

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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CLUB OFFICERS

President.....	Jack Foley
Treasurer.....	Will Baker
Chief Engineer.....	Fred Lockhart
Directors.....	Bryan Miller ('22)
.....	Roger St. Peter ('21)
.....	Gary Mangelinkx ('21)

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ON THE COVER: Amtrak’s 50th birthday celebrations include P42 locomotives dressed in “Heritage” schemes and the newest ALC-42 locomotive decorated in Amtrak’s first scheme...only given to one E8 for the first day of Amtrak service in 1971. The SSMRC celebrated, too, with a cake!

FORM 19 ORDERS

MAY B.O.D. MEETING

Thursday, June 3rd 8 p.m.

JUNE BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, June 7th 8 p.m.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING & ELECTIONS

Monday, June 7th after monthly Business Meeting

JUNE NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Sunday, June 27th

JUNE B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, June 28th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

For the **June** Business Meeting we will have the drawing for the past four newsletter contests. We have had a new contest in each of the Jan-Apr issues, so you will have up to four chances of winning the drawing in June!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

It has been a little quieter this past month in the work area of the club. Nicer weather the last couple weeks, fewer Covid restrictions and some of us getting into our warm weather activities outside have taken away from the club. It is to be expected; however, as we all look forward to the summer after a long winter.

Progress: Al Munn has finished spiking down the track for the trolley on the new section and has moved into our staging room to continue spiking down track as far as the roadbed goes for now. Scenery members Savery Moore, Bryan Miller, Ed Carter and Dave Galbraith continue to work on the Cedar Hill, Steel mill and the Boston Division below Cedar Hill. Working at home, Mike Dolan has pretty much completed the two bridges for the flyover track on the new section; he sent Savery and I some pictures. It looks great, and a lot of kit bashing went into it because of the extreme skew to it, due to the curved approaches on both ends. Also at home, Dave Clinton is in the process of painting the Overland brass draw bridge that will span the



harbor entrance. Operation Chairman Paul Cutler III has marked out the locations for the Rapido uncouplers that will be used in the industrial area on the new section. Doug Buchanan has installed the necessary 120 volt receptacles that are needed to power the section.

Going Forward: Holes for the Rapido uncouplers will be drilled. Painting of the tracks needs to be done and then the section will be placed back down on the floor. As I probably mentioned in an earlier column, we will be placing the other section up on tables to be wired. Originally, I thought we would do it the old way because it is a lot simpler than the other section, but after I did the four Tortoise switch machines, I thought better of it and the section will go up on tables to be wired. When this section is wired we will reconnect the two sections, power it up and operate it to check for problems--it will be a lot easier to work on with 360 degree access.

Well that is it for this month. Your questions and comments are always welcome, so give me a shout if you have some.

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer

ELECTION INFO

I wasn't able to obtain a sample ballot, but here are the candidates and the positions for which they are running, courtesy Nominations Committee:

President-	Jack Foley
Vice-President-	Rich Herlihy
Treasurer-	Will Baker
Secretary-	Eric Mercer
Chief Engineer-	Fred Lockhart
Director-1 year	Bob England
Director-2 years	Gary Mangelinkx

If you aren't able to attend the Annual Meeting and want to vote, please request an Absentee Ballot from: jack@scituate.net and put "Election" in the subject line of the email. It must be mailed back in the provided envelope and arrive by 5 p.m., June 7.

SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

MAY 2016 (5 years ago)

★ Siemens "Cities Sprinter" electrics begin replacing 36-year-old AEM-7 "Mighty Mouse" locos.

- ★ Steamtown shops complete work on Baldwin 0-6-0 and rededication brings back steam operation at the site.
- ★ Grant awarded to extend Amtrak's *Ethan Allen Express* from Rutland to Burlington, VT.
- ★ Planned extension of Green Line from Lechmere in Cambridge to Somerville approved.
- ★ Former D&RGW 130-ft turntable in UP's Burnham Shops in Denver donated to the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL. Built in 1943, it was refurbished in 2013.
- ★ Western Maryland Scenic RR receives \$400,000 grant from State of Maryland to restore ex-C&O 2-6-6-2 #1309. Must be matched by donations to be received.

★
MAY 2011 (10 years ago)

- ★ Railroad crews making steady progress rebuilding tracks between Portland & Brunswick for extension of *Downeaster* service.
- ★ Model Railroading becomes #1 hobby in U.S. (sales), with plastics & die cast as second.
- ★ Richard Steinheimer, famous RR photographer dies at 81.
- ★ CT begins Phase 3 of high-speed New Haven-Springfield service.
- ★ RI receives \$28-million from Florida high-speed rail funds, cancelled by their governor.
- ★ Commuters on Franklin, Needham, Fairmount and Providence/Stoughton lines face reduced service, due to replacement of defective concrete ties from Rocia Concrete.
- ★ NJ unveils first ALP45-DP locomotive, its first dual-powered; also the first in North America and manufactured by Bombardier.
- ★ GE Transportation building \$96-million manufacturing plant in Fort Worth, TX.
- ★ RR Museum of Pennsylvania installs geothermal heating in its cavernous rolling stock hall.
- ★ U.S. Customs looking at possibility of establishing clearance for international rail passengers at Central Station in Montreal.
- ★ Track-laying almost complete in Cedar Hill Yard.(ssmrc)

MAY 2006 (15 years ago)

- ★ 20,000-sq.-ft. expansion of North Station begins.
- ★ "American Orient Express" changes name to "GrandLuxe Rail Journeys".
- ★ Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad Preservation Society formed to keep B&ML operating tourist trains.
- ★ UP and BNSF plan \$100-million expansion of their joint Powder River Basin coal track to three and four main lines in many areas.
- ★ Railpower introduces its first diesel road switcher, a 2,000 HP unit that can run on one, two or three engines, depending on the load demand.
- ★ Caterpillar buys Progress Rail Services, Inc., a supplier of remanufactured locomotives; they had recently bought EMD, also.
- ★ Utah's commemorative quarter released, depicting the Golden Spike Ceremony.
- ★ Conway Scenic rennumbers ex-QBT #21, a U23b, to its original L&N RR number: 2820. It was rebuilt for the L&N in 1975.
- ★ South Korea-based Rotem Co. builds new rail car manufacturing plant in Philadelphia; company is a subsidiary of Hyundai Automotive Group.

- ★ Jack Doyle joins SSMRC.

MAY 2001 (20 Years Ago)

- ★ Amtrak rebuilds AEM7 electrics to 7000 HP, from 5700 HP, as delivered.
- ★ Ray Evans dies, last of the four children brought up in the Willard Section House in Crawford Notch, NH.
- ★ Bombardier acquires Chrysler's subsidiary Adtranz.
- ★ Edaville RR sold for \$3-million to a group of investors called Cranrail Corp., which included Jack Flagg and Jon Delli Priscotti.
- ★ MBTA adds four round-trips to Worcester service, bringing to 10 daily RTs.
- ★ Providence T service also increased by four trains, to a new total of 11 RTs.
- ★ Athearn brings out "Genesis" Pacific steam loco.
- ★ Runaway 47-car CSX freight train travels 70 miles in Ohio, before being stopped. (Idea for movie "Unstoppable" produced 9 years later.
- ★ Guilford becomes an all-EMD railroad, with retirement of remaining GEs.
- ★ VIA Rail Canada places order for 21 P42DC "Genesis" locomotives with GE.
- ★ Jon Delli Priscotti loses control of Quincy Bay Terminal RR; MWRA awards contract to run railroad to Twin Rivers Technologies, one of its two large customers.
- ★ Lease of West Barnstable RR station awarded to Cape Cod Chapter NRHS, who plan on refurbishing building.

MAY 1996 (25 Years Ago)

- ★ Amtrak creates first "Cab-baggage" control unit out of retired F40 locomotive. Railfan term: "Cabbage car".
- ★ Tom Wylie joins SSMRC.
- ★ Bob England joins SSMRC.
- ★ Old Colony Middleboro and Plymouth lines delayed 9 months for installation of ATS equipment.
- ★ Marshfield resident Jack Flagg (later of Edaville's rebirth) proposes a RR "park" in Marshfield business section. (Settled for Peter Palica's caboose!)

MAY 1991 (30 Years Ago)

- ★ Amtrak's 20th anniversary
- ★ "Colorful" and active member Bob Persson dies suddenly at age 53.
- ★ Amtrak leaves Grand Central Terminal, consolidating all NYC service at Penn Station.
- ★ Governor Weld signs \$5-billion transportation spending package, which includes money for restoration of all three Old Colony Lines.
- ★ Amtrak orders 140 "Superliner IIs" from Bombardier.
- ★ Fore River RR \$16 offered "free" to the City of Quincy by Fore River Shipyard contractor.
- ★ Hingham voters approve use of Building 51 by SSMRC.

MAY 1986 (35 Years Ago)

- ★ SSMRC "Traveling Railway" exhibited for one week at Hanover Mall.
- ★ ECL "Car Card" system introduced, complete with waybill pockets.
- ★ Strike by M.O.W. workers against Guilford threatens to spread across the country.
- ★ Amtrak cancels *Montrealer*, due to poor trackwork north of Springfield, MA; owned by Guilford.
- ★ "Citizens Advisory Board" meets for first time to discuss Old Colony restoration.

- “Minuteman ’86 NMRA Convention” held in Boston, including display of prototype RR equipment in Braintree yard for a week. Volunteer guides help included ye Ed.
- Hingham residents form group called “S.T.O.P.” to derail Old Colony restoration through town.

MAY 1981 (40 Years Ago)

- Portable Layout travels to North Conway Model RR Club show at the “Red Jacket Hotel” in North Conway.
- Operation Night best ever, with 25 members taking part. Operations Chairman John Governor conducts first “critique” session afterwards.
- Terminal point of “Southern Division” named “Cedar Hill”.
- Two NMRA officers visit SSMRC to determine if we would be a visit destination, if Boston awarded 1986 NMRA Convention; in competition with Toronto.

POTPOURRI

WITH A GOAL OF REDUCING greenhouse gas emissions 26% by the end of the decade, Union Pacific is working to improve locomotive fuel efficiency, plans to roll out battery-electric locomotives soon, and is exploring alternatives to the diesel-electric. “We do not plan on buying any new locomotives — unless it’s battery-electric locomotives for testing out that concept, in which case I think we will be on top of that in the very near future,” CEO Lance Fritz said during an investor day presentation recently. UP plans to introduce battery-electric switching locomotives — first in California and then in yards and local operations across the system — and is working with Wabtec and Progress Rail on road locomotives that will reduce emissions. (TN)



WABTEC’S FLXdrive battery-electric locomotive has been named a winner of Fast Company magazine’s World Changing Ideas for 2021 in the transportation category. The locomotive, which recently concluded more than 13,000 miles of testing in Southern California, uses more than 18,000 battery cells and works with conventional diesel locomotives to create a hybrid. (TN)



THE STATE OF WASHINGTON has opened a former Milwaukee Road trestle in Central Washington State for use as trail crossing across Interstate 90, bringing new life to a structure that



had been idle since the railroad shut down the Pacific Extension in 1980. The Renslow Trestle, located about 6 miles east of Kittitas, Wash., was opened to foot, cycle, and horse traffic on April 29 as part of the Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail. Its opening for trail use came after an \$800,000 conversion that included addition of a concrete deck and railings to the 680-foot structure built in the early 1900s. (TN)



ON THE DAY THAT MARKS the 50th anniversary of its launch, and the day after an event marking that anniversary that featured President Joe Biden, Amtrak is reiterating its desire to add up to 160 communities to its network through an expansion of routes and train frequencies over the next 15 years. At the April 30th event at Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station, Amtrak CEO Bill Flynn said the expansion plan would ensure 47 of the nation’s 50 largest cities would have Amtrak service, while also increasing service in more than half the 50 states. “America needs a rail network that offers frequent,



reliable, sustainable and equitable train service. Amtrak has the vision and expertise to deliver it, now we need Congress to provide the funding for the next 50 years,” Flynn

said. With Amtrak’s ‘Midnight Blue’ anniversary locomotive in the background, President Joe Biden spoke at the Friday event at Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station.

Biden, as part of a speech touting his larger \$2.3 billion infrastructure plan, called for support of the plan: “Today we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to position Amtrak, and rail, and intercity rail ... to play a central role in our transformation of transportation and economic future.” (TN)



CSX TRANSPORTATION will gradually rebuild Pan Am Railways’ slow main line track, pare its aging locomotive roster, and extend positive train control over the full route of Amtrak’s *Downeaster* service that links Boston and Maine. CSX detailed its plans for the New England regional in a more detailed merger application filed in late April with the Surface Transportation Board. Last month, federal regulators ordered CSX to submit the more detailed plan when it determined the proposed merger was a “significant” transaction that requires a more thorough review than the

“minor” deal CSX had sought. Over five years, CSX will rebuild Pan Am Railways’ 10-mph main lines to 25-mph standards. Outside of areas where Pan Am hosts Amtrak or Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority commuter trains, much of its track — particularly in Maine — is limited to 10 mph. The railroad also will beef up a section of track along a Massachusetts reservoir to FRA Class 3 standards, which will permit 40 mph operation in an area where state officials had raised water quality safety concerns. CSX also said it would improve Pan Am yard trackage, which should reduce derailments and improve yard fluidity. It did not put a price tag on the track improvements. (TN)

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THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA and Norfolk Southern (NS) have reached a \$257.2 million agreement that will increase existing Amtrak service to Roanoke and expand service to the New River Valley. The agreement, known as the Western Rail Initiative, calls for:

- One additional round-trip train to Roanoke in 2022. It will depart Washington, D.C., in the morning and also serve Alexandria, Burke, Manassas, Culpeper, Charlottesville and Lynchburg. The service will complement existing Amtrak Northeast Corridor service that travels northbound from Roanoke in the morning and returns in the afternoon.
- An extension of Northeast Corridor service from Roanoke to Christiansburg in southwest Virginia’s New River Valley, upon completion of infrastructure improvements in 2025. It will mark the first time since 1979 that the area will have rail service, which is expected to add approximately 80,000 new riders in the first year. (RA)

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NORFOLK & WESTERN CLASS J 4-8-4 No. 611 will again return to Pennsylvania’s Strasburg Rail Road for excursions and other special events, the Virginia Museum of Transportation and Strasburg have announced. The Strasburg visit will begin later this month and continue through October 2021.



Events will include opportunities to ride behind the locomotive on the Strasburg; cab rides; and opportunities to operate, fire, and maintain the engine. Photo and educational sessions and shop tours are among other events on tap.

“Since its restoration, the Virginia Museum of Transportation (VMT) has sought opportunities for 611 to engage people from all walks of life,” Brian Barton, VMT board member, said. “The partnership with the Strasburg Rail Road allows us to spark a fascination with steam locomotives and transportation, our history, steam technology, mechanical engineering, and design.” (TN)

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FOLLOWING A NEARLY TWO-YEAR renovation, Union Pacific Big Boy 4-8-8-4 locomotive No. 4012 has been returned to public display at Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton. During a several-hour procedure on Wednesday, the locomotive and tender were moved from a location outside the park’s paint shop, spun separately on the turntable, reunited, and moved to display at the park’s entrance. There, the engine’s articulation is showcased because it is parked on a section of curved track. The 132-foot-long locomotive and tender were handled individually, because together they exceeded the 90-foot length of Steamtown’s turntable. The engine is one of 25 of a unique class built for the Union Pacific Railroad between 1941 and 1944. They were used primarily in Wyoming and Utah to handle wartime freight demands on UP’s self-described “strategic middle route” main line between east and west. Cost of the contract was \$1,598,592.



The work involved replacement of rusted parts, remediation of hazardous materials, and a complete paint job that followed UP specifications. Discreet solar panels were mounted atop the engine and tender to power a timer-controlled illumination of the headlight, number boards, and marker lights. (TN)

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NEW HAMPSHIRE OFFICIALS have approved a 20-year, \$1.2 million loan for the Mount Washington Cog Railway, allowing the long-running tourist attraction to upgrade its right-of-way. The New Hampshire Union Leader reports the railway will replace its current 25-pound rail, dating to 1874,

with 100-pound rail, allowing the replacement of wooden side pieces that are prone to failure. Railway president Wayne Presby wrote in a report to the state Department of Transportation that the project “will result in a smoother ride, lower future track maintenance and a significant reduction in damage to rolling stock, thus reducing maintenance costs substantially.” The work could be completed by the end of September. (TN)

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THREE MEMBERS of the Massachusetts congressional delegation have reintroduced a bill which would authorize \$5 billion a year for five years for passenger rail projects serving unconnected or underconnected communities. Sens. Edward J. Markey and Elizabeth Warren and Congressman James P. McGovern, all Democrats, have introduced the bill with the unwieldy name of the Building Rail Across Intercity Networks to Ride Around Interior of the Nation (or BRAIN TRAIN) Act. In addition to considering underserved communities, the bill would instruct the U.S. Department of Transportation to award those funds based on estimated levels of ridership, increased on-time performance, reduced trip time, or additional frequency, as well as anticipated favorable impact on air or traffic congestion and safety. It also requires that preference goes to projects improving connections between multiple modes of transportation, improve rail operations, and have a positive environmental impact, among other criteria. “Passenger rail is an essential ingredient for a healthy economy, a healthy environment, and a healthy workforce,” Markey said. “As we now flesh out the details and put together a comprehensive infrastructure package, we must ensure that we are building a passenger rail system that works for not just the megacities, but also for our Gateway Cities and the smaller communities too often left behind by the modern economy.” (TN)

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EVERY NOW AND THEN, it seems, one of the long-debated MBTA expansion projects resurfaces and captures the public’s attention for a brief period before quickly receding into the annals of ideas gone by. That has been the lifecycle of the Red-Blue connector — the on-again, off-again idea to extend the Blue Line a short distance down Cambridge Street to the Charles/MGH Red Line Station, finally linking the only two subway lines that don’t currently connect. Now, as Massachusetts General Hospital prepares a massive expansion of its nearby campus, the Red-Blue connector is getting another turn in the spotlight. But this time,

the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority seems serious enough about the idea to have held about a dozen meetings with MGH, poring over detailed engineering plans and snazzy renderings as they consider how the two projects would coexist. As part of its \$1.9 billion expansion, MGH last month unveiled a proposal to set aside space for an entrance to a new underground Blue Line station in one of two towers it wants to build along Cambridge Street. Plans seem far along, containing such details as where elevators and escalators would be located, how to separate transit and hospital facilities, and where to build an underground wall that will later get knocked down to provide access to the future Blue Line station.

“There’s more than just the agreement on the concept of doing it,” said Nicholas Haney, project manager for planning and construction at MGH. “There are a lot of details we had to take into consideration. ... We didn’t want to say yes to something, and then not be able to build it in the future. We had to figure out a lot of it out now.” To be sure, this commitment from MGH does not ensure the Blue Line extension will happen. The hospital’s plans are limited to building an area to access the Blue Line station — not the station itself, or the tunneling and rail construction under Cambridge Street. In some ways, the conversations seem less focused on facilitating the Red-Blue connector, and more about ensuring the hospital expansion won’t block the transit project in the future. (BG)

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THE WHEELS DON’T FIT THE TRACKS on Honolulu’s beleaguered commuter rail project. The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Friday that the wheels of the train cars are too narrow for some sections of track that have already been laid on Oahu, and replacing them would make the cars too heavy. The wheels are about a half-inch too narrow to traverse the rail line’s “frogs,” where tracks cross, said Lori Kahikina, interim CEO and executive director of the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation. “One solution that is being contemplated right now is maybe changing the wheels on all of the cars,” Kahikina said. “It’s a faster solution and a cheaper solution, but one drawback to changing the wheels is that you’re adding weight to the cars, and so they’re going to go over the threshold.” Kahikina said other weight would have to be trimmed from the cars. Replacing the tracks would hold up completion by at least a year on a project that has already been delayed several times and is massively over budget. The project is now expected to cost \$12.4 billion and

won't be completed until at least March 2031. Officials are facing a \$3.6 billion shortfall. Construction began about a decade ago when the 20-mile line was estimated to cost \$5.1 billion. The frogs have had other problems including subpar welding and sandblasting that created cracks. (AP)

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THE MBTA IS MOVING TO LOWER fines for fare evasion, although some members of the Fiscal and Management Control Board, which oversees the agency, aren't sure the MBTA is going far enough. The agency — which has current fines of \$100 for a first offense, \$200 for a second, and \$600 for a third — would decriminalize the penalty and reduce the fines to \$50 for each of the first three offenses and \$100 thereafter, in response to a law passed earlier this year that allows it to set its own fines. But some board members indicated they would like to see fines as low as \$10. The change is in advance of MBTA plans to switch to an honor system of fare collection to be backed up by hiring of inspectors who would conduct spot checks to encourage compliance. (TN)

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EQUIPMENT FROM EMD'S long-time La Grange, Ill., manufacturing plant will be sold in a four-day auction beginning this month. Perfection Industrial Sales, which is conducting the sale, calls it an "unprecedented opportunity" featuring a complete machine shop and welding department, pools, paint equipment, and many other items. The plant — usually referred to as being in La Grange, Ill., but with a McCook, Ill., address, dates to 1937. Progress Rail, which uses its Muncie, Ind., plant as the primary locomotive construction site, ended the last manufacturing at La Grange at the end of March. Engineering and administrative offices in La Grange remain open. (TN)

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THE BATTLE FOR KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN appears to be over. KCS on has accepted Canadian National's \$33.6 billion bid to create the first railroad linking Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. KCS said it would break the \$29 billion merger agreement it reached in March with Canadian Pacific in favor of CN's "superior offer." (TN)

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THE HOUSE COMMITTEE on Transportation and Infrastructure has asked the head of the U.S. Government Accountability Office to investigate the impact of Precision Scheduled Railroading on shippers, Amtrak and commuter railroads, employees and others. In a letter earlier this week from committee chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) and Donald Payne Jr. (D-N.J.), chairman of the

Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, asked Comptroller General Gene Dodaro to, "at a minimum," investigate 10 aspects of the impact of PSR. These include the safety and service impacts of longer trains, and of reduced workforces; elimination or downsizing of yards and maintenance facilities; changes in dispatching practices; on-time performance of passenger trains; quality, availability and reliability of service to shippers; and increases in demurrage or other charges. "Longer trains, unhappy shippers, and a workforce pushed to do more with less is not a model to chase after — unless you're on Wall Street," DeFazio said. "But we can't let hedge fund managers write the rules of railroading." (TN)

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THE MBTA WILL KEEP NEW SUBWAY CARS out of service as it investigates an abnormality with the trucks in the new equipment. The cars, built in Massachusetts by an affiliate of China's CRRC, have been sidelined since a March 16 derailment. MBTA Deputy General Manager Jeff Gonville said tests on the cars have found that as their mileage increases, it takes increasing force to turn the truck frames, and that investigators are looking at a component known as a side bearer pad, which regulates rotational force on the truck. Four six-car trainsets on the Orange Line and one on the Red Line, the first cars of a CRRC order that will eventually total 402, have been withheld from service since an Orange Line train derailed at the Wellington station in Medford, Mass. (TN) See next story.-Ed.

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WHEN ONE OF THE FEW NEW MBTA trains to have graced the Orange Line derailed in March and disrupted subway service for weeks, transit officials at first suggested it was unlikely the problem was caused by the vehicles themselves. And since the derailment occurred along a section of track that was undergoing repairs, it seemed likely at the time that the culprit would be aging rails or a faulty switch, not brand-new train cars. Still, as a precaution, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority pulled all the new subway cars from service — four trainsets from the Orange Line and one from the Red Line — while investigating. The caution, it turned out, was warranted. Following a series of tests, the MBTA last week revealed that the undersides of the new trains are not turning properly as they accumulate more miles — an effect that officials now say played a key role in the March 16 derailment. The episode marks the latest setback in the troubled rollout of the new trains. The MBTA has a nearly \$1 billion contract with a

Chinese rail manufacturer to build 404 cars to replace the entire fleet of aging Red and Orange line trains. But repeated delays, including stoppages during the early days of the pandemic, have put the project well behind schedule. Only a few trains have so far carried passengers, and briefly at that, as technical problems have forced them out of service — sometimes for weeks on end. The latest issue centers on a part that few riders will ever see, called a side bearer pad. It's a thin strip of synthetic, resin-like material, about a foot long and five inches wide, wedged between the heavy machinery of the vehicles' trucks, which carry the wheels, and the bolsters, which connect the trucks to the cars' bodies. Each train consists of six railcars, and each car has four of these pads. They are designed to create a certain degree of friction — not so much that the truck struggles to move, but enough to create some resistance and prevent fast-moving cars from losing control. The pads, however, appear to be wearing far faster than expected, creating more resistance to turning than they should. The friction is roughly double compared to when the cars were first introduced, making it more difficult to navigate track, Gonville said. "There's a fine balance between what is an acceptable level of resistance to moving," he said. "There's a certain amount of force or energy . . . to put on the truck frame and the wheels, to have those wheels turn. If the resistance to that is higher than it should be, then you will climb up over the rails, which is what we had here." (RA)

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AMTRAK IS OVERHAULING 12 CTDOT P40DCs

for use on Connecticut's CTrail and Shoreline East services. First to return from Beech Grove is #6711 painted into CTrail's "Diet Coke" scheme, seen in CSX's W. Springfield yard on March 7th. (RPN)



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AMTRAK HAS ANNOUNCED that rail service to Vermont will be re-instated on July 19th; the *Vermont* to St. Albans and the *Ethan Allen* to Rutland. ☺

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MAINE LEGISLATORS ARE CONSIDERING two bills to study expanded passenger rail service in the state, while some residents would like to see state-owned rail corridors used for recreational trails. Currently, Maine's only rail service, the Downeaster

to Boston, terminates at Brunswick. Sponsors hope to have 90% of the state's residents live within an hour of rail service. One of the two bills would study an extension about 20 miles northwest to Lewiston and Auburn; the other would provide analysis of an extension about 110 miles north and east to Augusta and Bangor. Lines exist on both routes but would require upgrades and the construction of stations and platforms. "We have a secretary of transportation who is very enthusiastic about rail, and we have a lot of resources going to state and local government," state Sen. Joe Baldacci (D-Penobscot) said during a Tuesday hearing. "We really have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make this happen." The state purchased some 200 miles of rail corridors in 1989, but most are inactive, and in addition to the passenger studies, the legislature's transportation committee is also considering bills that would promote use of the rail corridors for other purposes. (TN)

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CSX TRANSPORTATION HAS REPAINTED one

of its executive fleet F40PH locomotives in a paint scheme inspired by predecessor Baltimore & Ohio. The city of Baltimore chartered the railroad on Feb. 28, 1827, to build west to a suitable point on the Ohio River. Ground was broken on July 4, 1828, at Carrollton, Md. By 1929 the railroad operated 5,658 miles of track and had 2,364 locomotives. In the 1970s the B&O became part of Chessie System and in the 1980s it became part of CSX. (TN) Looks nice on an F40!-Ed.

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THE HOOSIER VALLEY RAILROAD Museum will add two rare EMD BL2 locomotives to its collection through a lease with the engines' private owner. The two locomotives, built in 1949 for Maine's Bangor & Aroostook Railroad, previously operated on New York's Saratoga & North Creek Railway. Only 59 of the locomotives were built, seven of which have been preserved. They are currently

painted in a blue, gray, and yellow scheme somewhat reminiscent of the Delaware & Hudson. BL2s have ties to Indiana, as the Monon operated the second-largest fleet of the 1,500-hp units. "There has been a great deal of speculation online about these locomotives," Kyle Flanigan, Hoosier Valley museum secretary, said. "At this time, we have no plans to repaint them. Railfans will get the



opportunity to photograph the units in their current paint scheme." The locomotives are on route from New York to North Judson on their own wheels. They will join the museum's existing fleet of switchers for use on tourist trains, but both will need work from the museum's mechanical department before entering service. (TN)

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

TRAINS

Restarting a Legend
East Broad Top RR

Wiscasset in Winter

Brian Solomon Commentary
Amtrak at 50! (page 14)

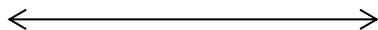
Bill Stephens Commentary
A Noble Calling—Ron Batory of FRA

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN
Mid-Century on the Boston & Albany
Collector Consist

Amtrak's Iconic F40PH
Modeling New England-Style Barns

Diverging Points
Passenger Operations: 1

MODEL RAILROADER
With a Little Help from Their Friends
Canadian Canyon Action in a Small Space
Trains of Thought
Lighting Surprises, Good or Bad



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

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. Next month's newsletter is our "Summer Issue", which will carry us through August. If you have plans on traveling by train, we'd love to include in the issue. It's been a very "dry" season for enjoying rides on trains and, hopefully things will get better and more comfortable in the coming months.
2. I hope that everyone has a happy and safe Memorial Day long-weekend. Hope also to see you at the Annual Business Meeting.

"As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you."
(Isaiah 66:13)

MEMBER NEWS

Stan Rydell is recovering from his fall and is in the "Rose Court" rehab center (separate building) at Linden Ponds Senior Living Community in Hingham. Visitors are welcome and the mid-afternoon is best. Entrance is off Rte 53, south of the Weymouth/Hingham line.

Bill Garvey is at the South Shore Rehab Center at 115 North Ave. in Rockland. Phone is 781-878-3308, if you'd like to visit him. Please call in advance. He loves short visits from old friends. We miss you, Bill!

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

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

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

- Al Munn..... June 7th
- Matt Sisk June 10th
- Mike Dolan June 11th
- Dave Clinton..... June 13th
- Rich Herlihy..... June 14th
- Savery Moore..... June 20th



Meanwhile, I've heard from these folks on

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Al Taylor: "I just added sound decoders to four earlier Genesis F-Units (Soundtraxx)."



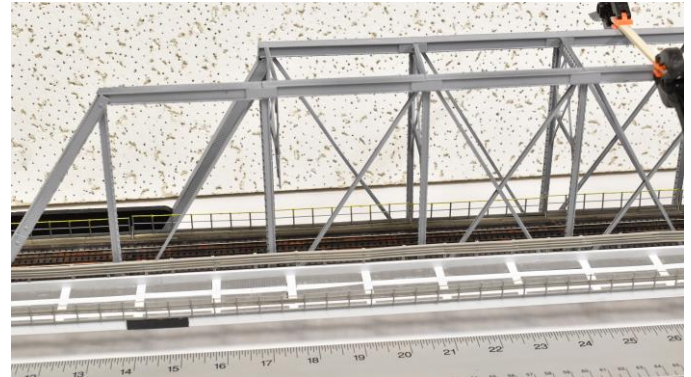
Peter Palica: "I am forwarding some photos of my completed 3D-printed Woolworth Building in Z scale. I know a lot of members have stopped by to watch my progress on this 25.75" New York City architectural masterpiece that was at one time the tallest building in the world."



Ron Clough: "Finally got the mower at the club running thanks to Peter Palica helping me switch around the mower and snow blower. The 9-year-old mower needed a new battery (which I've procured and installed) and a couple of other maintenance items. I've spent some time, as much as I can afford, trying to keep the outside of the club looking somewhat presentable. More will be done soon. Other things in my life have also kept me busy between trying to keep both my own home and Mom's home also presentable. It is a nice time of the year to get outside and working on both my property and her property and seeing all the new plants springing out of the ground is very relaxing to my mind. And as usual, as Publication Manager for the BSRA, I've been busy keeping book orders filled and shipped. We have noticed a healthy up-tick in orders, especially through our "on line store".

Roger St. Peter: "I'm heading for a golfing trip early Saturday. This will be my first vacation in two years; a short trip but looking forward to getting away!"

Fred Lockhart: "We're still working on the new section and Mike is working on the skewed bridge. Here are some pictures of its progress."



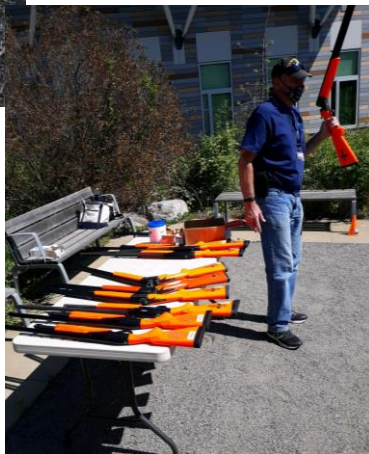
Bob Farrenkopf: "I'm building a new garden RR that will be much smaller than the one I just dismantled and sold."





Gunny: "This month was turkey hunting season in NH. I went hunting about 4-5 times and did not get a Turkey. I was in Northern NH and did not see many wild turkeys. I have taught about 6 or so Hunter safety Hunters Classes. I really enjoy sharing my knowledge on Firearms handling and loading and unloading

firearms in a safe manner. It is rewarding when the students thank us for our time we spend teaching, as they know we are volunteering our time. I also enjoy working as a Range Safety Officer, as it lets me work with different police departments and interact with them as most are veteran officers and a lot are going through the police academy. That's about it, all-in-all it has been a busy month and as hunting season closes, fishing season opens up."



Al Munn: Working on installing the trolley turn-around (loop) at "the beach" on the new section.



Ed Carter: Continuing his scenery work and spruce-up of the Steel Mill area.



Paul Cutler III: Installing wooden crossings for the tracks in Highland Oaks. Also installed operating "ditch lights" in two of the recently-released Maine Eastern FL9s from Rapido.



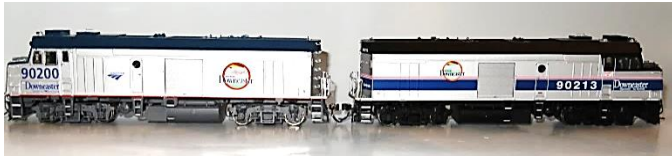
Kurt Kramke: "I have finished most of the trackwork except for the sidings. I still have some ground throws to install and then I need to build the coaling tower by Tichy, which I got for a really good price."



Bob Knapp: "still busy--getting the camper ready for the season. New to travel trailers and had to learn all the tricks to holding tanks, water heater gas and electric same as fridge. Wired van for 7-pin connector and set up electric brakes. Figured it all out and works great. Finished a few jobs; Milton came out nice. Now off to Cohasset condo renovation."



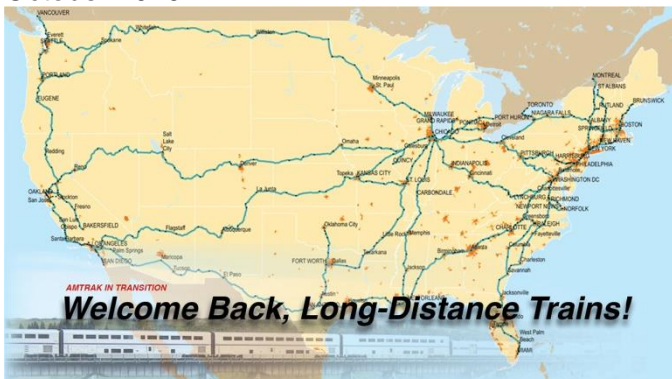
Ye Ed: My project has been making the “Phase II” of the *Downeaster’s* “Cabbage Car” scheme. So, I had custom decals made by HighRail, which included a 5-ft “Downeaster” logo for the side of the Cabbage. I’m pleased with the result, seen on the left; original scheme on the right.



RUNNING EXTRA

We are getting our daily trains back!

(By David Peter Alan, [Railway Age](#) 5/1/21) Congress spoke, delivering funding for Amtrak to restore the long-distance trains that had been cut to tri-weekly service to daily operation. That’s great news, at least for now. Amtrak has also assured us that it does not plan to cut service again when the current fiscal year concludes at the end of September and has started the process of recalling the roughly 1,250 employees who were furloughed when the cuts were implemented in October 2020.



Amtrak spokesperson Marc Magliari told me: “We are selling tickets normally, which means you can book travel into early 2022. We have no plans at this time to revert to less-than-daily on these routes. As you know, we are subject to annual appropriations and Congress can direct us, as can our Board of Directors.” He is right in a very important respect. It’s up to Congress to support Amtrak with enough money to keep running the trains every day. It is also up to the riding public to keep riding, and to the riders’ advocates to keep pushing for an improved, and even an expanded, Amtrak National Network. Last year, the House passed HR-7616, a comprehensive COVID-19 relief package that included enough funding for Amtrak to keep running all its daily long-distance trains. The Republican-controlled Senate wanted nothing to do with the overall package, even though Amtrak would have gotten only a tiny portion of it. Republican Senators unanimously voted against the bill, but it passed 50-49, with no need for Vice President Harris to break a tie. By now, anyone who is even mildly concerned about politics knows that the bill squeaked

through the Senate because it was a budget reconciliation bill, which can pass with a bare majority. Whether we like it or not (and polls show that many Americans don’t), the threat of a filibuster can enforce a Senate custom that requires 60 votes to pass almost anything else. Practically all Democrats support Amtrak (many are from the Northeast, where Amtrak is strong), including the fiscally-conservative “Blue Dog” Democrats, and a few Republicans have typically voted for Amtrak funding. Many advocates have called the magnitude of the Amtrak line in the federal budget “a rounding error” (it is less than 0.1%, or precisely 895 parts per million), and they have repeatedly pointed out to Congress that Amtrak trains benefit the residents and the economies of the cities and towns those trains serve. Amtrak’s trains are indeed popular around the country, often more so than in the halls of government.

The point of this discussion is that a future bill that would require daily operation must be a self-contained, stand-alone bill. That means nothing about highways, nothing about transit, nothing about health care, nothing about defense—really, nothing about *anything* else. Congress must avoid the temptation to tack unrelated provisions onto legislation that should pertain only to Amtrak.

“America’s Railroad” enjoys unanimous support from Democrats, most visibly President Biden, but also from a few Republicans, so it should be possible to keep all of Amtrak (including state-supported trains and corridors, and the NEC and its branches) going on a permanent basis, at least as long as unrelated provisions don’t impart confusion to an Amtrak bill. What should a useful Amtrak bill contain? First, it must include a clear and unequivocal requirement that Amtrak operate *all* long-distance trains *every day*, and it must also authorize funding that would enable Amtrak to perform that specific directive. Second, it must mandate accounting practices that would make it clear how much Amtrak needs to spend to operate the trains in question. Third, Congress must repeal 49 U.S.C. §24102(7)(C), which froze the long-distance network where it stood in 2008. Fourth, Amtrak must be required to recruit Board and senior management people experienced in passenger railroading. The need for statutory reform is pressing.

Amtrak is part of the public sector, since the U.S. Department of Transportation owns all of Amtrak’s voting shares, which under Amtrak’s unusual statutory charter are preferred shares. Accordingly, it is reasonable to hold Amtrak to transparency requirements that comport with other public-sector entities that also provide transportation to the public. If Amtrak’s national network is to grow, in response to future increased demand for service, Congress must make a change. The current definition of the National Network (at 49 U.S.C. §24102(7)(C)) is so restrictive that there is, literally, no room for growth. It limits the network to “long-distance routes of more than 750 miles between endpoints operated by Amtrak as of the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) of 2008.” Any other route longer than 750 miles, no matter where it might run, is not part of the National Network. That would even include routes that were part of the Amtrak network in 1971, but were discontinued later. If Amtrak’s National Network will ever have a chance to grow and develop, Congress must remove that limitation on the size of the National Network. That includes the 750-mile limitation, as well as the straight-jacket that does not allow the network to expand beyond its size of 13 years ago.

Finally, Congress should require that members of the Board of Directors and senior managers at Amtrak be familiar with passenger railroading. That concept speaks for itself and

should be obvious. Nobody represents Amtrak's riders on the Board, either. Congress can change that, and for the sake of the riding public, it should.

With the long-distance trains returning to daily operation in time for Memorial Day, or shortly thereafter, it is time to think about restoring Amtrak in its entirety. It is also time for Congress to think about expanding the nation's passenger rail network generally, for which Amtrak is now strongly pushing, bolstered by President Biden's ambitious plans to "Build Back Better."

It is great that daily service is coming back on most of our long-distance Amtrak trains. It's time for Congress to get busy, to start looking toward a better future for Amtrak and its riders. It's time for those riders and the advocates to push for that future. I know that Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg will help. Time will tell, hopefully soon. *(David Peter Alan is one of America's most experienced transit users and advocates, having ridden every rail transit line in the U.S., and most Canadian systems.)*

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Amtrak at 50!

Looking back at America's long-distance
passenger railroad



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Amtrak has reached its 50th birthday. This is a mighty accomplishment, and one deserving of consideration. Despite the paradoxical conditions of its creation, Amtrak has not only survived decades longer than most observers expected, but it is now among the oldest active big names in American railroading.

Born of political wrangling, the National Railroad Passenger Corp. was created by Congress as the most acceptable solution to the spiraling decline of passenger railroading.

Amtrak's founding legislation was authorized by the Senate in June 1970, and signed by President Nixon that October. This Cold-War-era political creation couldn't reconcile the collective effects of massive public subsidies for roads and airports on the largely privately conceived, owned, and operated railroad network. Politicians, planners, and the public seemed unable to distinguish between the railroad as a mode

of transportation and the once all-powerful companies that ran railroads. By 1970, the legacy of 19th-century railroad domination of American transport was a hollow specter that still haunted the public imagination. And yet, the prospect of a national railroad or federally operated passenger trains seemed unacceptable to the nation leading the international philosophical battle to stem the spread of communism. The disparities in American transport subsidies have yet to be reconciled.

Amtrak at birth was a quasi-public corporation, but neither capable of sustaining itself through ticket revenue alone, nor designed as a national governmental agency. This situation caused uncontrollable spasms in the writing hands of its philosophical foes. Yet, it was balanced by a cleverly designed route structure — largely based on historic lines of its operational antecedents — that has had more to do with sustaining political support than providing ideal long-distance passenger rail

**THE DISPARITIES
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RECONCILED.**



In the mid-1990s and early 2000s, Amtrak dabbled in moving freight and packages on its long-distance trains as a means of achieving self-sufficiency. On a November 1998 morning, Amtrak No. 40, the *Three Rivers*, works east from Chicago at Lilly, Pa. Two photos, Brian Solomon



In 1991, on its crossing of Southern Pacific's Donner Pass, Amtrak's *California Zephyr* negotiated the narrow ledge between two chasms known as Smart Ridge, at Emigrant Gap, Calif. Surveyed in the 1860s, this 150-year-old main line runs parallel to Interstate 80.

transportation. Amtrak has been criticized by passenger-train advocates for its inadequacies, by enthusiast train riders for its lack of character, and by its political foes for simply continuing to exist, and yet the national cognitive dissonance that demanded its creation and produced its incongruous structure has resulted in one of America's most enduring railroad institutions.

Amtrak outlived Penn Central, the ill-conceived, poorly planned, doomed private behemoth, whose financial woes were key to Amtrak's creation in the first place. Amtrak has also outlived most Class I carriers operating in 1971, including most of the 17 roads that conveyed their long-distance trains to the new carrier on May 1 that year. Amtrak has outlived the locomotive business of both General Motors and General Electric, and survived both the Budd Co. and Pullman, which had supplied the bulk of America's passenger cars in the 20th century.

I am just old enough to recall traveling by train before Amtrak, yet, I recognize that today there are generations of Americans for whom Amtrak has been the primary means to experience American intercity rail travel. As a patron of railroad services, I have spent more money on Amtrak tickets than on any other railroad. By and large, I've enjoyed my travels on Amtrak, which have spanned much of its far-flung system from New England to Florida, and from the West Coast to the East. Although punctuality outside its major corridors has been spotty, I've found that Amtrak meets my expectations. Its trains are

comfortable, safe, and offer views of the American landscape like no others. My many friends in Amtrak's ranks have given me enormous respect for Amtrak's people as professional railroaders.

For so much of its half-century, Amtrak has faced public uncertainty and scathing scrutiny, and yet it has survived despite its naysayers, its critics, and those aiming to improve it. For better and for worse, Amtrak continues to represent the model of American passenger railroading. Observers who thought Amtrak couldn't survive for five years, let alone 50, must be astounded. Do you think Amtrak will persevere for another 50?

Having traveled widely by rail outside the United States, I can imagine alternatives to today's Amtrak. Alternatives where trains would run frequently on interval timetables, on faster schedules, on routes designed to serve and facilitate modern travel. Yet, these alternatives require something that Amtrak has never been afforded: adequate funding for growth, combined with the ability to apply money in ways that will provide the best possible service without the gold-plated inflation that too often plagues public works. Funding that will do more than just supply infrastructure, but also provide world-class operations that go beyond the legacy constraints of America's largely 19th-century railroad route structure. **I**



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