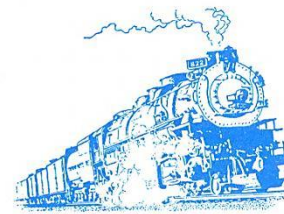


The Semaphore

South Shore Model Railway Club

NEWSLETTER

Home of the "East Coast Lines" since 1938



CLUB IN TRANSITION-5

OCTOBER 23, 2017 ■■■■■■■■■■ VOLUME 37 ■■■■■■■■■■ NUMBER 10



The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



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Boston <u>Herald</u> Reporter.....	Jim South
<u>Wall Street Journal</u> Reporter.....	Paul Bonanno, Jack Foley
Rhode Island News.....	Tony Donatelli
Empire State News.....	Dick Kozlowski
Amtrak News.....	Rick Sutton
“The Chief’s Corner”.....	Fred Lockhart

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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. ©2017

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VOLUME 37 ■■■■■ NUMBER 10 ■■■■■ OCTOBER 2017

CLUB OFFICERS

President.....	Jack Foley
Vice-President.....	Dan Peterson
Treasurer.....	Will Baker
Secretary.....	Dave Clinton
Chief Engineer.....	Fred Lockhart
Directors.....	Bill Garvey ('18)
	Bryan Miller ('18)
	Roger St. Peter ('19)
	Rick Sutton ('19)

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ON THE COVER: Top row- Building 51 Business Mtg.
2nd row- Weymouth location meeting room.
3rd row- Temporary wall under construction; West Middleton section added to Middleton Yard brought from Weymouth.
4th row- Wiring E. Middleton curve; DCC test track;
“younger years” at Weymouth. (Photographers unknown)

FORM 19 ORDERS

FALL SHOW AND OPEN HOUSE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28th 9-4
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29th 10-

OCTOBER B.O.D. MEETING

Thursday, November 2nd 8 p.m.

DECODER & LOCO TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, November 2nd 8 p.m.

NOVEMBER BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, November 6th 8 p.m.

ADAM HORGAN PHOTO PRESENTATION

Monday, November 6th after B.M.

OFFICIAL OPERATIONS

Sunday, November 12th 11 a.m.

TRAINS 'N TURKEY

Wednesday, November 22nd 11 a.m.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Saturday, November 25th

NOVEMBER B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, November 27th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

Congratulations to Honorary Member **Paul Bonanno** on winning this month's 50/50 Raffle! He kindly donated his winnings back to the Club treasury...thanks Paul!

For NOVEMBER: "Match the slogan to the railroad", a fun puzzle from Savery, was included in last month's newsletter. Extra copies are on the old wood display case in the train room. Good luck!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

First off this month, I want to thank everyone who pitched in right-away this month to get the building and the railroad ready for the show, with some

members sweeping and vacuuming the floors. We also spent some time removing non-railroad-related items from beneath the railroad benchwork. Dusting and cleaning of scenicked areas was also done; foreign materials, tools and other items have been removed from the railroad, and it will make a better presentation to the public, in my opinion, but I think many of you will agree with me.

Maintenance is becoming more frequent, as the railroad gets older, Middleton peninsula is about sixteen to seventeen years old, and each end of the yard is even older, as it came from the old club. After each operating session, we have a list of issues to repair. Recent issues involving turnouts were from screws loosening up and allowing the machine to drop down allowing the throw rod to fall out, another turnout failed for a loose wire connection in a terminal strip. Another issue that came about two weeks ago could have been a real problem during the show had it not been found; wasn't easy to find, either, as it took three members on different days to track it down. Turned out to be a bad connection in Cat 5 cable used for a loco net cable; we discovered this and replaced the cable that ran up thru the wall and ceiling to the overhead fast clocks. So, future work will have to include some sort of routine maintenance program.

Some of the ongoing work includes the new staging yard. The Benchwork Committee has prepared the area and will be starting on the benchwork for it after the show. Once built, it can be put into service right away. For a while, access will only be by duck-under, but as the approved work continues it will become a walk-in area. The Operations Committee and the Electrical Committee are working on two model boards for Middleton yard. They will be located inside the pit, next to each switch toggle panel; a much smaller version of what was done in Cedar Hill passenger terminal. The operators of Middleton will have LEDs to show turnout position and there will also be LEDs to show if any part of the yard is shorting.



Closing this month, I would encourage members this week to make a final effort to get signs out, even on your own front lawn if you live on a busy street; pass out flyers, particularly at train stations and whatever else we can do to make this a successful show.

That's it for this month.

Fred Lockhart
Chief engineer

SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

OCTOBER 2012 (5 years ago)

- Amtrak in process of replacing Niantic, CT bridge, as well as restoring boardwalk and grooming the beach.
- MBTA chooses Beverly Scott, from Atlanta's MARTA as head of the authority.
- Japan's Nippon-Sharyo chosen to build 130 bi-level cars for several Amtrak mid-west corridors and California. To be built in Rochelle, IL
- Genesee & Wyoming completes its acquisition of shortline giant RailAmerica.
- Massachusetts to acquire 90 miles of CSX track to expand commuter rail. Included are 45 miles from Worcester to Boston and 37 miles from Taunton to Fall River and New Bedford.
- Federal and State officials celebrate the completion of Vermont's federally-funded rail corridor upgrades between Vernon and St. Albans. First passenger rail stimulus project to be completed under the initiative.
- Amtrak offers free smartphone app for Android phones
- MBTA general manager travels to Korea, to find out why 2-year delay in delivering 75 double-decker cars.
- Iowa Pacific Holdings plans to acquire 80% interest in Cape Rail, Inc. and its subsidiaries.
- East Broad Top does not operate seasonal tourist trains for first time, since stopping service in 1950s.
- The era of the train order ends on standard-gauge North American railroads, with one written for a Long Island Rail Road train.
- Nice picture article about the SSMRC in the Globe South section a month before our Show.
- Chip Mullen joins the SSMRC.

OCTOBER 2007 (10 years ago)

- Canadian National acquires Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway Co. for \$300 million.
- Interesting: when the Great Northern Rwy was ready to retire its last steam locomotives, its first diesels were ready to be retired as well!

- Marklin acquires assets of LGB "G"-scale trains.
- Mass Coastal RR awarded contract to operate the 60-miles of EOT rail lines in Southeastern MA.
- "Trash Trains" become "Energy Trains" on MassCoastal RR.
- Norfolk Southern operates nation's first revenue service train equipped exclusively with electronically-controlled pneumatic brakes.
- Saco, Maine breaks ground for new train station.
- NJ Transit plans to build new \$7.5 billion rail tunnel under the Hudson to Manhattan. (Never happened-Ed.)
- Canadian Pacific completes purchase of Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern RR.
- Start-up of Greenbush Line service set for Monday, October 31st -Halloween.

OCTOBER 2002 (15 years ago)

- Kato introduces first HO passenger car: a "Business Car" with lighted tail sign.
- Amtrak ends "satisfaction guarantee" program, which gave out free Amtrak travel.
- Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Commuter Rail merge operations.
- Finger Lakes Railway takes over operations of MassCentral in Palmer.
- Phase I of rebuilding Buzzards Bay RR Bridge completed.
- Genesee & Wyoming RR makes largest purchase to date, with acquisition of Utah Railway Co.
- BNSF is first RR to offer full money-back guarantee for carload traffic.
- Bangor & Aroostook System to be sold to Rail World, Inc., the only bidder.
- "Friends of Canaan Union Station" (CT) formed to get donated funds to restore station, torched by teenage vandals in 2001.
- NS introduces modified logo, which includes image of NS Thoroughbred's head, neck and mane; first change in logo since 1982.
- Amtrak eliminates staffing at Vermont stations served by *Vermont* and *Ethan Allen* Trains.

OCTOBER 1997 (20 Years Ago)

- New oil tanks installed and contract signed for furnace/heating for members' area at Bldg. 51.
- Super Steel Schenectady receives \$20 million order to rebuild two Amtrak "Turboliners".
- VIA Rail Canada introduces "North American Rail Pass", covering all Amtrak and VIA routes.
- Guilford raises roof of Hoosac Tunnel, to accommodate double-stack trains.
- Boston's Green Line, the oldest subway in America, celebrates 100th birthday.
- P2K brings out Alco PA locomotive.
- Eight members travel to NJ to ride "Erie Limited", pulled by ex-C&O Northern #614.

OCTOBER 1992 (25 Years Ago)

- Phil Wood conducts first work session at Building 51 – on Halloween.
- Mark Hall and crew complete long over-due repairs to “loop track” under Cedar Hill at the Weymouth club.
- Kevin Linagen reports on cab ride aboard the *Merchants Limited* to New Haven.
- SSMRC group tours Amtrak’s CETC at South Station.
- Former Woburn toxic waste site to be turned into “Anderson Transportation Center”.
- Boston-Portland passenger train project receives \$25 million to upgrade tracks. (It’s a start!-Ed)
- Amtrak begins testing Swedish-built X2000 high-speed train on Northeast Corridor.

OCTOBER 1987 (30 Years Ago)

- USPS brings out set of five steam locomotive stamps.
- Ridership on Cape Cod & Hyannis RR between Braintree and Hyannis increases 93% over 1986.
- MBTA takes delivery of first F40PH-2C locomotive.
- MBTA’s Needham Branch reopens after 9 years, due to construction of the “Southwest Corridor”.
- John Governor (“The Gov”) writes the first “Operator” column—a description, in humorous terms and drawings, of the previous month’s operating sessions and the “oops” played by members.

OCTOBER 1982 (35 Years Ago)

- Mark Hall describes his “railbike” trip on 2-ft gauge track at Phillips, ME, home of the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes RR.
- Stoughton RR Station Restoration, Inc. holds first model railroad show, in order to raise funds.
- Amtrak introduces “Metroliner Service” trains between Boston and New York.
- Vermont Railway buys ex-D&H branch from Whitehall, NY to Rutland, VT.

ENGINE TUNE-UP CLINIC

Nice crowd this month, starting with **Savery Moore**, who brought both his UP Challenger and Northern (by Athearn) to change the “traction tires”. Problem is, with steam you have to remove the siderods from the driver to be changed. I had brought two different-sized mini-wrenches for the hex bolts holding the siderods to the wheels. Unfortunately, neither was the right size. So, he made do with the small “needle-nose” pliers. With some struggling, he was able to remove and reinstall the hex bolts

and tires on both locos. A ½-hour project and he was ready to pull those mile-long trains again!

Jim South brought his Rapido Budd RDC-1, dressed in MBTA purple stripe, to be custom programmed, specifically turning down the sound of the Detroit Diesel engines, so that he could hear the horns. We also programmed the RDC-1 to one of his assigned addresses. A beautiful model but what else would we expect from Rapido?

Bryan Miller brought his new Vermont Railway RS3 by Athearn in the attractive scheme of red with white striping and lettering. The DH126 fits nicely into the “tray” provided over the trucks and plugs into the 9-pin socket. Problem here is that the trays are not fastened to the chassis, so that when you go to put the shell back on, the tray has dislodged and jams the wires. I have found that “Goo-ing” the trays, as they have pegs which fit into holes, to the chassis solves that problem. Bryan’s major malfunction, though, was not installing the decoder but having the loco derail at the slightest curve. Turns out that the brass bearings on the front axle were not being held in place by the piece of steel in the truck sideframe. Should be a simple fix but necessitates taking the truck apart. So much for QC!

Bob Farrenkopf brought his Stewart F3, dressed in the handsome B&M maroon with yellow-gold striping. He installed the “Econami 100” sound decoder, and was pleased with the results. Of course, it was a “hard-wire” procedure but the thing to remember is to follow the instructions carefully, (not assuming you know what to do without reading them) and have patience...i.e. RTFM!

Paul Agnew brought his unique Alco FA2 in the “demo” scheme (Paul loves those demos!) This P1K model needed cleaning and a new DZ126 hard-wired into the loco. While he was at it, he installed new LEDs, for more prototypical appearance.

Applicant Ed Bulman brought a little P2K S1 in the New Haven green and orange. Another hard-wire application, after removing and discarding the factory board. He used the DZ126, which fit nicely where the factory board had been. He will be completing the installation next time, by installing

LED lighting, which will take some time and patience. "Patience" is very important when working with electronics in such small spaces. While he was inside, though, he cleaned the gears and put new silicone lubricant on them.

Ye Ed had a chance to start installation of the DH126 into an Overland SD40-2, painted in the Northern Alberta Railway scheme of grey and yellow. This railway, since taken over by CN, worked way up in the Province of Alberta, Canada; a railway which isn't modeled very often. This is a hard-wire job, having to cut the fancy factory light board out, snip off all the components, and use it to attach the decoder with "Magic Tape" or double-sided tape. It keeps the decoder out of the way and firm, so that there is one less thing to worry about when you're reassembling the locomotive. The model comes with dual, sealed-beam headlights at both ends, using Miniaturics "mini bulbs". EACH bulb must be protected with a 680-ohm resistor, the resistor is wired in series in either the white (front) or yellow (rear) bulb supply line. The blue goes to the other four bulb supply lines. A fairly easy installation, but takes patience in making sure that you are wiring correctly...especially to the motor contacts. (There's that word "patience" again!) Installing decoders cannot be done in a hurry.

Thanks to **Paul Cutler III** for his assistance and for preparing the Model Shop beforehand. Our next clinic will be **Thursday, November 2nd, 2017**. Sign-up sheet on Bulletin Board. Everyone is welcome!



IN ABOUT A YEAR, customers of Amtrak, Metra and other users of Chicago Union Station will enjoy a Great Hall painted in its original colors, made brighter by a restored and protected skylight with improved lighting in a \$22-million project. The work, now underway and self-funded by Amtrak, is designed by architect Goettsch Partners and contractor Berglund Construction to minimize

disruption to the flow of people through the station, which is the fourth busiest in the national Amtrak network. The construction team devised a creative solution to maintain access to the Great Hall by using a suspended working deck and swing stages, in lieu of much scaffolding, to allow customers to move freely below. A crane erected on Clinton Street is being used to move materials through the building and above the Great Hall. The painting and plaster repairs have been divided into phases, to further provide full customer access to the Great Hall during the repairs. The Great Hall at Chicago Union Station, completed in 1925, was designed by Daniel Burnham and successor firm Graham, Anderson, Probst & White. The centerpiece of the Great Hall is a 219-foot-long skylight that soars 115 feet above the floor. Over the decades, it has deteriorated due to water damage and flaws within the original design. (TN)

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SIEMENS AND ALSTOM officials say they will merge their rail operations in a business decision that increases competitiveness with China's state-owned China Railroad Rolling Stock Corp., Reuter's reports. In a separate news release on Tuesday, Alstom officials said the union would create a "European Champion" in mobility. Siemens will own 50 percent of the new company, Alstom CEO Henri Poupart-Lafarge will serve as CEO and a Siemens executive will serve as chairman. The business arrangement, which still needs approval from Alstom shareholders and regulators, forms a European rail industry pact with combined annual revenues of \$18 billion. In the U.S., both companies are growing their respective shares of the passenger market with Alstom ramping up tooling and production in Hornell, N.Y., to fulfill a nearly \$2 billion order with Amtrak for high speed trainsets for the Northeast Corridor. The first of Alstom's Avelia Liberty train sets are expected in 2019. Amtrak declined to comment on the merger. Siemens, meanwhile, supplied more than 70 locomotives for Amtrak and Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority service on the NEC. It has also nearly sewn up the market for new orders on passenger diesel-electric locomotives by delivering its Charger locomotives to several states on Amtrak-served state-sponsored routes, as well as complete trainsets for Florida's Brightline. Nearly all of Siemens' U.S. work is

completed at shops in Sacramento, Calif. The merger also puts to rest speculation that Siemens' team would explore a potential merger with Canada's Bombardier Transportation. Sources say Siemens' team met with Bombardier to explore possibilities prior to its agreement with Alstom. As the Siemens Alstom deal moves forward, China's CRRC still generates about \$35 billion in annual revenues, which is larger than Siemens, Alstom, and Bombardier combined. The new company, Siemens Alstom, will have its global headquarters and rolling stock business in Paris, while it's signaling and technology unit will be headquartered in Berlin. Combined, the new company will have approximately 62,300 employees. Officials expect the deal to close by the end of 2018. (TN)

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NEW POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN INDIA could put a stop to GE Transportation's contract to supply Indian Railways with 1,000 diesel locomotives, the Wall Street Journal reports. GE secured a \$2.5-billion contract in 2015 to build 1,000 Evolution series locomotives for Indian Railways as long as the locomotive supplier would manufacture the locomotives locally in a new \$200 million factory. But now, India's new railways minister has decided that India should have an all-electric locomotive fleet. Rail officials who are familiar with the matter say India has not yet terminated its arrangement with GE, but officials are exploring options to see if the supplier can build electric locomotives. GE executives recently met one-on-one with the new railways minister to talk about the project, sources say. Bloomberg cites GE representatives who say that changing the agreement would undermine one of the country's most promising infrastructure projects, while also placing India at risk for substantial fees associated with the project.

Indian Railways' entire network includes more than 41,400 miles. GE Transportation's facility near Erie, Pa., has catenary strung over test track but the company has not produced a commercial electric locomotive in decades. (TN)

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EAST BROAD TOP OWNER is trying to sell railroad in one piece. "The East Broad Top is sleeping," Joe Kovalchick says. Indeed, it's been five years since the legendary narrow gauge railroad has operated for the public. The famed

narrow-gauge coal hauler's modern-day owner, Kovalchick, says he's trying to find someone, some group or agency to buy the 33-mile railroad. "I want to keep it together," he says. "It's important to maintain that." He says he's had offers to buy the locomotives, but he doesn't want to sell them piecemeal. He said he had feelers out but so far, no offers. There have been a handful of private runs since the railroad's popular 9-mile round-trips behind steam ended in 2011. Gas-electric car M-1 and one of the road's center-cab diesels have made runs for the annual Friends of the East Broad Top October gathering, and more recently, several EBT motor cars have made shorter trips. However, during the EBT's hibernation, the Friends' organization has kept up its work. Lee Rainey, the organization's president, says volunteers continue to preserve and stabilize buildings with monthly work weekends year-round and a full week of work in May. Kovalchick has partnered the Friends for this work. "Major stabilization work was begun and is about half done on the freight house. Built in 1884, the freight house was in very precarious condition," Rainey says. In addition, Rainey says work on the foundry and the south end of the locomotive shop is complete. Another crew has been stabilizing the lumber shed, and much new window sash has been fabricated for installation in the blacksmith shop, roundhouse and other buildings. Work continues on the restoration of 1882 combine No. 14. The East Broad Top Preservation Association, formed in 2010, operated the railroad for two years and was trying to raise about \$8 million to buy it. But, as of late 2017, it has succeeded only in purchasing the standard gauge former Conrail connection in Mount Union, Pa., and about four miles of the East Broad Top south to Aughwick, Pa. At present the standard gauge trackage is used for railcar storage. The association was able to secure a state grant to re-purpose part of the Mount Union interchange yard into a linear park and install new ties into a portion of the EBT yard. Attempts to reach the association were unsuccessful. Any attempt to re-open the railroad faces several major obstacles. Any one of the road's six steam locomotives would have to undergo a lengthy and expensive overhaul to meet federal regulations, and the track, which was getting rough when the line shut down in 2012, would require an unknown number of ties, amount of ballast and surfacing before it could handle

regular trains. In addition, since it has been shut down for several years, a strong publicity and marketing effort would be necessary to bring in new riders. (TN) Hopefully, a purchaser will step forward to reopen this wonderful, historic railroad.-Ed.

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CANADIAN PACIFIC, Parks Canada and a group of university researchers have teamed up to try and reduce the number of grizzly bear deaths along the railroad's main line through Banff and Yoho National Parks. Now, after five years of research and testing, the team has created a new system that works like a crossing signal to warn the animals of approaching trains. University of Alberta graduate student Jonathan Backs has developed a similar tool to alert bears and other wildlife of oncoming trains. The "wildlife warning system" is a network of small boxes that are attached to the side of the rail with a flashing light and bell sound that are activated when a train is approaching. The system is activated by vibrations and changing magnetic fields. Backs tells Trains News Wire that the purpose of the system is not to scare the bears, but rather alert them of the oncoming train. The first systems were installed around Banff in 2016 in areas that were known to be popular with the bears and other animals. They also set up trail cameras to watch the warning system and its surroundings to see if it actually works. Backs says they are still trying to go through all of the photos that have been gathered but that they have seen some instances where bears appeared to get off the tracks before a train arrived because of the alert. (TN)

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A NEW YORK SUPREME COURT judge is siding with the Adirondack Scenic Railroad in a ruling in favor of the group's lawsuit opposing the state's plan to remove 34 miles of track between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake, N.Y. The state had wanted to replace the rails with a multi-use trail, the Adirondack Daily Enterprise reported. New York's Supreme Court is the lower or trial court. The legal action by the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society, which operates the scenic railroad, was filed last year and contended that New York's departments of Environmental Conservation, Transportation, and the Adirondack Park Agency ignored economic development and historic preservation factors in greenlighting the railroad's removal. The railroad alleged the state's decision to build a rail trail was arbitrary and capricious, and

Main agreed. He said the state did not successfully resolve historic preservation efforts or title issues to land within the corridor. Attorneys representing the society say the state may have to reroute part of its trail near Saranac Lake if they cannot sort out ownership issues for the railroad that the trail would replace. The trail versus rail issue has been brewing for years. The former New York Central line runs 141 miles from Utica to Lake Placid, with the state owning 119 miles from Remsen to Lake Placid. Adirondack Scenic has leased the line from the state and has been operating tourist trains over two segments: from Utica to the Old Forge area since the early 1990s, and from 2000 through 2016 between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake. The intervening 69 miles from Big Moose to Saranac Lake has been allowed to deteriorate. This 10-mph excepted track only received enough maintenance so that empty Saranac Lake-Lake Placid equipment could move to Utica for repairs and winter storage, though the Society would like the state to help it restore service over the entire route. In 2016, at the behest of trail advocates, the state finalized a plan to remove the track between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid and replace them with a trail. To appease the railroad's backers, the state plan also called for upgrading 45 miles of track from Big Moose to Tupper Lake to allow the continuation of tourist train operations. While the case was in court, the state moved ahead with plans for the trail. It did not issue a permit to the railroad to run trains over the most northern portions of the line this year. It also did not permit Rail Explorers to operate rail car rides out of Saranac Lake, as that company had done for two years. Until the mid-1960s, New York Central ran sleeping cars from Grand Central Terminal directly to Lake Placid, a popular ski and tourism destination. The line was acquired by the state from Penn Central and rehabilitated for passenger service for the 1980 Winter Olympics held in Lake Placid. In 2015, the railroad carried more than 74,000 passengers, up from 42,655 in 2009. (TN)

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THE MAN WHO SAVED the Steamtown collection in Scranton, Pa., by getting it named a National Historic Site, has died. Joseph M. McDade, 85, was an 18-term Republican congressman well known for bringing federal dollars home to his northeastern Pennsylvania district. The Steamtown National Historic Site, built on the remains of the Delaware,

Lackawanna & Western Railroad's yard and shop in Scranton, which also included some buildings from the Dickson Locomotive Works, was controversial. The federal government spent more than \$70 million in an attempt to turn the mostly abandoned yards and buildings into a National Park Service site celebrating the nation's railroad history. Critics lambasted the project, which sits next to a shopping mall. They noted the park service didn't ask for the money and most of the site's equipment had nothing to do with Scranton. But McDade and local leaders saw the park as a way to bolster Scranton as a tourist destination. For several years, no steam locomotives operated at the museum, and only recently has Baldwin Locomotive Works 0-6-0 No. 26 returned to service, supplementing historic diesels leased from several historical rail organizations. An earlier attempt by a private entity to operate the museum with steam locomotives ran out of money, and the equipment originally saved by F. Nelson Blount as Steamtown USA in Vermont might have been sold piecemeal or scrapped if McDade hadn't stepped in. As the top Republican on the House Appropriations Committee at the time, he was able to ram through legislation creating the national historic site. (TN)

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MBTA OFFICIALS will not release records to a Boston newspaper that could explain why a commuter coach broke away from a moving train on Sept. 6. The Boston Herald requested written and email communications between several top officials, according to the newspaper. The newspaper says the commuter railroad cited an ongoing investigation as the reason for declining the request. The newspaper had sought the material, emails sent to and from then-General Manager Steve Poftak, Deputy General Manager Jeff Gonneville and Chief Railroad Officer Ryan Coholan to Julie A. Ciollo, the MBTA's assistant general counsel. No-one was injured when the last coach of a four-coach MBTA commuter train, carrying about 400 passengers, detached. Air brakes on the train operated as designed and brought the two segments to a safe stop. Since the incident, which MBTA's operator Keolis called "exceptionally unusual," mechanics have since been putting all coach cars through "more rigorous daily inspection," including physically checking couplers to ensure they are properly connected. Accident investigations led by the

National Transportation Safety Board or the Federal Railroad Administration often require railroad officials to remain silent until federal agencies' work is complete. It is unclear if the agencies are involved in the Massachusetts case. (TN) Wow...something that happens on the East Coast Lines, happening on a real RR—with passengers on board. How scary, how Keolis!-Ed.

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THE MBTA SPENT nearly a half a million dollars last year on recruiting and search efforts to fill only 10 positions, the Boston Herald reports. The \$476,000 in bills includes a \$90,000 search for a new general manager alone. MBTA leadership recently picked former General Electric executive Luis Ramirez to head the agency. The agency spent several hundred thousand additional dollars to help fill specialty roles within the agency, MBTA officials say. The money was also used to cover travel expenses for potential job candidates. MBTA leadership recently outlined the recruitment costs during a presentation advocating for its new recruitment, retention, and training fund, a program that would rely on private sector donations to help offset recruitment costs. The agency still needs to fill senior level roles on its Green Line extension project and other capital project positions. Private donations could help offset recruitment and search efforts, while also helping pay for sign-on bonuses, which are typically between \$20,000 and \$30,000. So far, the fund has yet to accept any donations. (TN)

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DIFFERING SOMEWHAT from previous renderings, images Amtrak released Friday of Avelia Liberty trainsets to be produced by Alstom in Hornell portray expanded sides above the platform level similar to the 20 Bombardier-Alstom Acela Express trainsets they are set to replace. The gray-accented power car nose appears to be much sleeker than current Northeast Corridor workhorses they are set to replace beginning in 2021, but the blue-and-white trainsets retain the Acela logo, implying that Amtrak has decided to keep the brand it introduced in 2000 rather than name a "next generation" version. "Teams from Alstom and Amtrak continue



to finalize interior design elements,” Alstom spokeswoman Michelle Stein tells *Trains News Wire*. She says the first motor built for the trainsets in Hornell that was sent to company facilities in Europe for testing and validation will soon return.



Alstom has been making changes at its three Hornell sites to accommodate different production aspects of the 28-trainset order. (TN)

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TRAINS MAGAZINE HAS AWARDED its \$10,000 2017 Preservation Award to the Mad River & NKP Railroad Museum in Bellevue, Ohio, for the restoration of the dome on America’s first dome car, Chicago, Burlington & Quincy’s *Silver Dome*. The grant will sponsor restoration of the dome, specifically focusing on replacement of trim and plexiglass which have discolored with time. Work on the dome coincides with the museum’s effort to restore the entire car, including reupholstery, carpeting, and window sill work. The award was made from nearly 40 applicants in this, the 18th year, for *Trains’* \$10,000 grant. (TN)

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ITS BATHROOMS are gold-plated, its ceilings are made of German-stained glass and a violinist plays in the sycamore wood-paneled lounge. It also moves at 30 miles an hour. Japan’s biggest railway companies, which pack millions of commuters into rush-hour trains, are introducing luxury rail tours that cost as much as \$22,000 per couple. The tours, which sell out months in advance, are one

way the companies are trying to grow as a shrinking population saps their core business. Satoru Horikoshi, a medical doctor from Tokyo, surprised his wife, Mari, with tickets for a journey on Tokyu Corp.’s Royal Express to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. The three-hour journey to the Izu Peninsula’s beaches cost about \$300 per person compared with \$29 on a regular train—sans violin recital or lunch of deer confit, poached shrimp and chilled green tea. Mr. Horikoshi, a lifelong train enthusiast, decided he could indulge in his passion while his wife, who enjoyed dining-car meals as a young girl, could enjoy hers. “I really loved the dining car,” Mrs. Horikoshi said. “We hardly see them these days.” Posh train tours operate on other continents but what distinguishes Japan is how some of the nation’s biggest rail operators—each with more than \$10 billion in annual revenue—are embracing the potential of wealthy older people and foreign visitors as a path out of stagnation. Passengers in Japan took 23.6 billion train trips in the year ended March 2015, the most recent national data available from the government, only 4% more than they did two decades before. This luxury segment, while earning relatively little revenue, helps burnish the brand and attract travelers to the lower-priced tours, hotels and restaurants the railway companies are increasingly operating as part of an effort to diversify away from their core business. “Luxury trains have a very small impact on the total earnings,” said Seigo Ando, senior analyst at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley, referring to revenue in the tens of millions of dollars for them. “Investors realize this is sort of an advertisement or brand placement.” East Japan Railway Co., which carries more than 750,000 passengers a day through Tokyo’s Shinjuku Station, introduced a train in May that seats only 34 and carried just 833 passengers in four months. It is no ordinary train. The champagne-colored Shikishima (Four Seasons Island) was designed by Ken Kiyoyuki Okuyama—a Japanese industrial designer known for his work with Ferrari and Porsche—and boasts its own exclusive platform in Tokyo’s Ueno Station. The carriage interiors have traditional tatami mats and wooden paneling meant to invoke the surrounding forests. The train, including the new platform, cost nearly \$90 million. Tickets, sold through a lottery, are sold out until June. A four-day itinerary includes sightseeing at ancient castles and

temples and dinner at a Japanese inn with mushrooms collected by a staff forager. (WSJ)

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BILL SCOTT SAYS he's been working with CSX Transportation for 35 years, and he's not happy about the decline in service he's seen. "I have seen service go from having a CSX agent at your door, to having to call someone in Jacksonville, Fla., who is looking at a computer screen, but knows nothing about your local facility or your local rail line," said Scott, vice president of Collum's Lumber Products in Allendale, S.C. Customer service was a major theme that ran through the Surface Transportation Board's listening session Oct. 11, where Scott and fellow CSX customers discussed the problems ranging from service disruptions to car supply to local switching service. Shippers also said that CSX had not given enough advance notice about changes in network service. Mary Pileggi, logistics manager for the Chemours Co., and representing the National Industrial Transportation League, said that members were planning 24 to 36 months in advance what their transportation needs would be. "Customer service is a critical function." Pileggi said. "For anyone to think that a few weeks or a few days notice can fit into that model, they're wrong." E. Hunter Harrison, CSX's CEO, was to have the final word at the day-long session, but Cindy Sanborn, the railroad's chief operating officer, spoke in his place. Sanborn said that the railroad had "loudly and clearly" heard what shippers said about communications. For any future changes, the CSX customer service department in Jacksonville would be notifying customers. STB Acting Chairman Ann Begeman asked how many customer service representatives the company had. Bob Frulla, senior vice president of network operations, said that there were 40 customer service clerks and 40 managers, down from 120 people before the management changes. (TN) This is the crux of the problem..."do more with less" (people) IMHO.-Ed.

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NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY representatives in Congress are introducing a bill that would require federal transportation agencies to test locomotive engineers for sleep apnea. The bill would force the U.S. Department of Transportation to create a rule requiring transit agencies and railroads to test engineers for sleep apnea. A law, if approved by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump

would supersede Trump's decision last month that allows railroads to choose whether to test operators. Since Trump's announcement, the Federal Railroad Administration says it is no longer pursuing a rule that would mandate the tests, adding that any testing should be up to the railroads to decide. (TN)

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CHINESE-MADE MBTA Orange Line cars are expected to depart for the U.S. Nov. 18. Officials for CRRC MA — the Boston-based arm of the gigantic Chinese rail rolling stock and equipment supplier — say cars will first move from northeast China where they were made, to the major port city of Shanghai in the center of the country. The first four-car set made a public run in China on Monday with CRRC, Chinese government, and MBTA officials attending. The cars are the first of a 404-car order for MBTA, 152 for the Orange Line and 252 for the Red Line, company officials say. CRRC MA workers are also building a \$95 million, 204,000 square foot assembly plant in Springfield, Mass., where the bulk of cars will be finished — though the final number built in the U.S. has yet to be announced. (TN)

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ONE VIA RAIL CANADA train is set to take the rarest of rare miles journeys for trains: from Churchill, Manitoba over Hudson Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Crews loaded a stranded VIA Rail passenger train onboard the MV Nunalik on Wednesday. The ship is expected to take the train to eastern Canada for repatriation to the North American rail network after it was stranded in Churchill in May. That was when OmniTRAX's Herchmer Subdivision became impassable north of Avery, Man., at milepost 355 due to 19 washouts and 5 damaged bridges. Making the journey south are F40PH-3 locomotives Nos. 6434 and 6402, baggage car 8601, coaches 8105 and 8118, dining car 8418 *York*, and 3 section — 8 roomette, 1 drawing room, 3 double-bedroom — sleeping car 8222 *Chateau Richelieu*. (TN)

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UNION PACIFIC is introducing another heritage locomotive to its fleet, this time in honor of a World War II bomber aircraft downed over Europe. Railroad officials repainted SD70AH, or SD70AC, No. 9026 as No. 1943, commemorating the year that B-17F Flying Fortress bomber, *The Spirit of the Union Pacific*, rolled off an assembly room floor

bound for the skies over Nazi-occupied Europe. Nazis shot down the aircraft while it and its crew were on a bombing mission over Munster, Germany. Union Pacific painted the locomotive to honor veterans in all branches of military service and included design elements from each: Air Force silver, a blue stripe from Strategic Air Command, hand-drawn lettering in homage to the B-17's nose art, a Coast Guard safety stripe, Navy battleship gray, and camouflage for the Army and Marine Corps. A prisoner of war-missing in action, or POW-MIA, emblem is painted on the unit's B-end. (TN)



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THE ORANGE EMPIRE RAILWAY Museum in Perris, CA, has restored Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe No. 108, an EMD FP45, to its original 1967 Warbonnet passenger colors. The locomotive is the last of nine FP45s purchased by AT&SF which are six-axle cowl units that once led the hot *Super C* freight and various streamlined passenger trains. The engine was renumbered No. 5948 and went into freight service when Amtrak assumed passenger duties. It wore various freight colors and numbers until 1989, when it emerged as red and silver No. 102 for the "Super Fleet" marketing campaign. BNSF Railway donated the faded warbonnet (then re-numbered to No. 98) to the museum in January 1998. The restoration team began work in 2012, rebuilding the unit inside and out. No. 108 is expected to make a public debut in November. (TN)



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LOOK WHAT MASSDOT IS USING on their ballast train! I believe this is from the closed Old Colony & Fall River Museum, that was in Fall River for many years. Wonder if the MDOT bought it or just using for a while? Photos by Dan Compston, a friend of Kevin and who's the last CSX mechanic east of Springfield. (Ed)

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WILDFIRES RAGING through northern California this week have left the region's railroads relatively unscathed — so far. As of early this month, nearly

two dozen major fires torched 170,000 acres across the state, with the worst being north of San Francisco in Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, and Yuba counties, the San Francisco Chronicle reports. The fires have destroyed thousands of homes and buildings and killed at least 23 people. Union Pacific spokesperson Justin Jacobs tells *Trains News Wire* that the Class I railroad has not been directly affected by the fires, but that officials are keeping a close eye on the situation. BNSF Railway spokesperson Lena Kent says that the railroad, which operates trains on UP trackage through the area, has reduced train speeds due to visibility in some areas. Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit, which provides commuter rail service in Marin and Sonoma counties, is operating on a limited schedule from the Santa Rosa, Calif., station to San Rafael, Calif. It is offering free rides to assist those in the area affected by the fire. Due to power outages and in the northern portion of Santa Rosa resulting from extreme fire conditions in the area, the Sonoma County Airport and Santa Rosa North stations are currently closed, according to the commuter operator. Click here for the latest schedule information. The Napa Valley Wine Train has also closed this week due to extreme fire conditions and hazardous smoke in the area. Wine train representative Jane Chung tells *Trains News Wire* that operations have been suspended until further notice. (TN)

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GIRLS ARE FINALLY getting a bigger role in Thomas the Tank Engine's boy-dominated world. Mattel, the toy maker that owns the Thomas brand, will add two female characters to the "Thomas & Friends" TV series next year. "Nia" and "Rebecca" will appear in each episode and help fix the gender imbalance at the shed where Thomas and the other main characters love. Three of the seven engines at Tidmouth Sheds will be female, up from just one. (PL)

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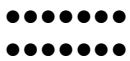
A 70-SOMETHING World War II veteran is leaving Iowa and returning to the old battlefields of Europe for good. Specifically, a Mason City, Iowa-based 65-ton Whitcomb diesel is going to Holland where it once served in the U.S. Army during the war. The locomotive loaded onto a ship in Milwaukee, Wis., on Thursday and is scheduled to arrive in

Antwerp during the week of Nov. 6. The locomotive was one of several hundred 65-ton center-cab Whitcombs sent to Europe as the Allies defeated the Nazis. The locomotive returned to the U.S. after the war and was sold as military surplus. The 65-ton tonner, formerly U.S. Army Transportation Corps No. 7989, was donated by the Lehigh Cement Co. to the Stoomrein Goes-Borsele Museum in the town of Goes in the Netherlands. The museum has a collection of World War II-era rolling stock and locomotives, including a Davenport 0-6-0T built in 1943. Museum leaders had been seeking an example of the center-cab Whitcomb diesel, 20 of which were sold to the country at the end of World War II. When museum leaders began their search for a Whitcomb, they also began a crowd-funding campaign, which has raised about \$41,000 to date. Much of that amount will be spent to move the locomotive from Iowa to Milwaukee and from Antwerp to Goes. The ocean shipping has been donated by Splietoff Shipping, which makes two monthly trips between Antwerp and several Great Lakes ports. "It is a big deal for us, we were approached by a museum in the Netherlands that wanted to restore this back to its original condition to celebrate the 75th anniversary of World War II, and we're happy to be a part of that," Lehigh Cement Plant Manager Tom O'Neill told local newspapers. While at Lehigh Cement, the locomotive's original Buda diesel prime movers were replaced with Cummins engines, and the trucks and traction motors were also replaced. Fortunately, the original trucks and traction motors were still on hand at the plant and will accompany the locomotive to Holland. "We were looking for years to find one Whitcomb to complete our collection in the railway museum," reported Project Manager Jos van der Heijden with Stoomrein Goes-Borsele by telephone to the Mason City Globe-Gazette newspaper. (TN)

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INDIAN RAILWAY OFFICIALS owe extra thanks to the 40 people who went to track level and pushed

an express train into place. The 16-car express train departed Mumbai Central terminal at 7:45 p.m. on Oct. 19, but was held by a stop signal before it reached the higher speed network. The train's impatient engineer did not see that the switch point in front of the train lined to a stub-ended track without catenary and proceeded. The newspaper cites railway officials saying the rear of the train still faced the stub-end track on the Mumbai station platform — meaning that officials could not get the helper locomotive into position from either direction when the train's electric locomotive died. That's when officials emptied the train and 40 people pushed the express back to the overhead catenary. Trains were allowed through the track at restricted speed beginning at 9:15 p.m. (TN) Imagine an episode like this happening on Amtrak? —Ed.



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

TRAINS

Intermodal Mystery

Cumbres and those Sheep

Sunday in the Sun Lounge

One of 3 special cars from the ACL

The Long Wait

East Broad Top dual-gauge yard at Mt. Union

Zipper ("In my own Words")

The loyalty of a RR dog

MODEL RAILROADER

Tracks in the Street

Make a Hill from Foam Peanuts

ABCs of DCC Power District Management

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

Test Track: Rapido Trains RDC

News sources: [Boston Globe](#), [Boston Herald](#), [Amtrak "News"](#), [Trains Newswire](#), [Railway Age](#), [Railpace](#) Newsmagazine, [RRE "Callboy"](#), "The 470", [Patriot Ledger](#), [Wall Street Journal](#).

A CLUB IN TRANSITION-4

Dave Clinton

I believe that we had one of our first business meetings at Building 51 in the summer of 1993. I remember the lights hanging down (and everything else hanging down) and the generator working outside, since there was no service past the Fire

Museum. We could not tap into the Fire Museum line, since it was provided by the school offices, which to this day I don't understand. We ended up having to pay Hingham Light Plant to bring the 3-phase in from Fort Hill St., at a cost of over \$700/pole.

Having the old layout in Weymouth and trying to build new facilities in Hingham was always a "tug-of-war". "The troops were restless", with this situation! Some thought that everyone should be working on preparing Building 51 and others felt that we were going to be running trains in the Broad Street basement for many years to come, so it was important to keep the layout in good shape and continue to work on it. I was "torn" about this situation and tried to play both sides of the street, continuing to attend the Monday/Thursday sessions at the old Club and showing up some Saturdays at the new one. Not having taken after my "woodworker" father, I was pretty useless at these sessions, though. Good for taking old nails out of the used lumber that had been donated, but that was about it. Looking back, though, we needed members doing everything from pulling out nails and being "go-fors" to putting up sheetrock, ceilings, plumbing and electrical. We had a good group of diverse abilities, as you see and experience the result!

So, we had our meetings, either sweating or freezing our butts off, for at least a year, until the members' area was heated and air-conditioned. This allowed the workers to go into the "train room", where insulation, sheetrock and ceilings were installed.

We had discussed changing over to DCC, with the move to the new building, by asking representatives of each of the three systems (Lenz, Digitrax and NCE) for samples and to give us demonstrations. Debbie Ames, owner of Lenz actually came to the Club and showed us their set-up. We also tested the NCE and Digitrax equipment, which had been loaned to us. The Electrical Committee decided that the Digitrax would be best for us, which they recommended to the members, after it was decided by vote that the majority of members wanted to go with DCC. We were able to place our first order for Digitrax equipment at a 55% discount. (I believe we ordered

over \$6,000 of assorted supplies at that time.) It was a good start. I'm just a little sad, though, that several of the 5 members, who voted against going DCC have never run a train on the new layout. They are missing so much fun, because of their fear of "innovation" and "new" ways to operate.

We set up an 8-ft. "test" table in the train room, about where Bryant City is now, and included turnouts and some curved track. This is where we first found out about the "trials and tribulations" of some of the turnouts and DCC; especially with the old turnouts on the only section of the Weymouth layout that we brought over to start Middleton. (It was "Middleton" at in Weymouth.) The first DCC installations, which eventually led to the "Decoder Clinics", were held at a round table we had in what is now the meeting room. We learned an awful lot from this test table, and passed it along to anyone who wanted to learn.

We had decided that since our lease in Weymouth came up for renewal at the end of December 1998, it would be a good time to "officially" move. So, work stopped on the "South Division" at the beginning of that year, and it was dismantled in the late spring. We had a final North Division "Operations" in July and then we took the rest of the year to remove and demolish the remaining layout. Many, many trips were taken between the Weymouth location and Bldg. 51 by many, many members; there was a lot of stuff! So, January 1, 1999 was the official date of our being "all together" again, with happier times to come!

MEMBER NEWS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The following members have made it through another year and deserve congratulations:

- Tom Wylie November 5th
- Fred Foley November 17th
- Gary Mangelinkx..... November 23rd

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. For those who knew Bob Buck, who passed away six years ago this month, his youngest son, Russell, passed away on October 3rd. Russell was a good friend and had a great sense of humor...took after his dad. Only 53, this was a shock to all and he will be missed by many, including myself. May he rest in peace now, after having a very tough year.
2. Hope everyone is in the "spirit" for the Show and Open House this coming weekend. We should get a good turn-out, with the extra publicity from the Boston Globe article copied below. Look forward to seeing you!

..... *David N. Clinton*

RUNNING EXTRA

What's with adults still playing with toy trains?

By Johanna Seltz **Globe Correspondent** October 20, 2017



There are more than 1,800 feet of track coursing through model structures in the South Shore Model Railway Club and Museum in Hingham.

Just across from the West Hingham commuter rail station, a driveway-like road heads past playing fields, a skate park, empty buildings, a fire

museum, the town's public works headquarters, and — right before the Bare Cove Park trails once popular with dog walkers before selectmen took aim at leashless canines — you come to another train destination of sorts: the South Shore Model Railway Club and Museum.

Inside the windowless former Navy munitions warehouse, model trains hurtle over more than 1,800 feet of track, zipping past farms and factories, cities and cemeteries, through tunnels, and over bridges. The intricate layout, named the East Coast Line, takes up about half of the cavernous 100,000-square-foot structure. Expansion plans include a replica of Boston's South Station, designed according to the original blueprints. The entire system runs digitally, with computer chips embedded in each train locomotive.

"This is not your father's train set," said Jack Foley of Scituate, president of the club, which he proudly



Jack Foley says the hobby is "creative, it's technical. There's the artistic side, electronics, woodworking. And it's relaxing."

said started in 1938, currently has 65 members, and is one of the largest and oldest model train clubs in the country. The club began with five members in the basement of a Quincy hobby shop, and was in the basement of a Weymouth storefront for 39 years before moving to Hingham in 1998. There are twice-weekly meetings, although members wander in and out, day and night, Foley said. "Most of the time there's somebody here," he said. The club will hold its fall open house on Oct. 28 and 29.

"We're always looking for new members, and we want to share the hobby as much as possible; we're happy to have people come watch us play," said Paul Cutler III of Foxborough, who as the club's operations' chairman is in charge of running



They roll through intricately designed model neighborhoods.

the trains, and also designs the layout using a computer design application to create settings that are loosely based on actual places. "I tell people to think of it as a 3-D game where the rules are reality," he said.

At 42, Cutler is one of the younger members of the club, which trends more toward the 50-70 age category. There are no women members, although club officials say everyone is welcome. Cutler joined in 1993 when he was 18, three years after his model train enthusiast father, Paul Cutler Jr., became a member. He said there is concern about the "graying of the hobby," but he added that the worry has existed for decades and he's hopeful there will be an influx of new members who "aren't eligible for retirement."

Model trains have been around since the 1860s, according to an online history from the National Toy Train Museum in Strasburg, Pa. Fifty years later, Lionel made its first electric train for store display windows, followed by other manufacturers. The hobby surged in the 1950s, when the market split between cheaper toy trains for children and the more detailed and accurate reproduction trains collected by adults. The museum estimates there are about half a million model train hobbyists in the United States and Canada. What's the attraction?



The South Shore Model Railway Club and Museum says new members are always welcome.

"It's an amazing hobby, because there are so many aspects," said Foley, who is in his 60s and joined the club about 20 years ago. "It's creative, it's technical. There's the artistic side, electronics, woodworking. And it's relaxing."

Simon Collinge, 67, is the club's newest member. The Hingham resident said he'd been interested in model railways since he was a child in England. He joined when he retired because he'd gone to the open houses in the past and been impressed by the scope of the train layout. He hopes to use his information technology background to help with the technical end of the trains, or perhaps get into the artistic aspect of creating scenery and models. The appeal, he said, is "a certain type of escapism. It's somewhere people can go and not be expected to do anything aside from enjoying their time there."



The Model Railroad Show and Open House is scheduled for Oct. 28 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Oct. 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for seniors and children ages 5 to 12; children 4 and under free. The club is at 52 Bare

Cove Park Drive, Hingham. More information is available at www.ssmrc.org.

Concern: Rise in deaths on railroad tracks

By **Gerry Tuoti**
WICKED LOCAL NEWSBANK EDITOR
and **Tom Relihan**
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

10-16-17
PL

safety group; and the state Department of Public Health.

Locally, 11 people have been killed along Kingston/Plymouth, Middleboro/Lakeville and Providence/Stoughton lines, according to data provided by the MBTA.

One man was trying to dash across the railroad tracks to catch a commuter train at the Brockton MBTA station in February.

Another drove his truck down the tracks in Abington in mid-July. A similar scene unfolded last winter in Bridgewater: A 20-year-old man drove down the tracks and stopped before his car was hit by a freight train.

In January, the car a 63-year-old man was driving collided with a commuter train in Holbrook.

All four men were struck and killed by trains.

In Massachusetts, such incidents have increased sharply in recent years. Now, state officials are looking into ways to reverse the trend.

Last month, the MBTA announced the creation of a committee that will study the matter, T spokesman Joe Pesaturo said. The Rail Safety Committee will include representatives of: the MBTA; Keolis, the company that operates the commuter rail system; the U.S. Department of Transportation; Samaritans Inc., a suicide prevention group; Operation Lifesaver, a train

"We're looking at how do we reduce those numbers," said MBTA Transit Police officer Dana Nye, a statewide coordinator for Operation Lifesaver. "There is a concerted effort going on to collect the data and analyze it. There is a very committed effort we're strongly working on to address the issue."

Last month, a Phillips Academy Andover student wandered onto commuter rail tracks in Andover, becoming the fourth person in Massachusetts to be killed by a train in September alone. Earlier in September, people were struck and killed by trains in Natick, Dedham and Beverly.

Statewide, there has been a sharp spike in fatal train strikes in the past year, according to the Federal Rail Administration. Data from the FRA's Office of Safety Analysis shows that 20 people were killed by trains in Massachusetts in fiscal 2017, a 12-month period that ended June 30. That is a 150 percent increase from the eight deaths reported in fiscal 2016.

Hell Gate Bridge, a rail span and a fine place to hide from zombies, turns 100

By James Barron

Allan Renz laughed at the question: Would people care as much about one of the bridges his grandfather designed if the word “Heck” were in its name, instead of “Hell”?

“The rhythm of ‘Heck’ doesn’t work,” said Mr. Renz, whose grandfather was the civil engineer Gustav Lindenthal, who had a hand in the Williamsburg, Manhattan and Queensboro Bridges and was New York City’s first bridge commissioner.



The Hell Gate Bridge has more than 1.17 million rivets, according to photographer Dave Frieder. (Photo: Jet Lowe, via Library of Congress)

Lindenthal’s credits also include the Hell Gate Bridge, the railroad span with a milestone coming up next week. The first train rumbled over the Hell Gate 100 years ago on Thursday, a moment that will be celebrated by bridge fans.

The Hell Gate Bridge is the main structure in a rail link between the Bronx and Queens that crosses over Randalls and Wards Islands. It is an essential connector in the heavily traveled Northeast rail corridor between Washington and Boston, and it was all about convenience. Previously, passengers traveling from Washington to Boston, for example, had to take one train to Jersey City and a ferry to Manhattan, where they had to find Grand Central Terminal and catch another train to New England.

Pennsylvania Station and the tunnels beneath the Hudson River, completed a few years before the Hell Gate, did away with the ferry ride. The Hell Gate did away with the dash from Penn Station to Grand Central and the second train. It was magic for once-harried passengers.

“This is an iconic bridge that transformed the way the Northeast corridor lived,” said Antonio Meloni, 61, who grew up in Astoria and started the nonprofit New York Anti-Crime Agency, which arranges graffiti cleanups, among other things.

“And for Astoria, every organization in Astoria, they use the Hell Gate Bridge as a symbol of Astoria,” he continued, “but it’s a lot bigger than just Astoria. It’s about how we as a country were able to build a bridge that big. It’s a much larger representation of the skill that we as a country showed.”

It has more than 1.17 million rivets, according to Dave Frieder, a photographer who is assembling a coffee-table book about the bridges in and around New York.

“It’s bigger than you think, and when you get up there, it’s gargantuan,” declared Mr. Frieder, who climbed the bridge in 2002 — with official permission, he said — and returned to search out engineering trivia that is not trivial at all. The Hell Gate Bridge has the thickest rivets of any bridge in New York. He said that they are nearly 10 inches long, and that most are 1¼ inch in diameter.

The first train to cross the Hell Gate was an inspection train. The *New York Times* said there was a short dedication ceremony at the Bronx end of what was officially known as the New York Connecting Railroad Bridge.

The name came from the word “hellegat,” Dutch for “hell channel,” a description of the treacherous stretch of river that it crosses and its infamous tides and rocks. There were countless wrecks there, and Robert S. Singleton, the executive director of the Greater Astoria Historical Society, noted that the General Slocum disaster unfolded there. The General Slocum was a steamboat that caught fire and sank in 1904, killing more than 1,000 people.

The bridge, which Lindenthal designed with the architect Henry Hornbostel, “really was his pride and joy,” Mr. Renz said.

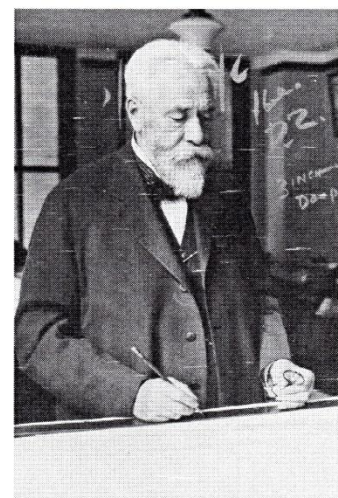
“He didn’t just want to build a bridge. He wanted the bridge to look a particular way,” he said. “The stone towers are really only decorative. They don’t have any structural function. But he had those stone towers built because he felt they made it look right.”

Bridge aficionados like Mr. Frieder say the Sydney Harbor Bridge in Australia was inspired by the Hell Gate. The engineers from Australia visited New York in the 1920s. “They saw the Hell Gate Bridge, and they said, ‘That’s what we want.’” Mr. Frieder said.

Jim Richter, Amtrak’s deputy chief engineer for structures, has a framed picture of the Hell Gate on the wall of his office. His office is in 30th Street Station in Philadelphia, which he calls “the cathedral of railroading” because it was the nerve center of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

But the Hell Gate, he said, is “more than a landmark.”

“That’s really, to me, a great symbol of the railroad,” he said. “It’s a tribute to the great bridge engineers of the past.” He said they had designed bridges that would last with minimal maintenance.



Gustav Lindenthal, the civil engineer behind the Hell Gate Bridge, also had a hand in the Williamsburg, Manhattan and Queensboro Bridges and was New York City’s first bridge commissioner. (Underwood & Underwood, N.Y.)

[Contributed by Frank Donovan]