

The Semaphore

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The Semaphore is the monthly (except July) newsletter of the South Shore Model Railway Club & Museum (SSMRC) and any opinions found herein are those of the authors thereof and of the Editors and do not necessarily reflect any policies of this organization. The SSMRC, as a non-profit organization, does not endorse any position. Your comments are welcome! Please address all correspondence regarding this publication to: *The Semaphore*, 11 Hancock Rd., Hingham, MA 02043. ©2021
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ON THE COVER: E8 #285 with #449, the westbound *Lake Shore Limited* at Framingham station. 50 years later, here’s *Acela Express* #2024 doing 150-MPH at Mansfield station. (DNC pictures)

FORM 19 ORDERS

APRIL B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, April 26th 8 p.m.

MAY BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, May 3rd 8 p.m.

FREE-RUNNING SESSIONS

Saturday & Sunday, May 15th & 16th 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Sunday, May 23rd

MAY B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, May 31st 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

For the **May** Business Meeting, our fourth and final contest in the “Celebrate Amtrak” series. This is a “matching” contest found at the end of this newsletter. We have had a new contest in each of the Jan-Apr issues, so you will have four chances of winning the drawing in May, if you enter each! Even Al Taylor has a chance! Extra copies available inside the Train Room and don't forget your name. Good luck!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

Progress

Picking up where I left off last month, progress on the new section has been excellent. With the 24 foot section up on its side on tables, it has been a pleasure to work on sitting on a chair or a stool. It has been such an efficient way to work; it just shows how much time is wasted crawling around underneath the bench work--especially at our ages. The other benefit, I believe, is that the work is neater, due to working in a comfortable way. Most of the wiring is done on the section, so we are in good shape. On the other section, the one with the harbor scene, Doug has just installed the roadbed for the trolley loop.



As for scenery, the work continues around the Cedar Hill arrival/departure yard, along the edge of the bench work. Savery has been working on a dirt road and complementing scenery and Bryan continues his work on the icing platform. I also

noticed, just recently, the excellent detail to the diesel fuel facility in the Cedar Hill engine terminal. Some of the details are the chain link fence around it's perimeter, the piping running from the tracks out to the fuel storage tanks and the dykes around the tanks, to mention a few. Nice job Savery; sorry I didn't notice it sooner.

Going Forward

After the track is installed on the trolley track on the other section, and the track feeders are installed, we will do the same as the other section and place it up on tables to do the wiring. The “L” section with the beginning of the trolley will be removed before-hand. After that, the Scenery Committee wants to paint the track before we put it down on the floor. When it's back in its normal position, we will reconnect the sections, power it up and test it for problems, while we can access it from all sides.

Misc.

Several members are thinking about buying the new DT602D throttle and have asked me about it, when they see mine. Overall, I think it is a good throttle. I tell them to try the club's DT602D first and use the manual because the throttle is a different animal and it takes a while to get used to the differences. I haven't had the glitches that I have had with the earlier throttles, but haven't operated in large groups yet. I find it very responsive to commands, which is a good thing. This throttle runs on 4 ½ volts (3 AA batteries) or the accessory battery pack available (3.8 volts), compared with the 9 volts in the earlier throttles; what did Digitrax do? As I said, overall I am happy with it. The Club's DT602D is upstairs in the Dispatchers office--try it out first to see if you want to get into a new learning curve.

That's it for this month and, as always, I'm willing to answer your questions or comments.

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer

SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

APRIL 2016 (5 years ago)

- “Corner City” and swamp area west of W. Middleton under construction.
- Mockup of future “Model Board” of Cedar Hill passenger terminal constructed.
- First “Charger” locomotive from Siemens plant in Sacramento, CA, rolls off assembly line.

- Connecticut DOT looking for service providers for New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line, branded CTrail Hartford Line.
- CP terminates plans to merge with NS.
- Poland Spring Water begins transporting bottles of water via PanAm Railways from their base in Maine to wholesale distributors in Massachusetts.
- Famous Peabody Coal Co. files for bankruptcy.
- Amtrak's spring timetable last printed edition.
- 40-years, since the start of Conrail.
- "Place Names" for various locations on the new RR described and to be voted on by the membership.

APRIL 2011 (10 years ago)

- Amtrak paints P42 #156 in "Phase 1—bloody nose" scheme—a first since the F7s and E8s with "pointless arrow" logo.
- Eastern Maine Railway chosen to operate 233 miles of track in Maine, purchased by the State of Maine from the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic.
- New Brunswick, Maine station under construction.
- Rehab of Springfield, MA, station finally gets legal go-ahead; to be completed by 2015.
- Paul Feeney re-joins SSMRC.
- FRA outlaws molded-on, plastic handgrabs on all freight and passenger cars.

APRIL 2006 (15 years ago)

- Guilford changes name to "PanAm Railways".
- Japan unveils sleeker version of its "Bullet Train" and calls it "The Shinkansen".
- High-speed ferry service on "The Cat" begins between Portland, ME and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.
- Famous "clacking" Solarie Board replaced with electronic one at South Station.
- RR Development Corp. of Pittsburgh acquires two Chinese 2-10-2 locos, one having the distinction of hauling the World's last regularly-scheduled mainline steam passenger train.
- Kadee introduces "Whisker" coupler.
- SSMRC "Discussion Group" set up on Internet by Tom Wylie.

APRIL 2001 (20 Years Ago)

- Norfolk Southern closes huge, ex-Pennsy shop in Hollidaysburg, PA.
- *Champlain Flyer* begins service between Burlington and Charlotte, VT on the Vermont Railway.
- Amtrak begins service to "new" (rehabbed) Worcester Union Station.
- First "official" Operations on new SSMRC layout.

APRIL 1996 (25 Years Ago)

- Bangor & Aroostook RR and Canadian American RR become "Bangor & Aroostook System".
- Amtrak converts 20 "Heritage" coaches into mail/baggage cars.
- *Cape Codder* to run between Boston and Hyannis, via Attleboro, instead of NYC. (Last year of Amtrak service to the Cape.
- MBTA buys 25 GP40PH-2 locomotives for "Old Colony" service; rebuilt CN freight locos called GP40MC.
- MBTA re-laying second track from Framingham to Worcester, which Conrail ripped up in 1980s.

- Rehabilitation of Plymouth and Middleboro lines for "Old Colony" service about 50% complete.
- CP Rail System creates "St. Lawrence & Hudson Railway", as designation of eastern operating unit.
- Cape Bretton & Central Nova Scotia Railway takes delivery of ex-CSX GP40s, to replace their famous fleet of Alco M630s and RS18s.
- Amtrak produces first "Cab-baggage" out of F40 locomotive; used on Downeaster service and other "push-pull" trains in state-supported services.

APRIL 1991 (30 Years Ago)

- Attendance figures show 2,315 paid admissions at Show and Open House.
- "Tower A" outside North Station closes.
- MA Gov. William Weld commits to restoring all three Old Colony Commuter Rail lines.
- Consultant's study concludes that Worcester Union Station should succumb to the wrecker's ball.

APRIL 1986 (35 Years Ago)

- SSMRC "Filene's Portable Layout" set up and manned at Hanover Mall for a week.
- Boston celebrates "50 years of trackless trolleys".
- Guilford strike causes re-routing of *Montrealer* via Palmer; the beginning of the end of Guilford owning Vermont trackage.
- Edaville advertises Flying Yankee for sale at \$230,000
- Amtrak plans to start *Cape Codder* service in June.
- Richard Kughn purchases Lionel Trains from Kenner Parker Toys.
- MBTA Board votes to purchase 16 F40PH locomotives for Commuter Rail service.
- Guilford closes B&M-Canadian Pacific interchange at Wells River, VT.
- BAR sells its famous F3s to various tourist roads.

APRIL 1981 (40 Years Ago)

- E&B Valley produces first Covered Hopper kit.

POTPOURRI

The MBTA's new Orange Line subway cars have derailed six times near Wellington Station in Medford, Mass., since the first new cars entered service, and their weight may be a factor. Five of those derailments came when moving through MBTA's Wellington Yard, with no passengers on board. The sixth came last week, when two cars of a train carrying 100 passengers derailed at low. That led to the MBTA removing from service Red and Orange line cars being built in Springfield, Mass., by an affiliate of Chinese manufacturer CRRC. The new cars are designed to be more durable, but that also makes them heavier, which may be a problem with the "aging track infrastructure" in the Wellington Yard, an MBTA spokesman said. A project to rebuild the yard's

track and signaling began in 2018 and is scheduled to be finished next summer. The cause of last week's derailment remains under investigation. (TN)

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CSX Transportation's proposed acquisition of New England regional Pan Am Railways will get a more thorough review. The Surface Transportation Board has decided that the merger application will be treated as a significant transaction, not the minor deal that CSX and Pan Am had sought. The move, announced in a draft notice in the Federal Register in APRIL, will create a longer review path for the deal and require CSX to submit a more detailed merger application and a revised proposed schedule. As a minor transaction, CSX had hoped the deal would close in late September. But the board's decision means the railroads won't be able to tie the knot until December 2021, assuming the deal is approved following a typical 270-day review schedule. Several parties — including short line Vermont Rail System, the Vermont and Massachusetts congressional delegations, Vermont and Massachusetts transportation officials, and a Massachusetts water agency — had asked the board to consider the merger as a significant transaction. "CSX is confident that the proposed acquisition of Pan Am Railways will enhance customer competitiveness and provide benefits to stakeholders in New England and beyond," the railroad said in a statement. "We look forward to demonstrating this further in our next filing to the STB." (TN) So much for trying to get away with something, CSX!-Ed.

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After a year of being closed due to the Covid pandemic, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg, Pa., will reopen on Friday, April 30. The new normal days and times of operation for the museum will be Fridays through Sundays, with hours 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and noon to 4 p.m. on Sundays. Capacity at the facility will be limited to 50% of normal occupancy or 125 people hourly, with a maximum per day capped at 750 on Fridays and Saturdays and 500 on Sundays. After the William Penn Memorial Museum at the state capital in Harrisburg, the Strasburg site is the most heavily visited of the state's two dozen museums and historic sites. It is one of four state-owned railroad museums in the U.S.; the others are in California, Nevada, and North Carolina. "It's a very lonely place when there's nobody here," said Patrick Morrison, who has been site administrator since May 2017, but began some 25 years ago as a museum educator.

"It's going to sound strange to say this, but I think the trains missed the people too. These things are meant to be seen." (TN)

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The Province of Nova Scotia will continue to pay a \$30,000-a-month subsidy to the owner of an inactive, deteriorating rail line to keep the line in place for possible use by an intermodal terminal. The CBC reports the government will continue the subsidy to the Cape Breton & Central Nova Scotia Railway for the line, last active in 2015, for another year. Cape Breton's municipal government has awarded a contract to a private investment firm to try to attract investors in a container terminal at Sydney harbor, but Mayor Amanda McDougall says there are local businesses hoping to ship by rail in the future, so the subsidy is about more than preserving the rail line for the port. The railroad is a Genesee & Wyoming property. (TN)

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U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and U.S. Rep Danny Davis (D-Ill.) have introduced legislation to provide permanent, dedicated funding for Amtrak. The Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund Act would create a fund providing approximately \$5.4 billion annually for repairs, service improvements, fleet modernization and other needs. The bill specifies 40% of the funds would go to the Northeast Corridor and 60% to the national network, and could be used for both capital and operating expenses. "This bill envisions the long-term, steady funding commitment to our nation's intercity passenger rail system necessary to ensure it is safe and reliable for passengers today and long into the future," Blumenthal said in a press release, which also notes intercity passenger rail is the only major form of transportation without a dedicated funding stream. (TN)

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A Union Pacific railroad lantern sold for \$46,200 — about nine times the previous record for a lantern sold at auction — during a sale earlier this month of the Steve Cregut collection of railroad lanterns by Soulis Auctions. Antiques and Arts Weekly reports the auction is believed to be the only blue-globe UP lantern of its type; blue-globe lanterns are generally the rarest because they did not have a wide range of applications. In all, lanterns from the collection brought the top nine prices achieved at auction, according to LiveAuctioneers. (TN)

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Progress Rail has closed its La Grange, Ill., engine facility, ending manufacturing at a site that had

been part of locomotive production since EMD broke ground for its main plant there in 1935. Progress, which announced plans to close the plant in 2018, said it anticipated the transition of engine manufacturing and assembly to Winston-Salem, N.C.; electrical locker manufacturing and assembly to Muncie, Ind.; and other work to outside suppliers, would be complete APRIL 31. (TN)

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The Biden administration’s proposal to eliminate carbon emissions from electricity generation by 2035, if approved by Congress, would add to railroads’ coal traffic blues. President Joe Biden on Wednesday unveiled his \$2 trillion infrastructure plan, which includes the proposal to wean electricity producers from fossil fuels as a way to fight climate change. About 92% of the coal consumed in the U.S. is used to generate electricity, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, and railroads haul the vast majority of that coal from mines to power plants. Railroads’ coal traffic has been declining for the past decade as low-cost natural gas and renewable energy projects have pushed coal aside as a source for generating electricity. Coal generated less than

2020 CLASS I RAILROAD COAL VOLUME		
Railroad	Coal Volume	Coal as % of Overall Volume
BNSF Railway	1,404,000	15%
Union Pacific	738,232	9%
CSX Transportation	637,000	11%
Norfolk Southern	574,000	9%
Canadian National	289,000	5%
Canadian Pacific	260,400	10%
Kansas City Southern	178,800	8%

Source: Association of American Railroads and railroad financial reports.

20% of U.S. electricity last year, down from 48% in 2008, according to the EIA. Despite these trends, coal still accounted for 12% of total U.S. rail volume last year, according to data from the Association of American Railroads. Coal was the largest single carload commodity that U.S. Class I railroads hauled in 2020, AAR data show. And coal brought in about \$7 billion in revenue for the seven Class I railroads last year, according to a review of railroads’ financial statements. Not all of that revenue came from coal delivered to U.S. utilities: Railroads also carry coal used in domestic steelmaking, and move coal to tidewater for export, to be used in foreign power plants and steel mills. But domestic power use is far and away the lion’s share of coal traffic in the U.S. (TN)

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U.S. Sen Edward Markey (D-Mass.) and Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass) have reintroduced legislation supporting state and local efforts to create fare-free public transportation. The Freedom to Move Act, originally introduced in 2020, would award \$5 billion annually for a five-year period for competitive grants to transit agencies, to cover the fare revenue lost by offering no-fare service. “Affordability and accessibility must define our public transit systems to ensure that they truly promote equity, economic growth, and community development,” Markey said in a press release, while Pressley said, “Public transportation is an essential public good, but for too long, we have not funded it like one. ... The Freedom to Move Act invests heavily in our public transit systems so that states and localities can offer safe, high-quality, and fare-free rides to all to ensure everyone in the community can access jobs, food and essential services.” (TN)

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Watco will buy 650 miles of branch lines in Wisconsin and Michigan from Canadian National, along with 250 miles of the company’s Soo Subdivision in Ontario, the companies announced today. In Ontario, where it acquires the line between Sault Ste. Marie and Oba, Ont., Watco will provide freight operations and continue the Agawa Canyon Tour Train, which offers one-day excursions from Sault St. Marie north for 114 miles. Watco has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Missanabie Cree First Nation regarding partnership opportunities for the Algoma Central Railway. The U.S. lines are being purchased from affiliate Wisconsin Central. In Wisconsin, Watco already operates the Wisconsin & Southern, which it acquired in 2012 and has 598 miles and 180 miles of trackage rights. The company also has two operations in Michigan — the 86.5-mile Ann Arbor Railroad and 122.9-mile Grand Elk Railroad. Overall, the company operates more than 40 railroads and 5,500 miles of track in North America and Australia, in addition to terminals, ports, and mechanical shops. (TN)

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Amtrak will celebrate its 50th anniversary on May 1, 2021. For the entire time the agency has been operating, funding has come from annual congressional appropriations that rose and fell based largely on which political party was in power. The ability to prepare budgets and plan for long-term capital improvements has been hampered by uncertainty surrounding the amount of funding to

expect. Passengers felt the brunt of this, too, as the quality of on-board services varied from year to year, and several services disappeared altogether. The first week of April, the earth stood still as two members of Congress introduced a bill called the Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund Act, which would provide permanent funding for Amtrak, much like the Highway Trust Fund provides for road and highway maintenance needs. If this legislation is approved by Congress and signed by President Biden, it would have a major impact on how Amtrak conducts business. (RA)

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Amtrak has launched a new website celebrating its 50th anniversary, which it describes as “a central hub for information about our five decades as America’s Railroad, innovative milestones along the way, and a spotlight on some of the employees that helped make it all happen.” It also features 50th anniversary merchandise and offers “50 reasons to travel.” <https://www.amtrak.com/50th-anniversary>

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The head of the agency that oversees Amtrak’s Downeaster is being honored for her commitment to rail passenger service. Patricia Quinn, executive director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, was honored by the New England Railroad Club Executive Committee with its Vincent R. Terrill Lifetime Achievement Award, citing her “outstanding work, dedication to the industry, and her leadership presence.” She has been the agency’s executive director since 2005. “This award is a tribute to Patricia’s achievements for her longstanding influence in driving continual improvement strategies and forging partnerships that benefit the regional environment of the rail industry in New England and abroad,” Clary Coutu, the club’s president, said in a press release. (TN)

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Tickets are now on sale for the resumption of operations for the Broadmoor Manitou & Pikes Peak Cog Railway, the nation’s highest railway and one of only two cog railways in the U.S. The railway will reopen in May. Since October 2017, it has been undergoing a \$100 million renovation including a complete rebuild of its tracks, a new cog system, new and rebuilt equipment, a new depot in Manitou Springs. At the 14,115-foot summit, passengers will visit a new \$60 million, fully accessible and environmentally Pikes Peak Visitors Center, featuring digital interactive displays and new menu options. The summit also features a new elevated pathway and overlook designed to protect the mountain’s fragile tundra. (TN)

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Government officials are criticizing the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority’s plans to buy 25 new diesel locomotives in the coming fiscal year, with one area mayor calling it “a step in the wrong direction” for a system with plans for electrification and a need to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Lynn Mayor Tom McGee also said in a letter to the Fiscal Management and Control Board, which oversees the MBTA, that the transit agency has “taken little action to date” to address pollution. State legislators have also questioned the move, saying the agency needs to begin purchasing and testing electric locomotives, but MBTA officials said electrification projects are still in the planning stages. (TN)

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Beginning Monday, May 17, VIA Rail Canada will begin operating its flagship train, the *Canadian*, across its full route from Vancouver to Toronto. The train has been operating between Vancouver and Winnipeg, Manitoba. (TN)

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Amtrak service in Vermont will resume July 19, the state Agency of Transportation has announced. Intercity bus service will also resume on that date. “We are very pleased to announce the restart of these vital transportation services for Vermonters and those who wish to travel to and from Vermont by train or bus,” Transportation Secretary Joe Flynn said in an announcement on the agency website. “With the Governor’s announcement this week of the Vermont Forward Plan to re-open Vermont fully during the next few months, we now have a target date for when we will be able to safely resume Amtrak and transit services.” The state is served by the Washington, D.C.-St. Albans *Vermonteer*, and the New York to Rutland *Ethan Allen Express*. Service was suspended APRIL 26, 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the state’s service will be among the last Amtrak routes to resume. (TN)

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Amtrak *Downeaster* service will increase and introduce a new schedule as of May 3, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority has announced. The new schedule will restore service to its pre-COVID-19 level of five round trips daily (up from the current four), while also making weekday and weekend schedules the same. Seasonal service to Old Orchard Beach, Maine, will also resume. The new schedule includes a mid-morning departure from Brunswick, Maine, as well as a mid-afternoon departure from Boston. “Passengers have requested more mid-day trains for years, Natalie Bogart, marketing director at

NNEPRA, said in a press release. “Given the recent changes in travel patterns, the timing is now right for us to introduce a new 10:20 a.m. southbound train from Brunswick and a 3 p.m. northbound from Boston.” Schedules and other information are available at [the Downeaster website](#). (TN)

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The Siska First Nation will receive a \$4.7 million award from the Canadian government for losses stemming from the creation of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. The award was granted by Canada’s Specific Claims Tribunal, created in 2008 to address claims made by First Nations groups, and is potentially precedent-setting because it is the first time losses have been awarded for lost fishing opportunities. The award covers infringement resulting from CP’s route along the Fraser River in British Columbia, which uses about 90 acres of a reserve set aside for the Siska. (TN)

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FRENCH NATIONAL RAILWAYS, working with the Normandy region, has launched a three-month trial using rapeseed oil to replace diesel fuel on all trains serving the Paris – Granville line. A fleet of 15 Alstom Régiolis six-car articulated bi-mode multiple units operate services on the line. The trains were built in 2014 and are equipped with six roof-mounted 338kW MAN D2676 LE323 diesel engines. The trains operate in electric mode over the 82km Paris Montparnasse – Dreux section, running under 1.5kV dc and then 25kV ac electrification, before switching to diesel mode for the remaining 246km section from Dreux to Granville. Following trials with a 30:70 mix of rapeseed and diesel oil, the use of B100 oil made from 100% rapeseed was sanctioned for use in trains in France in 2018, after being used in lorries. The trials on trains in commercial service were approved after the French Institute of Petroleum and New Energies (IFPEN) carried out tests in 2019 with one of the MAN engines on a test rig without significant modifications. Testing has far found that consumption of rapeseed oil is slightly higher than for diesel. (RA)

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Let the bidding war begin. On April 20th, Canadian National today topped rival Canadian Pacific’s \$29 billion offer for Kansas City Southern. CN’s \$33.7 billion offer is a 21% premium to the deal CP reached with KCS last month. CN is offering KCS investors \$325 per share, including \$200 per share in cash and 1.059 CN shares. CP plans to pay \$275 per share, including \$90 in cash, in a deal that currently has unanimous support of both railways’

boards. CN’s move, like CP’s, would create the first railroad to serve Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. But CN said its “superior proposal” would be better for KCS shareholders and result in post-merger synergies of \$1 billion, topping CP’s estimates of \$780 million. “CN is ideally positioned to combine with KCS to create a company with broader reach and greater scale, and to seamlessly connect more customers to rail hubs and ports in the U.S., Mexico and Canada,” CN CEO JJ Ruest said in a statement today. “CN and KCS have highly complementary networks with limited overlap that will enable them to accelerate growth in single-owner, single-operator, end-to-end service across North America. With safer service and better fuel efficiency on key routes from Mexico through the heartland of America, the result will be a safer, faster, cleaner, and stronger railway.” (TN)

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The Long Island Rail Road will test the use of battery-electric railcars on its Oyster Bay Branch, the first step in a process that could lead to the end of diesel-powered trains on the commuter railroad. LIRR President Phillip Eng announced the plan at a recent press conference, saying the commuter operator had an agreement with Alstom to develop the equipment. Following eight months of initial analysis, two of the LIRR’s electric multiple unit cars will be retrofitted with batteries. Where third-rail electric power is available, the train will be powered by the third rail and recharge its batteries, then run on battery power on the non-electrified portion of the route between East Williston and Oyster Bay. The train will initially test without passengers, but if the test is successful, it could allow single-seat service between Penn Station and Oyster Bay, and the technology could be expanded to other lines. The LIRR currently operates about 160 miles of diesel-powered service. While the LIRR says it believes the test is the first of its kind in North America, battery-electric equipment is making notable inroads in Europe. (TN)

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The Conrail Historical Society and Danbury (Ct.) Railway Museum have combined to preserve a “Flexi-Flo” hopper car built in 1966 for the New York Central by ACF Industries. One of 220 such cars, the order represented the first pressure



differential cars constructed, which allowed easy unloading of the contents by applying air pressure inside of the car. Usually used for cement or other dry bulk goods, the cars helped recapture business railroads had lost to trucks, and introduced technology widely used today on hopper cars. (TN) Rapido recently brought these cars out in HO in all the roadnames they wore.-Ed.

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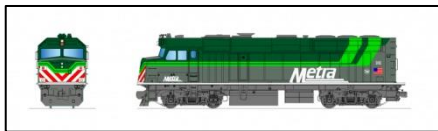
Natural lighting from huge skylights, spacious concourses, and dramatic entrances are key features of a dramatically reconfigured Penn Station under reconstruction options announced by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and renderings released by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The plans announced offer two options — one that would retain the current two-level boarding configuration while creating a central atrium and using some of Amtrak’s current space for NJ Transit, and another that would create a single-level station, eliminating the cramped, low-ceiling nature and complex floor plan of the current layout. (TN)

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Siemens Mobility has been selected as the preferred bidder to replace a large portion of Amtrak’s aging single-level railcar fleet. Slated for replacement is equipment that has been in service for many years, some of which dates to before Amtrak began operations in 1971: Amfleet I cars (late 1970s), cab cars converted from the original late-1960s *Metroliner* electric multiple-units, and *Cascades* service articulated Talgo cars from the late 1990s. They will all be replaced with a new fleet of 83 Intercity Trainsets (ICT). Accompanying the manufacturing contract will be a long-term service agreement for Siemens to provide technical support, spares and material supply. Summer 2021 has been targeted for contract execution and notice to proceed, according to Amtrak, which reported that it “will spend the time between now and then continuing negotiations with Siemens for this generational procurement.” (RA)

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The Metra board of directors (Chicago) has approved a Request for Proposals to convert three of Metra’s F40PH-3 diesels into battery-powered, zero-emission diesels, with the aim of awarding a contract this fall and having the first locomotive delivered 30 months later. “This proposal could be game-changing,” Metra Executive Director/CEO Jim Derwinski said in a



press release. “We have been monitoring the development of this technology for several years and believe the time is right to work with the industry and set a path for a brighter and cleaner future. ...As we emerge from the fog of this pandemic, we see this as an opportunity to transform Metra, and to become a cleaner partner in the region.” The proposal requires the converted locomotive to be fully compatible with all existing Metra equipment, capable of hauling trains of two to 11 cars at speeds up to 79 mph, operating on any line, and powering the onboard lighting, heating/air conditioning, and intercom systems. Companies responding to the request will have to address questions about operating distance, recharging time, ability to operate in Chicago weather, required supporting infrastructure and other issues. The locomotives, which may be painted in a green adaptation of the Metra paint scheme to indicate their environmental characteristics, are likely to be tested on the Rock Island District’s Beverly Branch, which is relatively short (15.7 miles from the downtown La Salle Street station to Blue Island), although it includes 15 stations in that distance. (TN)

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Work has begun on a 135,000-square-foot addition to Alstom’s rail manufacturing facilities in Hornell, N.Y. The new plant will include 105,000 square feet of manufacturing space, 18,000 square feet of warehouse space, and 12,000 square feet of offices. It is estimated to employ 258 people. The expansion was spurred by Alstom’s contract with Metra to build up to 500 multilevel cars. (TN)

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Amtrak will add information on carbon-emission savings to Northeast Corridor tickets, showing how much they saved by not driving and by not flying. On the electrified route between Boston and Washington, D.C., Amtrak says use of its trains produces 83% less emissions than driving and 73% less than flying. “Climate change continues to be one of the world’s most pressing issues, and we want passengers to know that traveling on Amtrak can help lower their carbon footprint compared to traveling in another manner,” Amtrak’s Caroline Decker, vice president, Northeast Corridor Service Line, said. Amtrak plans to add similar information to all tickets across its national network in the future. (TN)

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

TRAINS

Commentary

A House Near the Tracks
Passenger and Freight Separation?

New York's Moynihan Hall Makes Debut
The Astronaut and the Space-Age RR Watch

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

August 1939 on the Yosemite Valley
Build New Stations from Classic Kits
Diverging Points

Are You Stuck? (Jason Shron)

Editor's Notebook

The Forty-Year Layout

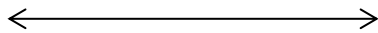
MODEL RAILROADER

Simple Pine Trees
Modeling in 1:1 Scale
DCC Currents

Dealing with Reversing Sections

CLASSIC TRAINS (Spring)

Archive Treasures: Steam So Familiar Yet Distant
Classic Conrail
Englewood Enchantment
Best of Everything
First Run for an NC&StL Fireman



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

EDITOR'S NOTES

- 1. Normally, we'd be having our annual "Happy Birthday Amtrak" celebration at the May Business Meeting but we'll have to postpone that for a while. It's still amazing, and a happy time, that Amtrak was thought by many, including President Nixon, to be a company which would be gone within 3 years. And here we are 50 years later, still able to travel by train from coast to coast!
- 2. Happy Spring to everyone!

"Somewhere beyond right and wrong there is a field, I will meet you there." (Rumi)

MEMBER NEWS

Stan Rydell is recovering from a recent fall and is at a rehab center. Get back to us soon, Stan; we miss you!

Congratulations to **Roger St. Peter** on the birth of his first grandchild, Nathan Alexander, born on April 9th. He adds that "everyone is fine and healthy".

(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:

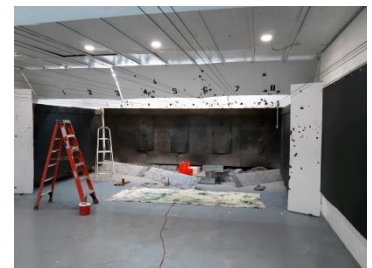
- Brendan Sheehan May 9th
- John Sheridan May 11th
- Paul Cutler, Jr. May 18th
- Doug Buchanan May 22nd
- Jim O'Brien (H)..... May 27th
- Steve Peers May 30th



Meanwhile, I've heard from these folks on

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

"Gunny" Mangelinkx: "This month was busy again.. Fresh water fishing started back up and Turkey hunting season in MA, until mid-May. I am teaching more" hunting safety " classes and Working as Range Safety Officer has picked up, also. Today at the Marshfield Gun club we had a spring cleanup and here are pictures of the indoor pistol range. On the left is the firing line and 75' away is the impact area (right picture)."



Kurt Kramke: "I have finished the O-scale brewery and I am starting the upper level with work on the turntable and round house."



Doug Buchanan: "I attended the "Marvin Plumley Reality Tour" in West Virginia on the 16th & 17th of April, and then railfanned for a few additional days in the New River Gorge and Cumberland MD (Sandpatch), before heading home. Marvin Plumley was the stationmaster at Prince, WV for the C&O and later Amtrak, retiring just a very few years ago. The weekend started with operating SACOM (St Albans C&O Modelers Club)



HO railroad on Friday. On Saturday, we (35 of my fellow C&O Historical Society members) met at the Prince, WV station to begin our tour with Marvin. Leaving Prince we headed east to Quinimont, and then to Meadow Creek, stopping for lunch in Sandstone first.

Marvin is a font of railroad knowledge and constantly regaled us with stories of the three fabled locations. We had many photo opportunities, as train traffic was rather prolific. Then it was back to the model railroad club for more operating at the end of the day, although it was rather late in the evening.

This tour was not sanctioned by any organization, but just a gathering of Marvin Plumley's friends....meet him once and you're friends for life! There was no registration fee, but suggestions were: donate to SACOM, donate to COHS or purchase items from the COHS, whose President attended with brand new/not yet advertised exclusive Prince polo shirts for sale. Another Marvin Plumley Tour is planned to start in Thurmond later this year--hope I can be there!

Doug posted this pic of "The Rexall Train", which toured the US and Canada in 1936 promoting Rexall Drug Store products. It was a "rolling national convention for druggists". Louis Liggett, the founder of Rexall, declared "The Depression is over!" and with \$1 million he put together the most fantastic promotional train ever conceived traveled the rails to the four corners of the Nation. 29,000 miles, 47 states and Canada and 2.3 million people visited the train from APRIL-November 1936.



David Galbraith writes: "Finished my northern extension."



Peter Palica: "My work is continuing on painting and detailing my Z-scale 3D printed short version of the Woolworth Building in New York City. This model is approximately 25" tall."



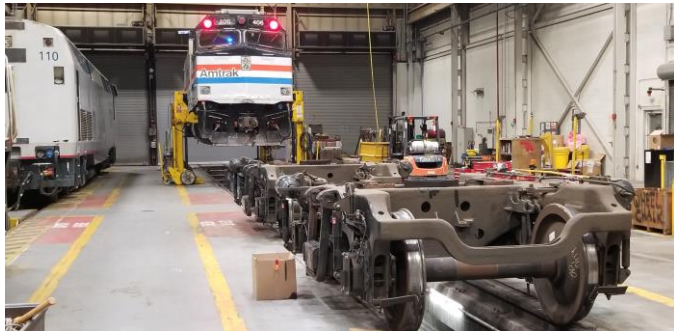
Ross Hall: "Mineton lives! The branch-line facility on the SSMRC's former layout in East Weymouth was exempted from removal to the new premises and was auctioned off to me, where I



have made it part of my new garage layout in Harwich Port. I bought the mine structure separately; it was scratchbuilt in wood from an RMC article on kitbashing plastic structures. Whoever built it did a superb job! Now

it's finally back in its old place and can again be part of operating sessions. What remains is to build a new hillside behind it, so we can "actually" mine the coal. That will take some doing, but Styrofoam will play a major role."

Jesse Collins: "F40 #406 in for periodic maintenance". This is Amtrak's last F40, that hasn't been turned into a "Cabbage". Its engine and



traction motors have been removed, though, and is used as a control cab on "push-pull" trains like the Downeaster, when its "cabbage" is down for service.

Mike Dolan: "This month I have spent a lot of time on building the bridge for the fly-over on the new section of the club layout under construction.



Challenging project to say the least. Central Valley Bridges are a demanding project when built as a straight bridge with a regular entrance and exit. The desire for this bridge was to skew the entrance parallel to the main line running under it.

When I first discussed this bridge with Savery, his idea was to try and duplicate, as close as possible, the bridge at Thurmond, WV. (You can view at the website for Historic Bridges or just Google the Thurmond Bridge.) The Thurmond Bridge is unique because there is a walkway adjacent to the Bridge track and also an auto road on the opposite side. This bridge is also the only way in and out of the ghost town of Thurmond. I began the



project by printing some full-size templates of the kit I intended to use--mounting them on poster board so that Savery, Fred and I could review and accept the concept.

Once we decided how the bridge would work and fit, Fred made a full size wooden template of the area and marked up the track centerlines



under the bridge. It was this template I used in the first step of the project. The difficult part was to skew the entrance to the bridge and insure there was clearance for the tracks below. As shown in this photo, the right side is skewed at a steep angle. The frame structure of the bridge can also be seen.

Once the configuration was refined I could then proceed with painting the frame work and mounting the roadbed and track. Central Valley has a tedious but excellent method of mounting the track and on a 185' bridge it is time-consuming. Once completed, the track was painted and the roadbed given some initial detail. There is Code 83 track on the bridge as well as Code 70 guard rail installed.

Once I had completed the track work it was time for the superstructure. This was also a challenge because with the end skewed, I needed to insure, that when aligned, the entire cross bracing would work; believe me, there is a lot of cross bracing; the cross bracing is what makes this bridge a beauty.

The far end of the bridge will be a girder bridge to complete the span. Overall measurements of the structure is approximately 40" (270-280 scale feet).

The end section is shown in place but not assembled at this point. During the next month, I hope to have the walkway and the roadway constructed and in place. I'm just glad I didn't decide to figure how many hours this would take. The final picture is of the left section of the bridge showing where the girders will be located.



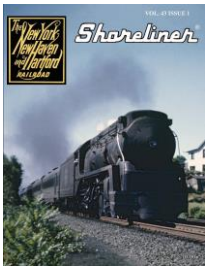
I would urge everyone to Google the Thurmond, WV bridge. Lots of information and photos. The bridge is still in use today by CSX but the hay days of C & O coal are gone.

<https://historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=wviregina/thurmond/>

Savery Moore: “I’m still working on the longest dirt road in model railroad history. In addition, my softball leagues start next week, so I’ve been going to practices and scrimmages.”



Paul Cutler III: “I forgot to write for this column in the last Semaphore, so this is a 2-month summation. I’ve just started working on the next issue of the NHRHTA’s *Shoreliner* magazine, Volume 43 Issue 1. The main articles in the new issue will be about the NH’s stainless steel combines and playing cards. The last issue (42-4) went into the mail



on March 17th but some people still haven’t gotten theirs yet.

‘Tis the season for yard work and my father, my sister and I have been working outside cutting up the fallen trees and branches from the winter storms. We had two solid days of bonfires to get rid of it all.

My visits to the club have mostly been limited to Thursday nights and I’ve been tinkering with the new DT602D throttle. They’ve already released a software update for them and I’ve installed it in the club-owned throttle and Dave Clinton’s. I have also worked on making the grade crossings for Rosetta Stone Manufacturing across the mainline. Back in



March, I took my dad to the club on a Wednesday afternoon. It’s the first time he’s been since the March 2020 Train

Show, and he was impressed with how much more scenery there is and all the work on the new section of layout.

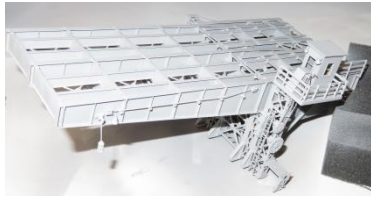
For personal modeling projects, I installed and programmed the ditchlights for my brand-new Maine Eastern FL9 489. Yes, it’s not New Haven (shock!) but I did get a cab ride in the real #489. (That’s my excuse.) The model’s ditchlights are mounted to MU plugs that have to be attached to the nose of the FL9 by the end-user. I drilled a #61 drill for each plug, and a #71 for the LED wires. Soldering the wires to the circuit board was easy, and then I used the LokSound Programmer to set their flash rate, flash duration and brightness. I built a Red Caboose PRR X-29 boxcar kit and I think it came out pretty nice. Next, I put a resistor in a NH caboose for block detection and repaired another NH caboose that fell off the club layout about 10 years ago (I was so annoyed that it fell that I put it up on shelf and forgot about it).



The station plans that I talked about getting in the February Semaphore have been turned over to a new NHRHTA volunteer who said he will scan all of them for eventual publication. In exchange, he offered to leave a 3-ring binder full of 8x10 photos as “collateral”. Inside are 50 aerial photos taken of various NH properties in 1954, and these include several pictures of Greenbush Line stations, as well as Boston, Providence, Hartford and New Haven. He said I could scan them and so I did. If anyone wants to see ‘em, please let me know.



Ye Ed: Must be “Bridge Month”, as I finally got around to preparing Overland’s model of “the Gloucester Draw”, the ex-B&M double-track bridge over the Annisquam River in Gloucester, MA. We have had the bridge for many years, but no place for it on the RR. The design of the new section being worked on now includes a place for the bridge, so I figured I’d better get busy! I have primed it and will spray/weather it next.



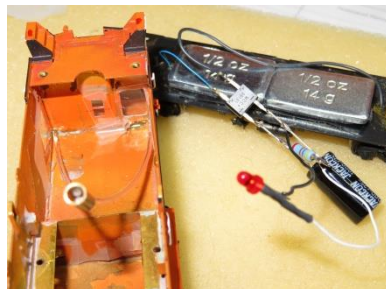
The prototype of this Deck plate girder bascule bridge was built in 1910 by the Strauss Bascule Bridge Co. of Chicago for the B&M’s Gloucester



Branch, which is still used for frequent Commuter Rail service. The bridge is presently being replaced with an ugly concrete structure, with a control tower that looks like it’s a prison guard tower!



I also installed flashing markers on a Central Vermont fairly-modern, extended-vision, steel caboose. The prototype lights are



on the edge of the roof, so I used fiber optics from a LED mounted in a “light box” inside the caboose, as the area is too small for bulbs or LEDs. This is my first attempt using this method and I’m pleased with the results.



RUNNING EXTRA



Along the Northeast Corridor and beyond, what can Amtrak buy with \$80 billion?

By Adam Vaccaro, Globe Staff 4-5-21

A passenger boarded an Amtrak train at South Station in Boston on November 24, 2015. CRAIG F. WALKER

Given President Biden’s storied affair with Amtrak, it stood to reason his administration’s first major infrastructure proposal would include big money for the nation’s passenger rail system. And, indeed, the president wants to inject \$80 billion into the network, a potential boon for rail transit across the country — including in Boston, the crown city at the northern end of Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor. So what’s on the docket? Could we finally see world-class high-speed rail? Maybe trips to New York at much lower fares? Or how about building that North-South Rail Link, to let trains continue past South Station to points beyond?

Not so fast, experts caution. While the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington, D.C. — by far Amtrak’s most popular and successful service — would undoubtedly benefit from the infrastructure plan, it probably wouldn’t be elevated to the stuff of science fiction. The existing rail line has just too many twists and turns as it winds along the New England coastline to accommodate bullet-

train style service. “They’re going to make sure that there are upgrades that will allow the existing system to go as fast as you can possibly get, given all the curves and angles,” said Jeff Davis, a senior fellow at the Washington, DC-based Eno Center for Transportation. “But the money is not in there for the quantum jump from Acela speeds. It’s not going to be nearly enough to put true, Japanese-style high-speed rail on the corridor. But there’s still a lot of good work that can be done with any portion of this \$80 billion.”

And the Northeast Corridor would only get a portion of that money, presuming Congress adopts Biden’s proposal. Even \$80 billion only goes so far in a national transit system subject to the political demands and infrastructure needs of a place as big as the United States.

After Biden’s proposal was released this month, Amtrak emphasized the money would be especially helpful for its existing plan to expand service across the country, whether by beefing up current routes or adding new ones. This work alone could cost \$25 billion or more.

New England, meanwhile, could benefit from these expansions in several ways. Amtrak’s plans include additional service between Boston and Albany, including stops in Springfield; an extension of the Downeaster service between Boston and Maine further north; and new service to Concord, N.H. — a proposal that delights New Hampshire rail advocates who have long pushed for a passenger service in the state. “It’s a huge opportunity for New Hampshire,” said Peter Griffin, the longtime president of the New Hampshire Railroad Revitalization Association. “It’s accessibility and economic development. We rely solely on highways.”

Nationally, the expansion plans include new service on shorter corridors involving cities such as Las Vegas, Nashville, and Duluth by 2035. Most rail analysts say the best way to expand a national system is to link cities located in similar regions, where relatively short train rides might be more attractive for travelers than the hassle of flying. But improving the current system, including the Northeast Corridor, would also be a major consideration of any infrastructure bill. In a statement issued Wednesday, Amtrak said the money would help to reduce some of the Northeast Corridor’s massive repair backlog, which tops \$30 billion, cutting delays and speeding up travel. The

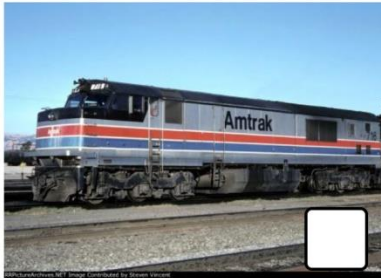
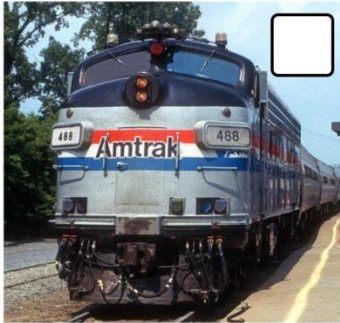
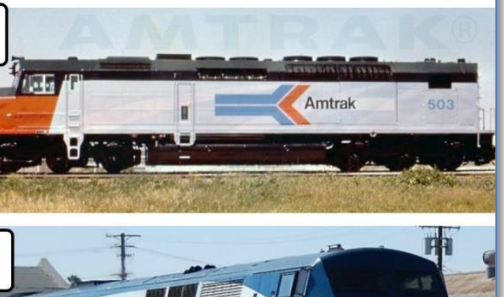
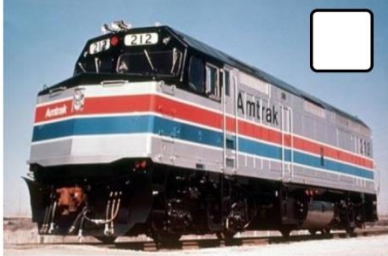
White House’s proposal also noted the need to “modernize” the corridor. About half of that work is already funded, said Davis. But the most crucial and big-ticket item — the so-called Gateway Project, a \$10 billion-plus plan to replace deteriorating bridges and tunnels between New York and New Jersey — is not. That project has already been subject to years of political and financial wrangling. Davis said that must-happen project would almost certainly be funded if Biden’s infrastructure proposal passes — either through the big pot of money allocated to Amtrak or through another pool Biden has proposed for important mega-projects. He noted that Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer represents New York, further bolstering the project’s odds.

Amtrak spokesman Jason Abrams also pointed to the Gateway project as well as another key tunnel under Baltimore as initiatives along the Northeast Corridor programs that could benefit under Biden’s proposal. The corridor requires plenty of other infrastructure work, such as bridge and track repairs and measures to protect the rail system from intensifying weather and sea level rise associated with climate change, said T.J. Girsch, a Quincy resident and the vice chair of the Rail Passengers Association. This work might not be as headline-grabbing, but those repairs could allow for faster and more frequent service while protecting the rail network from further deterioration, he said. “A lot of places where there is existing track is capable of 150 miles per hour, but . . . they can only do that where the track is in good enough shape and sufficiently straight,” Girsch said. “A lot of it is blocking and tackling — the stuff you should have been doing all along.”

The Northeast Corridor Commission, an organization that helps oversee the service, is in the process of developing a detailed 15-year plan for infrastructure improvements in the Northeast, which could be finalized by summer. But upgrading the Northeast Corridor to a world-class high-speed system capable of traveling over 200 miles an hour would likely be too expensive even with the added funding, because it would require huge amounts of real estate purchases and infrastructure work to straighten the many curves through southern New England, said Davis. And even more ambitious ideas that sometimes get tossed around by rail advocates — like a nationwide, coast-to-coast high-speed rail system — would require money well beyond what the White House has put forward.

“You’d need to add another zero” to the price tag, Davis said.

AMTRAK LOCOMOTIVES THROUGH THE YEARS CONTEST



- 1. F7
- 4. FL9 nose
- 7. P42 "Genesis"
- 10. E60 electric
- 13. ACS-64 electric "Cities Sprinter"

- 2. E8 locomotives
- 5. P32-8 "Pepsi can"
- 8. SDP40F
- 11. GG1 electric
- 14. ALC-42 Siemens "Charger"

- 3. First and only loco to get this Amtrak paint job--E8
- 6. AEM-7 electric "Mighty Mouse"
- 9. GP40TC
- 12. P30CH "Pooch"
- 15. F40 "The Locomotive that saved Amtrak"



Your name: _____