, which I put off over six months ago!



**RUNNING EXTRA**



**New Jersey Remembers “The Seashore’s Finest Train”**

by David Peter Alan. From Railway Age.

On Saturday, Feb. 22, history buffs and railfans from around New Jersey gathered in a repurposed and still-beautiful former railroad terminal to celebrate a train that, during its short life, was an

iconic and luxurious one that the Garden State could call its own. That train was the Blue Comet on the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ). It was New Jersey’s all-time premier train, which set the standard for décor and service at reasonable prices during an era when not many people could afford even a coach ticket. Few of the people who actually rode that train are alive today, and probably fewer still have vivid memories of the trips they took, but the fast and luxurious train that whisked riders through the countryside and the Pine Barrens of South Jersey to Atlantic City lives on in the DNA of New Jerseyans who remain tired of living in the shadows of New York and Pennsylvania, and who cling to memories of experiences of the past that their state could claim as its own.

The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) had its four-track main line to Pittsburgh, home of its namesake train, the *Broadway Limited* and the state’s namesake train, the *Pennsylvania Limited*. New York had the *Empire State Express* and the *20th Century Limited* on the New York Central. New Jersey is small in size but, for 12½ years through the depths of the Great Depression, it had a train that provided an experience available nowhere else.

Blue Comet Day was first celebrated last year, to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the train’s first run, which took place on Feb. 21, 1929. The venue was the historic CNJ Jersey City Terminal, also known as Communipaw Terminal, on the Hudson River waterfront in Jersey City. Ferries took passengers from Liberty Street in Lower Manhattan to the terminal, which was built in 1889 and expanded in 1914, itself replacing the original head house from 1864. It has been almost 53 years since the last train left that station, a commuter train that ended the service day on April 30, 1967. After that, CNJ trains were diverted onto the Lehigh Valley Railroad at Aldene and then onto the PRR (now Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor) at Hunter Interlocking, about one mile south of Newark Penn Station.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation implemented the change, known as the Aldene Plan. Trains on the line, now known as the Raritan Valley Line and operated by NJ Transit, still use that route.

The old CNJ Communipaw Terminal had fallen into disrepair, but the building and train shed have been restored as part of Liberty State Park. Today, the terminal building serves as a quasi-museum and hosts special events, but the tracks are gone, and it takes almost 30 minutes to walk there from the Liberty State Park stop on NJT's Hudson-Bergen Light Rail line, the nearest rail access.

### Communipaw Terminal as it appears today.



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## Passenger rail deserves our support

By JONATHAN BARNETT

**T**he Trump administration wants to cut funding for Amtrak's northeast corridor service by more than half, and similar cuts are proposed for their long-distance passenger trains across the U.S. Drastic reductions in Amtrak funding have been proposed before, and Congress has restored most of the funds, but the passenger rail system's survival is never certain.

The proposed cuts come at a time when U.S. population and economic growth are concentrated in megaregions like those extending from Atlanta to Charlotte, Chicago to Detroit, Portland to Seattle or Los Angeles to San Diego, where cities and their suburbs are merging with those of neighboring cities.

These urban corridors could greatly benefit from expanded passenger rail service, because highways are the megaregions' main streets, and predictions for 2040 show gridlock on these highways for much of the day. Demand for flights from



SUN CHRONICLE FILE PHOTO

An Amtrak Acela train has become a popular way for New Englanders to get to New York and Washington, D.C.

city to city within the megaregions will also increase, worsening airport delays.

In the nation's oldest and most populous megaregion — the Northeast corridor between Washington, D.C., and Boston — Amtrak's Acela express service offers a convenient alternative to flying or driving. Amtrak has attracted more than three-quarters of the passengers who might otherwise fly between New York and Washington, D.C., and more than half of those

who travel from New York to Boston.

Even on Amtrak's less expensive Northeast corridor service, travel times compete well against driving from city to city within the megaregion, drawing some passengers off the highways. The Acela is not as fast as the high-speed rail systems considered essential in Europe, Japan, China and other advanced countries, which continue to invest in them, not cut their budgets. While financing a national network of true high-speed passenger trains does not seem likely right now, U.S. passenger rail services need more investment, not less.

There is growing unmet demand for passenger train service at Acela speeds in all the nation's megaregions. Virgin Trains USA is already operating express passenger service from Miami to West Palm Beach, Fla., and is building extensions from Orlando, Fla., to Tampa, Fla., through the heart of the Florida megaregion. If this service becomes profitable, it may encourage more private investment in express passenger rail.

Bringing Acela-level passenger service

to other megaregions is far less expensive than building a true high-speed rail, which requires its own separate track system. But it still means finding new sources of public funding from states as well as the federal government, along with possible private investment in partnership with Amtrak. It means electrifying existing railway lines, upgrading crossings and buying new trains.

Of course, this will cost money, but widening highways and adding new runways — wherever it's possible — will also cost money, and won't be enough to stop highway gridlock at peak hours or eliminate air-traffic delays. Some people traveling from city to city within the megaregions will continue to drive or fly. But express passenger trains can offer a better alternative, as they do in the Northeast, and increasingly in Florida. Americans deserve to be able to choose.

**JONATHAN BARNETT** is a fellow of the Institute for Urban Research at the University of Pennsylvania and author of "Designing the Megaregion: Meeting Urban Challenges at a New Scale."