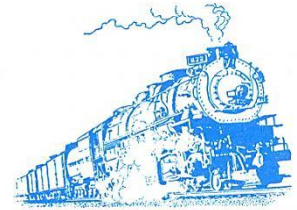


The Semaphore

South Shore Model Railway Club

NEWSLETTER

Home of the "East Coast Lines" since 1938



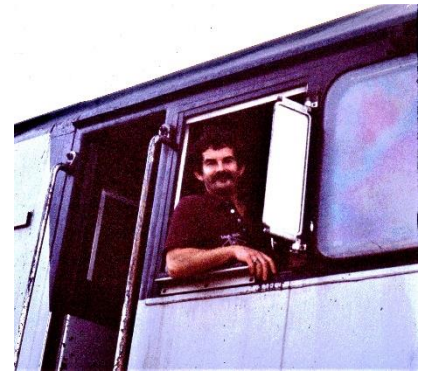
DECEMBER 18, 2023 ■■■■■■■■■■ VOLUME 43 ■■■■■■■■■■ NUMBER 12



BEST WISHES FROM YOUR EDITORS FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Southeastern Massachusetts.....	Paul Cutler, Jr.
“The Operator”	Paul Cutler III
Boston <u>Globe</u>	Paul Bonanno
Western Massachusetts.....	Ron Clough
“The Chief’s Corner”.....	Fred Lockhart
“Behind the Scenes”.....	Savery Moore
Mid-Atlantic News.....	Doug Buchanan

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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. ©2023
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VOLUME 43 ■■■■■ NUMBER 12 ■■■■■ DECEMBER 2023

CLUB OFFICERS

President.....	Jack Foley
Vice President.....	Ed Bulman
Treasurer.....	Will Baker
Secretary.....	Bryan Miller
Chief Engineer.....	Fred Lockhart
Directors.....	David Galbraith ('24)
	Bob England ('24)
	Roger St. Peter ('25)
	Gary Mangelinkx ('25)

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ON THE COVER: Watercolor painting by railroad artist Gil Bennett titled “Puritan Christmas”. The New Haven’s “Puritan” from New York to Boston in the early years of WWII, pulled by Alco DL-109 #0716. Shown at Madison, Conn. could easily pass for the “flats” south of Sharon, Mass.

FORM 19 ORDERS

DECEMBER B.O.D. MEETING

Thursday, January 4th 8 p.m.

JANUARY BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, January 8th 8 p.m.

DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, January 11th

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Sunday, January 21st

TROLLEY COMMITTEE MEETING

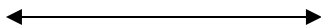
Monday, January 22nd 8 p.m.

JANUARY B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, January 29th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

Congratulations to **Donnie Pierce** on winning this month's "50/50" drawing (again)!



For January, we will have our annual, traditional "Calendar Contest", where those who enter the contest also supply a train calendar for the contest drawing...and everyone who entered the contest goes home with a train calendar...a "win-win" time! (When you put your contest in my mailbox, please also put your name on the calendar you are donating. If the calendar won't fit in the mailbox, please place it on the table behind the candy counter.)

Here are a few "clues", as you will find some of the wheel arrangements in this contest from Al Taylor (3/20/17--one of the last he made) were not in the November contest:

16 Across = GREENBRIER (the Southerners' name for the "Northern" type (part of the "still fighting the Civil War syndrome" in that part of the country.)

19 Across = FORNEY

3 Down = SOUTHERNPACIFIC

8 Down = UNIONPACIFIC

20 Down = COLUMBIA

Extra copies of the contest are available on the counter in the train room. Good luck!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart



Christmas is right around the corner and coming up fast; by the time you all read the Semaphore we are only a final few days before the holiday weekend. This will not be a long-winded column this month, as activity on the railroad has been slow and we are busy at home or work this time of the year so it is not unexpected. First, John Sheridan has resumed working on the upgrades to the DCC system on the first leg, adding a new power station to break up an original large power district.

Next, the "day crew" as, they call themselves, are still working on their village scene at the end of leg one; they have added building lights and street lights and the area really looks nice. Savery is still working on the area behind the steel mill that was exposed after the backdrop was removed. That backdrop has caused a lot of discussion over the years and did result in some real decisions. The first time I saw the backdrop gone, I immediately thought the steel mill buildings looked better because of the added depth to the scene and could visualize the new scenery that would be added to compliment the steel mill. Good Idea!

Yours truly has been working on the trolley again. I finished installing the Tortoise switch machines on the main section; wired them and in the process of installing their control panels.

That's all of the updates I have for this month. I probably missed someone and will put it in next month.

I want to wish all of our members, applicants and friends of the club a happy and safe holidays and may next year be even better for all of us. Merry Christmas!

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer

Semaphore Memories

DECEMBER 2018 (5 years ago)

- U.P. powers the funeral train of George H.W. Bush with a specially-decorated SD70Ace locomotive.
- Last historic “Solari Board” (flippers), located in Amtrak’s 30th St. Station in Philly, to go to RR Museum of Pennsylvania at Strassburg.
- Last “Toaster” or “Mighty Mouse” (AEM-7) retired from SEPTA. Those on Amtrak and MARC previously retired.
- MBTA earns dubious distinction of worst rating from FRA of U.S. commuter railroads for suffering mechanical breakdowns.
- MBTA experiments with \$10 weekend unlimited travel anywhere on the Commuter Rail.
- VIA Rail Canada awards C\$989 million to Siemens to supply 32 intercity trainsets for Windsor-Quebec corridor.
- UP begins massive restoration of Big Boy #4014 in Cheyenne, Wyoming.
- Cape Cod Central buys two ex-NH FL9s for their tourist trains.
- Honorary member Wally Chase, famed organizer of the SSMRC annual “Wally World”, passes away in Lewiston, Maine.

DECEMBER 2013 (10 years ago)

- Berkshire Scenic RR plans for start-up excursions out of North Adams in summer 2014.
- Montreal takes delivery of first new subway cars, since the Metro opened in 1966.
- NYC’s Grand Central Terminal celebrates 100th anniversary, as well as 50th anniversary of demolition of Pennsylvania Station, built 1905-10.
- Waterville, ME, city council votes to sell ex-MEC steamer #470 to New England Steam Corp. for \$25,000.
- Amtrak CEO Joseph Boardman named “Railroader of the Year” by Railway Age magazine.
- Siemens and Cummins partner to produce a diesel passenger locomotive for the North American market. To be produced in Sacramento, California.
- Trustee for bankrupt Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Rwy signs sales agreement for railroad assets to be purchased by Railroad Acquisition Holdings, LLC.
- Long-time superintendent of the Steamtown National Historic Site, Harold “Kip” Hagen, passes away.
- SSMRC’s 75th-year celebrations come to a close.

DECEMBER 2008 (15 years ago)

- FRA Administrator Joseph Boardman appointed as CEO of Amtrak.
- Super Steel Schenectady announces closing of manufacturing plant in Glenville, NY.
- Freight train service between North and South Korea makes last run, only one year after its launch.
- Senior “Charlie Cards” can be used on any fare gate, instead of “dedicated gate”.
- Free Wi-Fi expanded to all T Commuter Rail lines.

- Amtrak launches “National Train Activity Monitoring System”, which determines train’s estimated time of arrival at stations, based on GPS.
 - United Streetcar in Oregon to construct first U.S.-built streetcars since famous PCC cars of the 1940s.
 - Amtrak celebrates 25 years of *Auto Train*.
 - Historic Rockland, ME, passenger station undergoes \$350,000 in restoration by Maine Eastern RR.
 - Gary Mangelinkx, “Gunny”, joins SSMRC.
- ### **DECEMBER 2003** (20 years ago)
- Amtrak’s Downeaster celebrates 2nd anniversary, with best on-time record for all Amtrak trains.
 - Amtrak retires last E60 electric loco with #603 going to RR Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg.
 - Maine Eastern RR start-up, leasing Brunswick-Rockland track from the State, goes smoothly.
 - Construction on Greenbush Line proceeding “full speed ahead”, after Gov. Romney lifts moratorium.
 - Cohasset officials request that T move Cohasset station site to Cohasset Village. (Too late!-Ed.)
 - Museum devoted to O. Winston Link’s acclaimed photos opens at N&W’s renovated passenger station in Roanoke, VA.
 - Last of NYC’s “Redbirds”, all-steel subway cars are retired, after serving 40 years.
 - Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and International Brotherhood of Teamsters agree to merge.
- ### **DECEMBER 1998** (25 Years Ago)
- LDC “Control Task Force” decides on Digitrax for DCC control of the layout.
 - Amtrak has 800-car fleet of boxcars and RoadRailers, which are being added to various passenger trains, for increased revenue. (“Amfreight”-Ed.)
 - Amtrak’s passenger revenue tops \$1 Billion for the first time in the railroad’s history.
 - CSX and NS plan for “official takeover” of Conrail for March 1999. (Happened July 1999.-Ed.)
 - George Warrington becomes new Amtrak CEO.
 - SSMRC “officially” vacates basement on Broad Street, after 45-year presence.
 - Group called “South Carver Rail” tries, unsuccessfully, to re-open Edaville RR.
- ### **DECEMBER 1993** (30 Years Ago)
- “Selkirk Sojourn”, a multi-part trip report, authored by member Jeremy Cahill.
 - Thomas Downs, former NJ Transportation Commissioner, becomes Amtrak president.
 - P&W trades M420s to Conrail for four U23Bs. The 420s were the first MLW locos purchased by a U.S. RR, and the first to have a “wide cab”; built 1974-75.
 - Federal Environmental officials give Amtrak green light to extend electrification from New Haven to Boston.
 - Channel Tunnel, between England and France, completed—called “The Chunnel”.
 - Ski Train starts running weekends between Portland and Bethel, ME, sponsored by owner of Sunday River Ski Area and operated on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Rwy.
 - Bombardier building new Red Line subway cars for the MBTA in Barre, VT plant.
- ### **DECEMBER 1988** (35 Years Ago)

- EMD Canada builds 22 F59PH locos for Go Transit in Toronto, Ontario; first of this type loco.
- CV rebuilds 49-miles of crappy Guilford track on the CT River Line, so that Amtrak's *Montrealer* can resume service.
- Amtrak orders "Horizonliners" from Bombardier.
- New South Attleboro Commuter Rail station not allowed to open because not accessible by wheelchairs.
- New Red Line stop opened at JFK/UMass.
- Groundbreaking for \$1 million restoration of Falmouth railroad station.
- 113-year-old Kingston, RI railroad station suffers severe fire damage.
- Valley RR in Essex, CT, orders brand-new Chinese-built 2-8-2 steam locomotive.
- Metro-North Commuter RR and the Long Island RR join to rebuild 10 ex-New Haven FL9s with A.C. traction motors.

DECEMBER 1983 (40 Years Ago)

- Conrail profitable for the first time in 8-year history.
- Amtrak introduces toll-free reservation number.
- "Code 10" added to bad-order equipment listing, indicating equipment is a POS.
- Cheshire Branch of the B&M, from Keene to N. Walpole, New Hampshire, scrapped.
- New trash-to-energy plant planned for Rochester, MA and served by rail.
- MBTA leases elderly GO Transit cars from Toronto, due to equipment shortages on Commuter Rail.
- Santa Fe acquires TP&W Railroad.
- Editor hires "Daisy Wheel", replacing "Dot Matrix", who retired from service as printing secretary.

POTPOURRI



A TRIBUTE TO ATLANTIC COAST LINE is the latest heritage locomotive to emerge from CSX's paint shop in Waycross, Ga. The locomotive, CSX No. 1871, sports ACL's classic aluminum and Royal Purple scheme, which was introduced in 1939 on the railroad's first Electro-Motive E3 passenger locomotives. It joins CSX locomotives whose long hoods are painted for predecessor lines Baltimore & Ohio, Chessie System, Seaboard System, Conrail, Chesapeake & Ohio, and Louisville & Nashville. (TN)



SINCE THE CHANNEL TUNNEL connecting Britain and France opened in 1994, a high speed passenger service operated by Eurostar has connected London, Paris and Brussels (extended to Amsterdam in 2018). Although competition on the route has been theoretically possible for decades, none has started — but this may be about to change as no less than three new operators are planning new services. In October, start-up high speed rail company, Evolyn based in Spain, announced it planned to order new trains from Alstom and start services between London and Paris within three years. The company is backed by one of Spain's richest family-owned companies, which is directly involved in the new firm; despite this, within days Alstom put out a media statement saying no order had been placed, but admitted it was discussing one. (TN)



CANADA'S VIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY has launched a major fundraising campaign to acquire its first locomotive, former VIA Rail Canada FP9A No. 6539, to be used as part of the organization's touring exhibition train to celebrate VIA's 50th anniversary in 2028. The organization is seeking to raise C\$250,000 to purchase, move, restore, repaint and maintain the unit as a operating locomotive. It would be the only operational F unit wearing VIA colors. The unit was built by General Motors Diesel in London, Ontario, in 1958 as Canadian National FP9A No. 6539, and retained that number when it joined the VIA Rail Canada roster in 1978. An anonymous benefactor will match donations up to C\$125,000; the non-profit organization is a registered Canadian charity. The society will acquire the locomotive from the Ontario Southland Railway, where it currently wears No. 1400. Ontario Southland has offered to donate back almost half the purchase price to the VHA. The society's equipment fleet includes former CN Pullman-Standard sleeping car *Edmundston* and a group of Budd Rail Diesel Cars. Among those is former CN/VIA RDC1 No. 6110, the first RDC, built in 1949. (TN)



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METRA HAS USED one of its SD70MACH locomotives to lead a revenue service train for the first time, with locomotive No. 507 powering train No. 2135 on the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 29, from Chicago Union Station to Fox Lake on the Milwaukee District North line. Metra F59PHI No. 75 was trailing in the consist as a protection unit. After months of no physical testing on the main line, testing on special trains and trailing in revenue consists, the rebuilt locomotives finally received



approval to be placed on the point in regular service. The locomotives, rebuilt from former Kansas City Southern SD70MACs, were first assigned to BNSF service with testing in trail position commencing in June of this year between Chicago and Aurora. Metra ordered 15 SD70MACHs in 2019, with the first arriving on property in October 2022. Eight have since been received, with delivery halted in mid-2023 so that any bugs could be worked out of the locomotives already on the property. The SD70MACH introduces AC traction to Metra’s diesel fleet along with its B1-1B truck arrangement, with the two axles closest to the fuel tank unpowered. This allows four of the six AC inverters on the locomotive to be assigned to each traction motor, a fifth used for head-end power, and the sixth as a spare for either traction or HEP in case of inverter failure. When the SD70MACH is operating normally, the fifth and sixth inverters will alternate HEP duties to keep usage uniform across the equipment. (TN)

●●●●●

SOME DISAPPOINTING EVENTS have happened up in Maine for the Midcoast Railservice, which operates the ex-MEC Rockland Branch for the State of Maine. First, Dragon Cement announced that it was ceasing operations, after over 50-years of production. This freight customer provided 90% of the business for the branch. Then, one of the two RDC’s, that were being used for excursion service, suffered an engine breakdown. Parts are no longer available for these 60+ year-old self-propelled cars, so the railroad is selling them and is looking at locomotive-hauled passenger cars. It appears “back to square one”, as far as passenger service is concerned. (Penobscot Bay Pilot) These developments are unfortunate.-Ed.

●●●●●

MORE THAN 28 MILLION PASSENGERS rode Amtrak in its 2023 fiscal year, the company today in announcing results for the year that ended Sept. 30th. “Amtrak ridership continues to set post-pandemic records thanks to our customers who were anxious to travel again and attracted to the many benefits of train travel,” CEO Stephen Gardner said in a press release. “This resurgence was made possible by our dedicated employees, our many state and host railroad partners, and ongoing support from the Biden Administration and Congress. We’re inspired by the soaring demand for intercity passenger rail and are eager to continue connecting more people and places.” The 28.6% million customer trips represent a 24.6% increase over fiscal 2022, the company notes. (TN)

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NEW JERSEY AND NEW YORK Governors Phil Murphy and Kathy Hochul, respectively, Transportation Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg, and the FRA along with NJ TRANSIT and Gateway Development Commission (GDC) announced the beginning of construction in New Jersey on the Hudson Tunnel Project. According to the press release, the work begins with the “Tonnelles Avenue Bridge and utility Relocation Project” which is a “major early work component of Hudson Tunnel Project involving the relocation of utilities and the construction of a new roadway bridge for Tonnelles Avenue in North Bergen, New Jersey. This new roadway bridge will be above a future railroad right-of-way, “which will also provide construction access between the staging sites on either side of Tonnelles Avenue, as well as access to the entry point for the Tunnel Boring Machines that will dig the Palisades Tunnel portion of the project.” (RA)

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FULL LIST OF PASSENGER ROUTES in FRA Corridor program released. The routes selected for the Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification and Development Program related to New England are:

New--Boston-Springfield, Mass-Albany, N.Y. (Massachusetts DOT).

Existing route with extensions

1. **Downeaster Corridor** (Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority): Would extend the route to Rockland, Maine, add additional frequencies, add an infill station at West Falmouth, Maine, and make improvements to allow better connections in Boston, where the *Downeaster* uses a different station *than* all other Amtrak services.

2. **Green Mountain Corridor** (Vermont Agency of Transportation): Would connect New York and Burlington, Vt., via Albany, N.Y., and Rutland, Vt., dovetailing with the *Ethan Allen Express* by providing new service to communities including Bennington and Manchester, Vt., and Mechanicville, N.Y.
3. **Vermont Corridor** (Vermont Agency of Transportation): Would extend service north to Montreal, with creation of a customs preclearance facility at Montreal's Central Station, add frequencies, and reduce travel time.

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IT'S HARD TO SAY WHEN A TREND becomes a trend. But yesterday's announcement that Canadian National will acquire the 253-mile Iowa Northern Railway suggests that short lines and regionals getting gobbled up by Class I railroads is now a thing.

Since 2020, Class I railroads have reached a half-dozen deals with short lines and regional railroads. There's not necessarily a common thread among transactions that include:

- Canadian Pacific + Central Maine & Quebec, 2020
- CSX + Pan Am Railways, 2022
- BNSF Railway + Montana Rail Link, effective Jan. 1, 2024
- Canadian Pacific Kansas City and CSX + Meridian & Bigbee, expected 2024
- CN takes stake in Cape Breton & Central Nova Scotia Railway, 2023
- CN + Iowa Northern, expected 2024

Two of those deals — the CMQ and MRL — were made to correct spinoff mistakes the Class I lines made long ago. (TN)

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CSX REACHED A MILESTONE on the former Pan Am Railways on Monday, Dec. 4, when it ran the first train in nearly five years between Old Town, Maine, and the New Brunswick Southern interchange at Mattawamkeag, Maine. The 45-mile stretch of the former Maine Central was out of service and previously had speeds restricted to 10 mph. CSX has upgraded the line to Federal Railroad Administration Class II standards, permitting 25-mph operation, and 15 miles of the line is now up to FRA Class III track standards that permit 40-mph running. CSX also has upgraded trackage between Waterville and Old Town, which had been limited to 10 mph operation. "With increased speeds and improved track, CSX will now be able to interchange with New Brunswick Southern Railway at Mattawamkeag, which will save approximately two

to three days in transit time between Mattawamkeag and New Brunswick, Canada," CSX said. (TN)

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A WASHINGTON STATE PORT will serve as a test bed for Glīd Technologies' autonomous intermodal vehicle. The Port of Woodland and Glīd have announced a partnership that will allow testing of the Glīder prototype on a rail spur at the port's



Schurman Way Industrial Park. "Glīd is at the edge of tackling a significant issue that plagues industrial areas ... with the shortage of trucking, improving safety along our rails, and creating a green technology that would better serve customers," Port of Woodland Executive Director Jennifer Wray-Keene said in a statement. The Glīder prototype is expected to make its debut next year. The battery-electric vehicles, which can operate on road and rail, are designed to handle any type of truck trailer. (TN)

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ONE OF AMTRAK'S RETIRED HHP8 electric locomotives, with both pantographs removed, is



being tested for possible use as a cab car. Amtrak is reportedly looking to bolster or replace its aging fleet of ex-Metroliner cab cars in the Northeast until Siemens' new Amtrak Airo equipment arrives. The 15 Bombardier-Alstom locomotives, delivered in 2001, were plagued by reliability issues and retired by 2015.

●●●●●●

AMTRAK'S DOWNEASTER will receive \$27 million under a new initiative from the Biden administration to improve and expand passenger rail service across the country. The funds for the Downeaster Corridor Track Improvement Project will improve the mainline from Brunswick to the Massachusetts state line and help avoid delays and longer transit times. "Northern New England Passenger Rail Association

will also receive a \$500,000 grant to explore building a new station in Falmouth and extending train service from Brunswick to Rockland, something that has long been considered." Executive Director of NNEPRA, Patricia Quinn, said, "We are grateful for this federal award which, in partnership with CSX Transportation, will fund track-related upgrades to maintain reliability and set the stage for future improvements to the *Amtrak Downeaster* service." (NNEPRA)

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UNION PACIFIC IS PARTNERING with composite tie manufacturers to help reduce CO2 and potential methane emissions, improve infrastructure standards, and reduce the amount of rail ties that end up in landfills. (UP reports that for every million composite ties that are laid, 90,000 tons of plastic are diverted from landfills.) One such partner is Missouri-based **Evertrak**, a company that produces composite ties from recycled plastic and glass fiber. According to Evertrak, its Evertrak 7000 is "manufactured With 100% Recycled Polyolefin Plastic And Fiberglass." According to the report, the ties are installed in areas where the average lifespan of a wood tie is between 8 to 15 years, mainly due to "decay associated with heat, humidity and subgrade, compared to other areas of the railroad where wood tie life averages 25 years." Composite tie vendors manufacture these ties to reach Union Pacific's specifications, which include a 50-year lifespan. These new composite ties will be installed in humid climates. In November 2023, Evertrak's ties "were installed around Little Rock, Arkansas, St. Louis, Missouri, Fort Worth, Texas, and near Reno, Nevada as well as on a handful of bridges." "Unlike wood ties, composite ties have the option to be recycled or repurposed at the end of their lifespan. . . Next year, Union Pacific is looking to double the number of composite ties installations in 2023 and continue evaluating long-lasting products," said UP Senior Manager, Engineering Method & Research, Dave Bozarth. (RA)

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WHEN THE ARMY-NAVY FOOTBALL game was held in Massachusetts for the first time on Saturday, Dec. 9, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority helped transport the sellout crowd of 65,878 at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, thanks to a branch line that serves the stadium. Meg Richards, Project Manager, Pop-Up MetroRail Development Corp.'s Pop-Up Metro concept played a supporting role, as the MBTA deployed one of Pop-Up's portable platforms to facilitate the rapid unloading and loading of five trains (three to/from Boston, two to/from Providence, R.I.) at the single-track station.



The Pop-Up Metro temporary platform awaits passengers, with the regular Foxboro station platform visible in the background.

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AMTRAK IS GIVING THE ROLLING STOCK industry seven days to respond to its request for proposals (RFP) to replace the long-distance fleet – suggesting that the request-for-information (RFI) process launched a year ago has already created a list of competitors ready to file their bids.

The railroad issued its formal RFP today, with a due date of December 22, 2023, but with no real details in the public listing apart from the due date. Even so, it's good news insofar as it kicks off the long-overdue process of getting some kind of design into the U.S. rail industry's ever-growing backlog of orders. And the fact that the due date is seven days from today suggests Amtrak already knows what it's going to get, and industry already knows who is going to play and with what design or set of designs. (RPA)

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I ENJOYED THESE ARTICLES in this month's RR magazines and can suggest them for your reading:

TRAINS

The Making of Polar Express "Magic"

Best of Trains: The Loops at Old Fort

Enhancing Amtrak's Value to Rural America

Bill Stephens

Pin Your High-Speed Hopes on Brightline West

Travel

The Allure of Holiday Trains

MODEL RAILROADER

Amazing Allegheny Museum Layout

Trains of Thought

Getting Out and Getting Under

DCC Currents

More DCC Electrical Basics (last column)

MODEL RAILROAD CRAFTSMAN

Modeling Prototype Scenes

Green Mountain Division

Model a Steam Era Cinder Pit in HO

Diverging Points

Playing With the Kids

PASSENGER TRAIN JOURNAL (2023-4)

Brightline: From Idea to Reality

Trailblazer: Ethan Allen Express

The Amtrak Diaries, Part 9

News sources: [Boston Globe](#), [Boston Herald](#), [Trains](#) "Newswire", [Railway Age](#), [Railpace](#) Newsmagazine, RRE "Callboy", "The 470", [Patriot Ledger](#), [Rail Passenger Assoc.](#), Attleboro [Sun Chronicle](#).

Non-Registered Equipment on Bad Order Shelf

Last call! If any of this equipment belongs to you, please come and get it off the "Bad-Order shelf" and take home. Per our Rules & Regulations, non-registered equipment is NOT to be left on the layout. Next stop for these items will be the W.E.T. to make money for the club! Thanks, Ed Carter, Mechanical Dept. chairman.

(Number preceding Reporting Marks is B.O. card #)

109 PICK	20036 40' Boxcar
110 CB&Q	19838 High cube boxcar
111 TP&W	70113 50' Boxcar
112 CG	5628 40' Boxcar
114 RF&P	2920 50' boxcar
115 WM	35005 50' boxcar
117 HLCX	81287 50' boxcar
120 LV	63680 40' boxcar
124 RDG	80289 hopper w/load
125 C&LE	24017 34' hopper
127 B&O	733156 hopper 2 bay
129 WRNX	14132 40' tank
130 KOTX	8212 40' tank
137 UTLX	78331 Tank
138 GATX	74671 Tank
139 TXC	2266 3-dome tank
140 NMCX	106 Dairy car

143 GBX	4401 Wooden reefer
144 VCBX	1013 40' boxcar
147 FEC	23051 50' boxcar
149 GTW	591599 50' boxcar automotive
150 BAR	97 50' mechanical reefer
153 C&O	24251 50' boxcar
154 CB&Q	48500 50' boxcar
159 LV	66264 40' boxcar
160 LNE	18179 covered hopper
161 LV	7050 50' plug door boxcar
163 BM	11050' plug door boxcar
164 ASAB	7182 50' boxcar
166 CB&Q	21019 50' boxcar
169 SSW	34822 40' boxcar
172 WP	3809 50' boxcar
173 ROIX	57504 55' covered hopper
174 NDYX	816876 50' covered hopper
175 BM	5846 50' covered hopper
176 MOHX	2510 covered hopper
177 CH	23818 50' covered hopper
178 CRDX	11505 50' covered hopper
179 BAR	6004 50' boxcar
188 LV	62548 40' boxcar
189 REX	6123 40' reefer

LIBRARY CORNER

Donations to our Library collection this month:

From Ye Ed: **Railroads** by Don Ball, Jr.; 1985; W.W. Norton & Co. This 160-page, hardcover book is full of all-color pictures by famous RR photographer Don Ball (D).

New Library books are introduced on the Breakroom table for 30-days and then placed in the library. They may be checked-out (and back in) anytime by using the form on the return tray in the breakroom. Happy reading!

Dave Clinton, Librarian

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. In the **story at the end of the newsletter**, about the history of trains at Christmas, note in the first picture that the boy is working on an "Erector Set". I bet I'm not the only one here who had one of those, along with the Lionels! I had the set 6 ½, which had an electric motor and I remember I loved to build the "lift bridge".
2. "**JFJ**" was rather lightly-attended last Tuesday, probably due to a number of things, like not happening for three years and then happening two days after an evening Christmas Open

House. Those in attendance had a good time and a lot of laughs, as usual. One of our newer members even took the chance, not knowing what he was getting into! Thanks to those who attended and for the goodies and to Paul 3 and Doug for the great pictures—and laughs! Maybe a different time next year would be more appropriate.

3. The editors and I wish all our readers a very **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year** and look forward to seeing you in 2024!



.....*David N. Clinton*

“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” (Colossians 3:14)

MEMBER NEWS

Welcome aboard our newest member **Ed Seyerlein**. Ed has been very active during his applicant period and has recently moved to Hingham from Upstate New York. We look forward to your continued participation in club activities, Ed!

Michael Anderson from Marshfield is our newest applicant. We look forward to getting to know you during the next several months, Mike!

Welcome back former member **Ed Sisk**, from Braintree. We’re so glad that you are able to join with us again!

Brian Miller is still on the road to recovery. He is home during the week and spends the weekends with his sister in Fitchburg. We’re all looking forward to seeing you back at the club soon, Brian!

We miss **Chris Barlow**, who is traveling in the Far East for an extended period. He leaves the club in good-standing. We hope you’ll visit us whenever you return to the area, Chris!

(Note: For the “Health & Welfare Committee”, Ye Ed, would like to hear of any member who is ill, hospitalized, or special occasion news, so we can keep the membership advised of these happenings.)

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

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

Dominic Mirabello... January 4th
Paul Cutler III January 7th
Ed Carter..... January 20th
Jesse Collins January 20th
Mark Hall January 21st
Eric Tedeschi January 25th
Andrew Allen January 27th



UNDER the WIRE

Ron Clough

The Trolley committee has met a couple of times since the last UNDER the WIRE report in September, so this report will bring you up to date on progress.

First, and most importantly, we met our goal of having a trolley run for the October Open House! I was able to get two of my trolleys (and more recently a third one) ready to operate on our DCC-wired trolley line. One car ran during the open house on the city line out to the beach loop and return. To me, that was sort of a historic moment to actually have an operating trolley running loop to loop on the club layout. No issues in the trackwork or electrical systems were detected. That speaks well for our construction teams...thanks guys!

Now we need to operate the trolley line to make sure all things are in order before the installation of scenery makes it more difficult to repair. Discussions about the installation of trolley poles have started but it will be a while before they are actually installed, as we will need to first install some blocking in certain sections, especially on the “high line” going out to the trolley barn.

We also looked at the equipment the committee has. None of it is DCC-decoded and we really have only one car capable of carrying passengers. It is an unpainted brass Boston Type 5 car, and again, not DCC-ready. Jeff G has agreed to start looking into determining if any of the fleet is even able to have a decoder installed. It will take some time to determine what club equipment is worth keeping and making it DCC. We have plenty of needs for all kinds of equipment for the club, as I don’t want to be the only supplier, so keep your eyes open. Think: box motor, wire car, 12 bench open, snow plow, etc.

Fred has plans, as his time allows, to install some Tortoise switch machines on the city loop. He also hopes to complete the switches in the trolley barn yard area that Mike Dolan started.

Our next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2024 at 8pm. We planned that to be after the Scenery committee meeting, which I plan to attend to try to coordinate work of both committees in the areas without scenery. Come and join our meetings, as we are always looking for new ideas

That's it for this year. Thanks to all who have shown an interest in the trolley line.

Ron

Running Extra

A (model train) Christmas story: The holiday tale behind a 100-year-old tradition

George Petras, Jennifer Borresen, USA TODAY. Published Dec. 21, 2022

Railroad displays at Christmastime evoke an American era in which trains brought relatives, holiday gifts and childhood memories to town.

For many American families, Christmas isn't Christmas without a tree decorated with lights, ornaments, tinsel – and an electric train circling merrily beneath. No one knows precisely when the train custom started, but it



Train sets and Christmas trees are a longstanding tradition.

has been a part of Christmas in the U.S. since the early 1900s, rooted in nostalgia and passed down from one generation to the next.

“Railroads were part of the American consciousness at the time,” says Hal Miller, editor of Classic Toy Trains. “If you wanted to travel long distances, if you wanted to go anywhere, you did it by train.” But children had special reason to love trains. Trains brought everything from visiting relatives to all the goods in town,” says Tony Cook, editor of Model Railroad News. “The train under the tree maybe signals the path by which the Christmas gifts arrived.” The popularity of Christmas trains has varied over the years but continues to endure and evolve. Train setups range from a simple loop of track on a snowy white bedsheet to handcrafted villages with painstakingly detailed churches, railroad stations, water towers and other features.

How it started: European Christmas villages and Lionel trains

The ritual of miniature villages and nativity scenes beneath Christmas trees came to the U.S. with European immigrants in the 1800s. Christmas villages were popular

BUILD A BETTER R.R. WITH LIONEL TRAINS

No. 524 - Chesapeake & Ohio Switcher. Another top performer! This GM-type switcher has a worm-drive motor and Magne-Traction. Powerful headlight and knuckle couplers on both ends. Ideal for switchyard use. 11 1/2" long. **\$25.00**

No. 140 - Automatic Bang Signal. Automatic action. Arm swings when train approaches, red light goes on. Stops when train has passed. **\$5.95**

AND ACCESSORIES

No. 445 - Operating Switch Tower. On approach of train, man on platform goes inside, other man runs down stairs. After train passes, they resume their positions. **\$7.95**

No. 50 - "Section Gang" Car. Operates from track power. When buffers on either end strike an object, car reverses, "gangy dancer" faces the other way. **\$7.95**

No. 397 - Operating Coal Loader. Loads cars by remote control. GM Diesel housing contains self-lubricating motor. **\$12.25**

No. 282 - Portal Gantry Crane. Use hook or magnet. Make cab turn, raise or lower electro-magnet, turn magnet on or off - all from trackside control box. **\$12.95**

No. 450 - Operating Signal Bridge. Spans two tracks. Lights change from green to red as train passes to warn following train. **\$5.95**

No. 221 - Fairbanks-Morse. What Power! Brand new Diesel type. Modeled after the loco built for the Lackawanna R. R. Two screw-drive motors. Magne-Traction and built-in horn. Completely illuminated, including headlight, marker lights, classification lights. **\$43.50**

ONLY LIONEL HAS MAGNE-TRACTION

52 MARCH 1955

in Germany and what is now the eastern part of the Czech Republic. Retail entrepreneur F.W. Woolworth began importing miniature villages from Europe and selling them in his U.S. dime stores in the 1890s. At that time, “toy

trains were simple wood or metal creations that did not necessarily include track,” Cook says. “The common power source was a child pushing a toy train or pulling it on a tether.”

An inventor named Joshua Lionel Cowen started Lionel 1900 and came up with a battery-powered “Electric Express” gondola that ran on metal tracks. Cowen intended his motorized gondolas to draw attention to merchandise displays in store windows. Instead, customers began buying them as toys and “they became popular almost immediately,” Miller says.

Model trains are a large part of the overall hobby industry, and Lionel remains best known for its enduring line of trains. Lionel reached its peak in the 1950s and became the largest toymaker in the world in 1953. Sales eventually declined, and the company changed owners in later decades, but it’s still making popular model trains today.

What connects trains and Christmas?

“There’s something exciting about trains that transcends cultures,” says Otto Vondrak, editor of Railroad Model Craftsman. “There’s the power of nostalgia and a simpler time. Instead of busy airports and unpredictable delivery services, we had cozy and luxurious steam trains and brown parcels delivered by Railway Express,” Vondrak says. Train sets could also be expanded at Christmastime with accessories and buildings. Lionel and other companies “were stamping objects out of metal, and they were making stations and crossing signs and things like that. Plus, you could add on more track,” Miller says. Train sets “can get more elaborate as time goes on,” Miller says.

“People find little things over the year and they say, ‘I can save this for the Christmas layout.’ It’s like your Christmas tree when you add new ornaments. In that way, trains always got tied to the holiday.” Model train manufacturers took early notice. “Once Lionel and other companies saw the trend, they began building their years around it,” Miller says. They started releasing new products in the fall to be ready for the Christmas season. “Companies also seized on it with advertising,” Miller says. “It became sort of a self-fulfilling thing. Advertising promoted trains at Christmas, and momentum built from there.”

Why do model trains at Christmas endure?

Interest in model trains has varied over decades, even during Christmas. Since the 1950s, television, slot cars, plastic models and other diversions have diluted the attraction of model trains.

But though model trains “have probably slid in popularity, they’ve never gone out of style,” Miller says. While annual national sales figures for trains aren’t available, Miller estimates them at \$300 million to \$500 million a year. “You still have tons of people across the country and in Canada who have a train set, and they’re going to set it up around the tree,” he says. “They’re still very popular.”

Movies have also rekindled public interest in trains over the years. They include:

- “Polar Express,” the 2004 movie about a boy who rides a magic train to the North Pole on Christmas Eve.
- The Hogwarts Express train from the eight “Harry Potter” movies, 2001-2011.
- “The Little Engine That Could,” the 2011 children’s movie about a locomotive that overcomes adversity.

Lionel reached its peak in the 1950s and became the largest toymaker in the world.

In the early years, the size of a model train and its tracks depended on the manufacturer. Companies eventually adopted standards. Model trains are measured using:

- **Scale**, which tells you the ratio of your model train compared with a real one. An O scale model train is 1:48, so 1 inch on the model equals 48 inches on a real train.
- **Gauge**, which indicates the length between the train track rails. The gauge of an O scale track is 1.25 inches or 1¼ inches.



Early trains were wind-up models or battery-powered. Today, household electricity powers most trains, connected through transformers to train tracks. Locomotives pick up electricity from the tracks and use a small motor to pull cars.

The most popular train sizes are O scale and HO scale – HO stands for “half-O”. Lionel specializes in O scale trains. A variety of manufacturers make HO trains. Vondrak estimates at least 350,000 model railroad hobbyists live in North America, ages 9 to 90. Trains at Christmas no doubt inspired many of them. “Setting up a train around the tree is the spark for someone to take

those trains off the carpet and start building a model railroad,” Vondrak says. “I got my start in the hobby from a gift of a train set when I was 5 years old. My interest It often starts with “My dad gave me a Lionel train, which we put under the tree,” says Eric White, editor of Model Railroader.

It continues with: “I got older and I bought scale trains. Then I got interested in girls, had a family, and the kids moved out. “Then I took over the basement to build the railroad empire I’d always dreamed of,” White says.

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To learn more, join a model railroad club

“Clubs are a great way to get involved, especially if you don’t have room or the means to build a railroad of your own,” Vondrak says. “Your local hobby shop can guide you to what you’ll need to build great models for your model railroad.”

While model trains are high-profile at Christmastime, “the hobby itself is always growing and adopting new technology,” Vondrak says. The innovations include:

- 3D printing
- Laser cutters
- Computer-aided drafting
- Networked digital command to run multiple trains on the same track

Model railroad magazines, social media and the internet can help you connect, do research and share resources.

“You hear myths that the hobby is dying out, and that’s simply not true,” Vondrak says. “While the majority may appear to be graying, there’s always new blood coming in behind us.”



Lionel Trains was born in 1900, and the rest is history.





Movies such as "The Polar Express" have rekindled public interest in trains over the years. WARNER BROS. PICTURES

