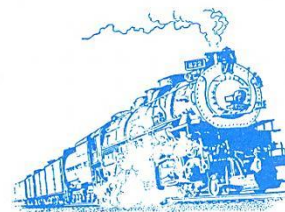


The Semaphore

South Shore Model Railway Club

NEWSLETTER

Home of the "East Coast Lines" since 1938



MAY 28, 2018 ■■■■■■■■■■■■ VOLUME 38 ■■■■■■■■■■■■ NUMBER 5



The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Southeastern Massachusetts.....	Paul Cutler, Jr.
“The Operator”.....	Paul Cutler III
Cape Cod News.....	Skip Burton
Boston <u>Herald</u> Reporter.....	Jim South
Boston Globe & <u>Wall Street Journal</u> Reporters	Paul Bonanno, Jack Foley
Rhode Island News.....	Tony Donatelli
Amtrak News.....	Rick Sutton
“The Chief’s Corner”.....	Fred Lockhart

PRODUCTION STAFF

Publication.....	Al Taylor
	Al Munn
	Jim Ferris
	Bryan Miller
Web Page	Savery Moore
Club Photographer.....	Joe Dumas

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. ©2018
E-mail: daveclinton@verizon.net Club phone: 781-740-2000. Web page: www.ssmrc.org

VOLUME 38 ■■■■■ NUMBER 5 ■■■■■ MAY 2018

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)
	Gary Mangelinkx (Int.)

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ON THE COVER: It’s June 1982—a day off work for railfanning--and a beautiful one at that. Barry Doland, Frank Ellis and I have found the W. Portal of the Hoosac Tunnel in North Adams. Guilford owns the MEC, B&M D&H and Springfield Terminal, so power is mixed and can be seen anywhere on their system. Here’s the daily, westbound Portland, ME (Rigby Yard) to Mechanicville, NY freight, with a D&H GP39-2 (ex-RDG) unit in the lead. Train-watching was a little “different” in those days! Dave Clinton

FORM 19 ORDERS

MAY B.O.D. MEETING

Thursday, May 31st 8 p.m.

JUNE BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, June 4th 8 p.m.

JUNE ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, June 4th 8 p.m.

DECODER/EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, June 7th 8 p.m.

JUNE NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Saturday, June 23rd

JUNE B.O.D.

Monday, June 25th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

Congratulations to **Ye Ed** on winning this month's 50/50 Raffle!

March Puzzle "Some B&M RR Cars", from Al Taylor, here's who found the names:

Barry Doland	Skip Burton
Ron Clough	Dan Peterson
Al Munn	Bob Farrenkopf
Coley Walsh	Bryan Miller
Fred Lockhart	Al McCarty
Savery Moore	"Gunny"
Jim Ferris	Roger St. Peter
Will Baker	Bill Garvey
Doug Buchanan	Don Pierce

Congratulations to **Skip**, who won the draw for the VIA Rail Canada RDC-1 model of the prototype, which Rapido Trains has purchased and is refurbishing.

This month's contest answer was "Richard Anderson", the newest president and CEO of Amtrak. He comes from Delta Airlines. Here's who found the answers:

Roger St. Peter	"Gunny"
Al Taylor	Al Munn
Jim South	Brendan Sheehan
Jim Ferris	Bill Roach
Skip Burton	Dan Peterson

Barry Doland
Fred Foley

Ron Clough
Savery Moore

All participants went home with an Amtrak mug, with the "heritage" locomotives pictured.

The Annual Show/Open House Raffle was won by:

1st Scott Straconi
2nd Geno Connell (Al Taylor's friend, donated the \$50 back to Club!
3rd Ben Bloomberg

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

On Monday night, May 21st, we held an Operations night and the trains ran pretty well for the most part. However, our DCC system really gave us trouble. Starting right out, before the clock started, my throttle did not want to function wirelessly; I had to use it in a tethered mode and that problem continued for the rest of the night. Other members were also having control or no control issues. There were problems with losing locomotive consists and one of the computers in the Dispatcher's office quit controlling turnouts. I find this very disturbing because it is intermittent. There does not seem to be any pattern to these problems popping up. I know, "Murphey's Law". Well, it was certainly there during operations and tomorrow the system may work just fine??? So frustrating, because we have bought the latest Command Station, done upgrades to the throttles and other hardware in the system and are still having these problems. The bottom line: we have to stay with it because it would be too expensive to change to another brand of DCC equipment.



Progress on the railroad continues at its regular pace. The Trackwork Committee is still working installing turnouts for the industrial area on the Trolley section. The Benchwork Committee is working in the new staging area, installing the benchwork for the Boston Division mainline that runs above the staging yard and below the Narrow Gauge and Larson Branch track. Even though the Boston Division will not be active in that area for a long time, the benchwork must be done now to avoid problems later on. The Scenery Committee

continues to make progress in Cedar Hill and they can still use some help on ballasting the mainlines.

That's all I have for this month, comments and questions are always welcome.

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer



SAMPLE BALLOT

OFFICIAL BALLOT
OF THE

South Shore Model Railway
Club & Museum

June 4, 2018

Instructions to voters: Vote for NO MORE THAN ONE (1) PERSON PER POSITION (except DIRECTORS-- no more than TWO (2) people) by placing an "X" in the box next to the candidate of your choice. IF YOU MAKE A WRITE-IN CANDIDATE, you MUST PLACE AN "X" in the box next to the write-in candidate's name. If these instructions are not followed, your ballot will not be counted. Thank you!

PRESIDENT

- JACK FOLEY*
- _____

VICE PRESIDENT

- DAN PETERSON*
- _____

TREASURER

- WILL BAKER*
- _____

SECRETARY

- DAVE CLINTON*
- _____

*Denotes incumbent

CHIEF ENGINEER

- FRED LOCKHART*
- _____

DIRECTORS for 2-Year Term
VOTE FOR TWO (2) CANDIDATES

- BILL GARVEY *
- BRYAN MILLER *
- _____

DIRECTOR for 1-Year Term
(VOTE 1 CANDIDATE TO FILL RICK SUTTON'S TERM)

- GARY "GUNNY" MANGELINKX
- SAVERY MOORE
- _____



SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

MAY 2013 (5 years ago)

- Amtrak's new "Cities Sprinter" locomotive from Siemens begins replacing AEM-7 "Mighty Mouse".
- Rich Prone, retired MBTA engineer and Old Colony supporter, starts push for Commuter Rail weekend pass.
- Cedar Hill Engine Terminal wired. Toggle panels being made for turnout controls.
- Cog Railway returns one steam trip a day to climb up Mt. Washington; 8:15 a.m. departure.

• One round-trip "Express Service" begins on Commuter Rail between Worcester and Boston.

• First three (of 75) By-level Commuter Rail cars from Hyundai-Rotem put into service.

• Amtrak putting finishing touches on Niantic River RR Bridge, after three years of construction.

• GE's Erie, PA, loco plant cutting 950 unionized jobs, and moving employment to newer facility in Fort Worth, TX, where they will add 160 non-unionized jobs.

• Federal Government to help fund repair of ex-B&M railroad bridge over Merrimack River in Haverhill, MA.

• MA D.O.T. Board unanimously approved plans to build new Commuter Rail station in Brighton, especially where New Balance will pay to build and operate it; to be called "Boston Landing".

MAY 2008 (10 years ago)

• Construction begins on World's longest tunnel—35 miles in Switzerland.

• Lionel emerges from bankruptcy, after 3 years.

• Vermont Rail System connects with Pan Am Railways at Hoosic Falls, NY, adding to business.

• EMD introduces first re-powered locomotives: GP9 fitted with 8-cylinder, 710ECO engine.

• Amtrak celebrates first "National Train Day" at many stations around country. Events in 28 states.

• John Mica (R-FL), a staunch opponent of Amtrak, proposes Northeast Corridor open to private competitors of Amtrak, to be more efficient.

• NS and Pan Am form "Patriot Corridor", a joint ownership of line from Mechanicville, NY to Ayer, MA. "Pan Am Southern" is official name.

• Hyundai-Rotem, World's 3rd largest urban train car maker, wins \$170 million contract to build 75 bi-levels for MBTA; to be delivered by 2012.

MAY 2003 (15 years ago)

• VT gives operating agreement to Vermont Rail Systems for ex-CP/B&M joint line between St. Johnsbury and White River Jct., VT.

• CT awards contract to begin planning for commuter rail service between New Haven and Springfield, MA.

• Construction begins on 4.1-mile Chatham portion of Cape Cod Rail Trail (ex-New Haven).

• UP opens Union Pacific Railroad Museum at historic Council Bluffs Carnegie Library.

• British Columbia puts BC Rail up for private operation.

• "Greenbush on Track" group formed by South Shore Chamber of Commerce to promote construction.

MAY 1998 (20 Years Ago)

• Bob Knapp finishes hanging wooden doors in members' section of Building 51.

• Ductwork installed in layout room by Walsh Sheet Metal.

• Layout room floor sealed.

• Conrail takes delivery of the first SD70MACs, after BN's initial order.

• White Pass & Yukon celebrates 100th anniversary.

• President Clinton appoints former Gov. Dukakis to serve on Amtrak Reform Board.

- ✱Bankrupt Pan Am Corp. bought by Guilford Transportation Industries.
- ✱P&W celebrates 25 years as independent RR.
- ✱NS and Guilford start intermodal service between Waterville, ME and Devons Commerce Center in Ayer.

MAY 1993 (25 Years Ago)

- ✱Phineas Sprague, Jr. completes deal to buy Edaville RR's historic trains for \$1.05 million and bring them to Portland, ME.
- ✱"The Operator" column appears again, after sabbatical by John Governor... "The Gov".
- ✱Swedish X-2000 "tilt" train authorized to operate up to 135 MPH in tests on the Northeast Corridor.
- ✱Abington Historical Commission celebrates 100th anniversary of the "North Abington Railroad Riot".
- ✱St. Lawrence & Atlantic considering establishing intermodal facility in Auburn, Maine.
- ✱MBTA's experimental weekend Commuter Rail service on southside lines proving very popular.
- ✱Club members scoff a lot of material for Bldg. 51 from the closed Ames Department Store in Braintree.

MAY 1988 (30 Years Ago)

- ✱50th Anniversary Club Boxcars produced, along with coffee mugs.
- ✱Bachmann brings out first "Spectrum" model, a 44-tonner, with dual motors. 7 burn out on Club layout!
- ✱Gov. Dukakis pushes for high-speed NY-Boston train service, by riding experimental VIA Rail Canada "LRC" and Spanish "Talgo", while they were demonstrating in Northeast Corridor.
- ✱New Fenway station opens for Commuter Rail passengers attending Red Sox games.
- ✱EMD begins closure of its LaGrange, IL plant, transferring production to London, Ontario plant.
- ✱Conrail takes delivery of B40-8 locos ("Camels"); at 4,000-HP, the most powerful 4-axle units on the roster.
- ✱City of Lowell purchases a closed trolley car to run along with their two open ones.
- ✱Westbound *Sunset Limited* held up behind a freight derailment, so residents of Sanderson, TX turned out and prepared a Bar-B-Q dinner for the train's 350 passengers and crew. Historical Society offered tours of the town, whose population was 1,200!
- ✱Former member Ross Hall and Ye Ed invited guests aboard CONEG'S "LRC" test train from Boston to NY.
- ✱Presidential candidate Michael Dukakis uses "whistle stop" campaigning aboard trains.

MAY 1983 (35 Years Ago)

- ✱"Evening Magazine" spends seven hours at Club for 5-minute segment on NBC.
- ✱"The Gov" appointed Operations Chairman and builds the activity to be the popular one it is today.
- ✱John Gore (D) wins contest for our Boxcar "slogan" with "Everywhere East".
- ✱*Semaphore* printed using stencils and hand-crank mimeograph machine purchased from a church.

- ✱*Rio Grande Zephyr* discontinued when D&RGW finally joins Amtrak. *San Francisco Zephyr* becomes *California Zephyr* and takes to Rio Grande route through the Rockies, as in prior routing when D&RGW ran the train.
- ✱MBTA tests Volkswagen engine in trackless trolley, so that if electric motor breaks down, car can get back to shop in Watertown on its own power.
- ✱CV becomes 50% Alco, with swapped GP9s for RS11s.
- ✱Conrail paints five business cars and its last E8 locomotive into a "Pullman Green" color.
- ✱Western Maryland RR becomes a "fallen flag", with purchase by C&O and operation by B&O, with total loss of separate entity.

DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Only a couple of folks took advantage of the clinic this month. **Will Baker** had an Atlas U30C dressed in the famous CB&Q red/white/grey scheme—quite handsome. This was an easy "P'nP", using the Digitrax DZ123PS. While he was at it, he replaced the terrible "Crapumate" couplers that Atlas insists putting on all their equipment, including the most expensive models. Strange how Intermountain and Bowser can install Kadee couplers, but Atlas can't! (Sigh-Ed.)

Former member **Ross Hall**, who now lives in Harwich Port on the Cape, brought two locos, and had success with both, thanks to help from **Paul Cutler III**. His brass B&M K7 2-8-0 took a DH123D right in the boiler and a German type M62 for the GYSEV Railway was another "P'nP", using the DZ123PS. It was nice seeing Ross and his wife Bonnie and getting caught up-to-date with all the news on both sides of the Canal!

Thanks to Paul Cutler III for setting up the clinic. Our next clinic will be **Thursday, June 7th, 2018**. Sign-up sheet on Bulletin Board. Everyone is welcome!

POTPOURRI

THE OPERATOR OF MBTA commuter trains has released an updated version of its app, including real-time train tracking among other upgrades. The MBTA Commuter Rail App, from MBTA contract operator Keolis, also includes information on track assignments, average seat availability, and on-time performance, as well as updates on weather and

service updates. The app is available in the Apple Store, at Google Play. (TN)

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OFFICIALS AT BOSTON'S Logan Airport will spend \$15 million to study the feasibility of adding a people mover or monorail to connect the airport to the nearest transit station, outlying parking, and a rental-car center, the Boston Globe reports. The move is an effort to reduce traffic congestion at the airport. The rail system would replace shuttle buses which currently connect the airport to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Blue Line subway, as well as rental cars and the economy parking lots. Officials at the Massachusetts Port Authority, which runs the airport, say the new system could take 10 years and a billion dollars to complete — if the study determines it is feasible.

●●●●●●

A CEREMONY WAS HELD at Vienna South container terminal on April 27 to mark the arrival of the first intermodal freight train from Chengdu after a 14-day journey on the 9800km route from China. The train transported 44 containers filled with consumer goods, leaving Chengdu on April 12 and travelling to Khorgos at the Kazakhstan border where containers were transferred to 1520mm-gauge wagons. The train then continued via Saratov, Russia, and Kiev, Ukraine, to Dobra on the Ukrainian-Slovakian border where the containers were transferred to standard-gauge wagons before continuing to Vienna via Bratislava, arriving on April 26. In Vienna, the containers were either transferred to other trains or lorries to continue their onward journey. Rail Cargo Austria says it is planning 400-600 trans-Eurasian trains per year, which it says are competitive with similar journeys by sea. An agreement has also been signed with the Russian Ministry of Transport to cut the journey time to just 10 days in the future. (RA)

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AMTRAK HAS BEEN NAMED to Forbes magazine's 2018 list of America's best employers, its fourth straight year of such recognition. Amtrak, which has about 20,000 employees, is one of 500 employers recognized across 25 industries. Included in the transportation and logistics category, Amtrak was chosen based on the magazine's independent survey of 30,000 people who work for large firms or institutions who rated their willingness to recommend their own companies on a scale of 0 to 10. (TN)

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RAIL MILLING will come to North America by the end of 2019, say representatives of Austria-based rail milling service supplier LINMAG and Switzerland-based Rhomberg Sersa. Milling machines are common in Europe and use carbide-tooth wheels to literally shave or chip rails to remove microscopic cracks, spalls, and shells caused by rolling contact fatigue and other phenomena. European railroads, especially Germany's Deutsche Bahn, also use milling machines to create or maintain rail profiles. Grinding machines, by contrast, use abrasive "stones" to grind away steel to remove deformities or shape rail. Grinding tends to generate sparks and heat on rail, while milling does not. In general, an 88-stone grinding machine used on class I railroads can remove about 0.2 mm of rail at 6 to 8 mph in a single pass. Milling machines can remove 1.5

to 3 mm from the rail head and up to 5 mm from the gage corner, on the inside of a rail, in



a single pass. The milling depth depends on the number and diameter of the cutting heads which move in a single pass over the rail at between 0.5 and 1.5 mph. The machine that the companies expect to import from Austria will be modified for the North American market. Specifically, the milling machine will include a centered coupler pocket in place of European buffer beams, and will be powered by a yet-to-be specified Caterpillar diesel-electric motor in place of a standard diesel-hydraulic engine. Stock and other milling promoters insist that milling will not replace grinding, but is complementary. (TN)

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SPECULATION ABOUT THE FUTURE of GE Transportation continues with the latest rumor about the locomotive maker's future centering on a possible deal between GE Corp. and Wabtec. A combination between the companies would create a railroad powerhouse in North America with a touch of irony: George Westinghouse, who founded predecessors to Wabtec, and Thomas Edison, who founded GE, were bitter rivals in the late 1800s. Westinghouse's companies served railroads through his Westinghouse Air Brake Company and,

eventually, alternating current electric technologies. GE meanwhile began with Edison's laboratories, and then went on to build locomotives, and make lightbulbs, dishwashers, and electric power plants, focusing heavily on direct current electricity. Today, Wabtec builds and rebuilds locomotives under the Motive Power brand and supplies parts, assemblies, and technologies for freights cars, locomotives and transit equipment under more than a dozen brands. Wabtec also produces and distributes the Interoperable- Electronic Train Management System, better known as the freight railroad version of positive train control in the U.S. GE, in addition to diesel electric locomotives, is a leader in heavy industry software and controls from Trip Optimizer to remote locomotive systems monitoring. (TN)

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REP. JOE COURTNEY (CT-02) joined officials May 3 from the New England Central Railroad (NECR), a subsidiary of Genesee & Wyoming Inc., for the ceremonial unloading of steel rails that will be used to upgrade the freight rail line running through Willimantic. The sections of continuously welded rail will be used to upgrade a nine-mile-long section of track across eastern Connecticut. The project was supported in part by a 2014 U.S. Department of Transportation's TIGER Grant that Courtney helped secure, officials said. The work is set to upgrade rail infrastructure to accommodate modern freight rail carloads up to 286,000 lbs. from New London to Stafford. Crews will also upgrade the existing line with new continuous welded rails, 15,000 new crossties, and 15,000 tons of ballast. The work is projected to cost about \$12.8 million and will include a \$4.6 million match from NECR. (RA)

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COMFORTABLY SEATED on a traditional folding wooden chair on the rear platform of a heavyweight Pullman business car, GVT Rail President David Monte Verde smiles and takes in the spectacular beauty of the Delaware Water Gap as the as Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad's 25th anniversary office car special rolls along the road's Pocono Main on a pleasant spring afternoon. One of five shortline and regional railroads in the GVT portfolio, D-L has been operating the 88-mile network of Scranton-area rail lines owned by the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority for a quarter century. GVT, established as Genesee Valley Transportation by Monte Verde, Michael Thomas, and John Herbrand, has been in the railroad

business since 1985. D-L serves a network of former Conrail and Delaware & Hudson trackage including the Scranton-Portland, Pa., segment of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western main line, the Scranton-Carbondale portion of the D&H Penn Division, and the former Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley "Laurel Line" from Scranton to Minooka. The D-L operation and agreement with the PNRRA, notes Monte Verde, is an excellent example of a private/public partnership that works. A pristine pair of D-L Alco Centuries — C424 No. 2423, built for the Pennsylvania Railroad, and C420 405 built for Lehigh Valley — led the special on a 120-mile round trip from Scranton, over the Pocono Mountains and through the Delaware Water Gap to the Norfolk Southern connection at Portland, Pa. The five-car train included four borrowed cars from the Erie Lackawanna Dining Car Preservation Society: a former Amtrak baggage-HEP car, an ex-NJ Transit commuter coach, Nickel Plate 10-6



Business car No. 2 rests at Scranton after the special 25th anniversary trip for the Delaware-Lackawanna short line. The car is in front of the former Delaware Lackawanna & Western station that is now a hotel.

sleeping car City of Lima, and DL&W dining car 469. Carrying the markers — and an original 1920s DL&W drumhead — the star of the show was GVT's heavyweight Pullman business car Erie Lackawanna 2, a DL&W original. Best known by enthusiasts as a bastion of Alco and MLW power, D-L is better known on its home turf for its friendly and efficient service. An economic driver in the region, D-L has increased carloads by 450 percent during its tenure of operation of the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority-owned lines. It's the perfect partnership observed Mike Delvecchio as the special rolled through the Poconos: "the right people are in the right places at the right time for the right reasons." (TN)

●●●●●●

“I’VE SEEN ENOUGH. I’ve heard enough,” explains former Amtrak President Joseph Boardman. Trains News Wire asked Boardman what prompted an email he sent early Tuesday, May 8th and subsequently forwarded to elected officials throughout the country. “This is beyond common sense,” he says of the letter Amtrak sent to elected officials explaining why it was declining to provide its match for the *Southwest Chief* TIGER grant recently awarded to Colfax County, N. M. “Amtrak took 20 years to address (infrastructure deterioration) problems on the route. They think they’re fooling someone, but there wouldn’t be this kind of arrogance if (management) valued the economic impact a daily passenger train brings to the communities it serves,” Boardman tells Trains News Wire. As for the threat to shut down routes that don’t have positive train control, Boardman says Amtrak needs to abide by the decisions made by the Federal Railroad Administration. “Stopping the service for New Jersey Transit or Metro North if they don’t have PTC? That would be ridiculous. If commuter carriers in the Northeast can continue on (past the Dec. 31, 2018, deadline), then the *Southwest Chief* can continue on. He also revealed that when he led Amtrak, he was asked by Amtrak’s board of directors what was the most important train. “I told them it was all of the long distance trains. Did that ever make it out into the rail community? No, because it wasn’t my job to (do that),” he says. “I understand that there is a high value for development in the Northeast, but there is also a high value for a train to go through Dodge City (Kan.) or La Junta, (Colo.), or Havre (Mont.) once a day in each direction when those communities don’t have other options. I don’t understand why (current Amtrak management) doesn’t get that and doesn’t try to operate it right.” Continuing, Boardman adds, “Why would we ever want to lose the opportunity for Front Range service from Denver down to Pueblo and Albuquerque to Los Angeles.” I am concerned that the Amtrak Board has begun to set their policy based on what we might call a “Hedge Hog” as opposed to a “Hedge Fund” approach. Meaning that the Board sees an opportunity to “Hog” all the Federal Assistance to complete the Gateway Plan; Procure new city-pair “Train Sets” operating off the NEC to the Southern big cities like Charlotte NC and Atlanta and others; And shortening more routes in order to transfer more cost to the States while abandoning the National purpose of Amtrak.

For me it’s: The Raton Pass vs. The Gateway Tunnel you can’t have one without the other. (TN) See “Running Extra” for additional comments.-Ed.

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CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER Justin Trudeau announced May 11th that the federal government will cover 60 percent of the cost to build a new rail by-pass around Lac-Mégantic, the small town ravaged by an oil train derailment in 2013. CBC News reports that Trudeau and Transportation Minister Marc Garneau will be in Lac-Mégantic to announce the \$133 million project. Quebec is expected to pick up the remainder of the cost for the 6.8-mile rail line that will take the rail line through farmland on the outskirts of town. Dozens of buildings were leveled and 47 people were killed on July 6, 2013, when a Montreal, Maine & Atlantic oil train derailed and exploded near downtown Lac-Mégantic. It was one of the deadliest rail disasters in North American railroad history. Executives with the current operator of the railroad through town, the Central Maine & Quebec, have said in the past that they would support whatever was best for the people of Lac-Mégantic. Building a by-pass around the community has been a top priority for many in town, said Sonia Dumont, director of communications and marketing for the bureau. “Some people in this community are still traumatized by passing trains, even though they see and hear the train every day,” she says. “Some people are still hesitant to return the downtown area until the rails are gone.” (TN)

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PRESERVATIONIST BENNETT LEVIN announced May 10th a new push to restore famed Pennsylvania Railroad K4s steam locomotive No. 1361 to operation after an on-again-off-again state of rebuild and disassembly for more than 20 years. The 100-year-old official state locomotive of Pennsylvania needs a new welded boiler at an estimated cost of at least \$1 million and its driving axles must be converted to roller bearings, Levin told members of the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society gathered in the famed railroad shop town for their annual meeting. “There is movement going forward,” he says. Levin says the 4-6-2 locomotive will be restored to pull a replica 1940s and 1950s PRR passenger train of six P70 coaches and B60 baggage cars that will tour the Keystone state as an educational tool. He also said he will work for a legislative remedy to alleviate liability insurance problems plague excursion trains. That would mean that excursion

operators would no longer need Amtrak's liability insurance to operate on freight railroad tracks. He says the restoration effort will be privately funded and that no additional government money will be involved. He said that retired Norfolk Southern Chairman Wick Moorman is also supporting the restoration. "We believe there are financial partners out there to sustain the operation," he said. Levin said that a survey of the boiler shows that it should be replaced so that it can be reliable once more. He said that boiler manufacturers such as Foster-Wheeler and the shop in Germany that produced a new boiler for a 4-6-2 in England in 2008 will be under consideration. He called the current operating environment for historic equipment "fragile." A special train behind Levin's Pennsylvania Railroad E8s and private cars to Altoona this week was cancelled after Amtrak said it would no longer handle charter trains earlier this year. Levin has worked tirelessly for railway preservation projects nationwide for years, much of the work in obscurity. The PRR holds a special place for him. "This is going to be my last hurrah," Levin said. "We need to solve the problem." The locomotive was display on Horseshoe Curve from 1957 to 1985 when it was restored to operation over a 2-year span. An axle problem sidelined the engine in 1988, and it was partially restored at Steamtown before that effort was abandoned and the boiler moved to the East Broad Top shops in Orbisonia, Pa. The boiler was returned to Altoona and a small crew has been working on components over the last year. (TN)



THE MASSACHUSETTS state senate has signaled its support for efforts to electrify Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority commuter trains, including a requirement to study electrification in the draft version of next year's budget. The Boston Globe reports the agency would be required to study electrification of its Providence and Fairmount lines and present a plan to make the transition from diesel powered trains by 2022. The Globe reports the MBTA is already engaged in a broader study of electrification, with that study due in 2019. The office of Senate President Harriette Chandler, who supports the legislative action, says it is designed to add urgency to the process. (TN)



A RESEARCH COMPANY is seeking funding to build a prototype autonomous, battery-powered flatcar that would serve as a platform for package-delivery drones. Cambridge Research &

Development has applied for a patent for the concept. The vehicle, Cambridge founder and CEO Ken Steinberg says, could carry and deliver freight or serve as a moving platform for autonomous package-delivery drones. The idea is to take advantage of railroad capacity that goes unused on commuter and freight lines in the overnight and other off-peak hours, Steinberg says. A railroad could lease track space to package-delivery companies such as UPS, FedEx, or an electronic retailer such as Amazon, he says. Steinberg came up with the idea while pondering the excess capacity on the lightly used Pan Am Railways Northern Main Line, the former Boston & Maine route that passes behind his house. His "a-ha" moment was this: "We could basically take Teslas and put them on tracks and run them autonomously." The Federal Aviation Administration last week approved pilot programs for testing drone deliveries. Cambridge says its concept would solve one of the technical problems facing drone delivery: the limited range of unmanned aerial vehicles. Drones could take off from the rail vehicle, pick up or deliver a package, then return to the flatcar — or a different one further along the route — for recharging or a battery swap before heading out on another delivery mission, Steinberg says. "You could deliver a lot of packages that way," Steinberg says. He did some back-of-the-envelope math and found that 5.5 million people live within a 5-mile flying radius of the former B&M main from Boston to Manchester, N.H. The vehicles could operate solo or, like an electric multiple unit, be coupled together to form a train. They also would be designed as bi-modal vehicles that could get on and off track, much like a hi-rail vehicle. And they could operate in conjunction with positive train control or be capable of running in signalled or unsignalled territories. "It's feasible," Steinberg says, using existing technology. Steinberg — who has a tech background and admits he's a railroad neophyte — has consulted with a former Class I railroad operations executive and is seeking partners in the rail and package-delivery industries who might be interested in testing the concept. Cambridge R&D aims to raise \$2 million to build a prototype, with the goal of licensing the patent and technology to a company that would then commercialize it and bring it to the marketplace. The vehicle, if commercially feasible, would face regulatory and operational hurdles. Trains have the right-of-way at grade crossings, for example, but it's not clear

whether an autonomous flatcar would be considered a train or something more akin to a hi-rail car or maintenance-of-way equipment, which must yield to traffic at crossings. (TN)

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AMTRAK IS INVESTING in an extensive refresh of its train interiors on the entire *Acela Express* fleet, which travels along the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington, aimed at introducing a more modern and comfortable customer experience. “Customers expect a premium experience when they board an *Acela Express* train, and these updated interior features will provide a more comfortable, refreshed look and feel — whether you want to relax, move about freely, work, or play,” says Amtrak CEO and President Richard Anderson. The *Acela Express* refresh is a 10-month program for all of its 20 trainsets, which includes 100 Amtrak cars and 6,080 total seats. Each trainset will be refreshed individually with new cushions and covers for all business class and first-class seats, new carpet for the aisle runner and a deep clean. The total investment is valued at more than \$4 million. (TN)

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IN ORDER TO MAKE AMTRAK’S busiest train station better, the passenger railroad’s officials are planning to annul service between New York and Chicago for the first time in living memory. Scott Naparstek, Amtrak chief operating officer, said in a media call Friday morning that the renewal impacts will include finishing winter 2018 improvements, work on Penn Station’s track 19; concourse, tunnel and bridge work; and reroutes for all *Empire Service* trains and destinations as far as Chicago. The last turnout of three to be replaced by interlocking “C,” at the east end of the station, will be completed by May 28; the work on track 18 was finished last week. Track 19 at New York Penn Station will see replacement of three turnouts as well as totally re-ballasted track and wooden tie replacement between June 8 and July 20. In the Upper Level Concourse, the rotunda air conditioner unit will be replaced, with the ticketed waiting room and Club *Acela* to be re-done. The major work will affect the Empire Connection and the Spuyten Duyvil Bridge, which will be closed to operations between May 26th and September 3rd. The Empire Connection, connecting Penn Station with the former New York Central West Side Line, will see track replacement in the Empire Tunnel, as well as replacing cross ties, grade crossings and 8,000 feet of continuous rail, including the track between the

tunnel and the Spuyten Duyvil Bridge. The Tunnel, open since 1991, suffered during Hurricane Sandy, with this work to correct structural and electrical problems that occurred as a result. The Spuyten Duyvil Bridge, built in 1907, links the Empire Connection with Metro-North’s Hudson Line and will see updating of the bridge’s mechanical and electrical equipment which was also corroded by Hurricane Sandy. During the summer work period, *Empire Service*, *Ethan Allen Express*, *Adirondack*, and *Maple Leaf* trains will be diverted from New York Penn Station to Grand Central Terminal. Amtrak will have staff and Quik-Trak ticketing kiosks at Grand Central throughout the summer; no shuttle service will be provided between the two major New York City stations. During that time, the *Lake Shore Limited* will be running between Chicago and Boston only, with no section to New York City. Passengers will need to connect to scheduled *Empire Service* runs, which will not offer checked baggage service. Food service on trains that start or end at Albany-Rensselaer will not be available. This will mark the first time in history that there will be no daily scheduled through train service between New York and Chicago in almost 150 years. Amtrak has updated its schedule to reflect the adjusted train service. Amtrak’s reservation systems now reflect the reroute of trains to Grand Central Terminal. Any passenger already booked on a train will be contacted and accommodated on other scheduled services. (TN) Ugh—another “nail in the coffin” for long-distance trains!-Ed.

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THE HEBER VALLEY RAILROAD (UT) has purchased three former Boston & Maine GP9s from Pan Am Railways. Heber Valley Chief Mechanical Officer Michael Manwiller tells *Trains News Wire* that the locomotives will help standardize the Utah tourist road’s motive power fleet. In 2015, the Heber Valley acquired a former Union Pacific GP9 and ever since Manwiller has been looking for more locomotives like it. Manwiller says the locomotives are perfect for the Heber Valley because they provide the right amount of horsepower, parts are still readily available, and they’re appropriate for the steam-to-diesel transition era the railroad is trying to recreate. The GP9s are also a favorite among the Heber Valley’s operating crews. “These locomotives are a good fit for us,” Manwiller says. “Business is growing and we really need the motive power.” Among the locomotives included in the sale are Pan Am’s two heritage units: Maine Central No.

52 and Boston & Maine No. 77. Pan Am painted the two locomotives for its predecessor roads in 2011. The third GP9, No. 72, is in Guilford Rail System gray-and-orange. All three locomotives were built in 1957. The locomotives are currently stored at Pan Am's facility in Waterville, Maine. (TN)

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CHESAPEAKE & OHIO 2-8-4 No. 2716 will be the centerpiece of a new rail heritage partnership with CSX Transportation in Ravenna, Ky. Kentucky Steam Heritage Corp., the No. 2716's non-profit arm, is purchasing nearly 50 acres of former CSX rail yard and property to build a rail-based tourist and community development center. The non-profit group plans to establish a multi-use facility on the site of CSX's retired Ravenna car shops. The railroad's yard office building, yard tracks, and modern railcar facility are included in the purchase. Kentucky Steam Heritage officials say the infrastructure will be used to showcase the rehabilitation and operation of C&O Kanawha-type No. 2716 and other rail equipment. As part of the purchase agreement, the group will have access to the yard's wye tracks, which they will share with CSX in case the railroad needs to move locomotives. "[CSX] has been very generous to guarantee us first right of refusal of the rest of the yard," Campbell says, adding that this is "step one in a multi-phase project to acquire the entire area. The railroad has been extremely good work with," he says. CSX says the partnership with the rail preservation group will benefit the railroad and local area. "This is a win-win transaction that allows CSX to focus on our core business, while bringing new economic opportunities to eastern Kentucky through CSX's retired Ravenna car shops," Shantel Davis says, who is vice president of CSX's real estate and facilities. "Visitors to this facility will have the chance to learn about the vital rail lines that have helped Kentucky fuel American prosperity for generations," McConnell said, highlighting the importance of future tourism and economic opportunities in the area. "It's an incredible opportunity to attract federal grant dollars to eastern Kentucky, and it's all because of CSX's generosity to get us in this position," Kentucky Steam Heritage Corp. Vice President Chad Harpole says. "This is just the beginning of what we hope will be a long and fruitful relationship with CSX." The Ravenna yard is a former Louisville & Nashville facility built to serve the coalfields of rural eastern Kentucky. The rail line has gradually seen less rail

service in recent years due to fluctuations in CSX's coal business. Ravenna is about 50 miles southeast of Lexington. (TN)

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THE EMERY RAIL HERITAGE Trust has awarded \$60,000 in grants to Friends of the 261 and the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society (FWRHS) to fund Positive Train Control (PTC) on two historic steam locomotives: Milwaukee Road 261 and Nickel Plate Road 765. Each organization will receive \$30,000 to launch individual fundraising efforts to cover the estimated \$120,000 cost per locomotive for PTC implementation. In 2017, FWRHS convened a gathering for steam locomotive operators, representatives from Class I freight and commuter railroads and the Trust to consider the "mechanical implications" of installing PTC on active main line steam locomotives such as 261, 765, Norfolk & Western 611, Southern Pacific 4449, Alaska Railroad 557, Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis 576, and Pere Marquette 1225, among others. "From this meeting, the group determined that it was wholly feasible to adapt the technology to work on individual locomotives, to share technical resources and systems, and to work with the Federal Railroad Administration on implementing PTC on historic equipment," said FWRHS Vice President Kelly Lynch. "We need PTC to operate on much of the general railroad system. Our goal is to underscore that main line steam locomotives can continue to be compliant with the modern railroad system with little deviation from the intent or purpose of PTC on any modern locomotive. The Emery Rail Heritage Trust is to be commended for helping us lead the way to make sure our valuable railroad history can continue to enrich people's lives." The Trust's seed grant "will kick-start our efforts to begin designing and installing PTC on 261," said [Friends of the 261](#) President and Chief Operating Officer Steve Sandberg. "We look forward to working with FWRHS and sharing information on how best to solve this challenge facing our non-profit groups."

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IN A PILOT PROGRAM, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority will offer \$10 unlimited-use weekend tickets for Commuter Rail trains beginning June 9. The tickets are good for Saturdays and Sundays. The program will be offered weekends through Sept. 2. "We look forward to testing this pilot program as we work to determine if there is an untapped market for weekend Commuter Rail service," MBTA General Manager Luis Manuel

Ramírez said in a statement announcing the service. "There is plenty of capacity on our weekend trains, and we'd be happy to fill those seats with families and others traveling in and out of Boston this summer." Beginning June 9, the \$10 weekend fare will be valid for all Commuter Rail zones from the first scheduled Saturday trip through the last scheduled Sunday trip. The \$10 fare will be available on the mTicket mobile app, on board trains, and at ticket windows at North, South, and Back Bay Stations. The special fare applies to customers age 12 and above; paying adults can bring 2 children under 12 for free. The fare does not apply to the CapeFlyer, operated through a partnership with the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, or special-event trains. (BG)

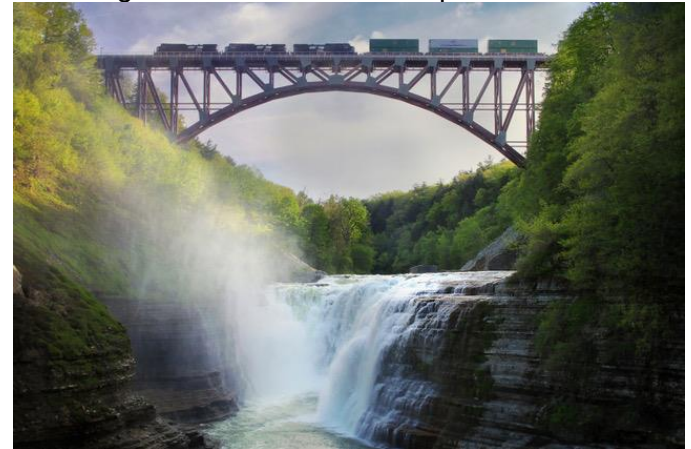
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WABTEC AND GE TRANSPORTATION are combining, according to a statement released May 21st, creating what Wabtec says will be a "Fortune 500 company [and a] global leader in rail equipment, software and services, with operations in more than 50 countries" and approximately \$8 billion in revenues. GE had announced in November 2017 its desire to sell its transportation unit, the leader in locomotive production which is also involved in the marine, mining, stationary power, and drilling industries. Wabtec, which makes equipment and systems for passenger and freight railroads, had recently emerged as the most likely buyer. Wabtec says the transaction is valued at approximately \$10 billion, after adjusting for the tax benefits to the new company. While Wabtec is calling the transaction a merger, GE will receive a \$2.9 billion up-front cash payment, and GE and its shareholders will receive 50.1 percent interest in the new company. Wabtec Chairman Albert J. Neupaver will be executive chairman of the new company. Rafael Santana, president and CEO of GE transportation, becomes president of Wabtec's freight segment. Wilmerding, near Pittsburgh, will remain corporate headquarters, with the freight segment based in Chicago. Wabtec officials say the combined company will have \$250 million in annual merger synergies. Some of that will come from cost-savings by eliminating duplication, while some will come from revenue gains from things like putting more Wabtec brake, compressor, and electronic components on GE locomotives. The typical new GE locomotive has about \$250,000-worth of Wabtec components, depending on the specifications of the customer, executives say. The deal comes as GE Transportation rebounds from a

cyclical low in what's traditionally been a boom-and-bust business. Already GE has an \$18-billion-backlog of business, which represents half of its total anticipated revenue through 2020. The deal is expected to close early in 2019, subject to the approval of Wabtec shareholders. It also will require antitrust review in the U.S. and abroad, as well as approvals of the tax structure of the complicated deal. Executives did not foresee any regulatory hurdles that would alter or stop the deal. The merger is a complex spinoff of GE Transportation from its beleaguered parent, General Electric. GE slimming down to its fastest-growing and most-profitable business segments. (TN)

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USHERING IN A MODERN ERA for freight rail in New York's Southern Tier, Norfolk Southern and New York State officials, along with supporters, today dedicated a new steel arch railroad bridge that spans the "Grand Canyon of the East." Surrounded by scenic Letchworth State Park, the \$75-million bridge expands freight rail capacity and economic opportunities for businesses and communities across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes. Built with a public-private partnership, the single-track arch structure replaced a 19th-century-era bridge that restricted train speeds and rail car



weights and had become a major transportation bottleneck. In recognition of a new beginning, Norfolk Southern CEO James A. Squires announced that the bridge, which spans the 235-foot-deep Genesee River Gorge, has been named the Genesee Arch Bridge. That name received the most votes during a bridge-naming campaign on social media. Located between Buffalo and Binghamton on the railroad's Southern Tier Line, the 963-foot-long bridge connects New York businesses to markets in the Midwest and New England, trade with Canada, and access to New York City. After two years of construction, Norfolk

Southern began operating trains in December over the new span, built 75 feet south of the former bridge. The old iron truss bridge it replaced — built in 1875 by the Erie Railroad and unable to support modern freight rail needs — created supply-chain inefficiencies. Rail car weights had to be reduced 13,000 pounds below the standard, and train speed was restricted to 10 mph. Trains crossing the new bridge are operating at up to 30 mph with fully loaded cars. Through the partnership, Norfolk Southern improved trails and public access to Letchworth State Park and preserved portions of the old bridge for use in historical exhibits. The new bridge's arch design minimizes the railroad's environmental footprint in the Genesee River and frames a striking view of the river gorge. (TN)

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A WHEEL FROM a long-lost Boston & Maine steam locomotive that fell off a bridge and into a river in 1939 is now on display in Maine. The wheel off of B&M No. 3666 was put on display at the Kittery Historical and Naval Museum earlier this month, a year after it was pulled up from the Piscataqua River between Portsmouth, N.H., and Kittery. According to newspaper reports of the era, the locomotive was leading a southbound passenger train to Boston on the evening of Sept. 10, 1939, when the bridge collapsed. The locomotive and the first car went into the river,



the river and has sat there ever since. (TN) killing the engineer, John Beatie, and the fireman, Charles Towle. The locomotive sunk 70 feet to the bottom of

the river and has sat there ever since. (TN)

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

TRAINS

- Western Steam Adventure
- From Plans to Smoke Plumes
- Ride this Train!
- Tourist guide

Superintendent Sees Big Changes at Steamtown

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

- Consider the Commuter
- A Place to Work
- Scratchbuilder's Workshop
- Color

MODEL RAILROADER

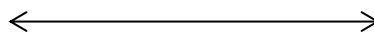
- News and Products
- Amherst Show Report

DCC Corner

Tips for Programming LokSound Decoders

CLASSIC TRAINS (Spring 2018)

- America's Last Real Steam Show
- GTW Michigan to Chicago
- Railroads, Motor Carriers and Superhighways
- Photo Special: Penn Central and its Predecessors
- Best of Everything
- Chris Burger's experiences in Boston



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

MEMBER NEWS

Our condolences to **the family of** our (last) Life Member, **Paul Patev**, who passed away on April 22nd. Paul had been in a nursing facility for the past eight years but still enjoyed getting *The Semaphore*.

Our condolences also to **Jeremy Cahill** and his sister, on the passing of their mother, Carol, on April 28th. No matter how old you are, it's always so hard to lose your mom.

Rick Sutton has returned home after rehab and awaits back surgery, which appears to be the only way to go for relief for him. Good luck, Rick, and please keep us posted of where you will be. We look forward to your returning as an active member in the SSMRC!

Congratulations to **Jim and Alice South**, who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 20th. Long time to put up with Jim's trains and fire engines, Alice!

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

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

Al Munn June 7th
Matt Sisk..... June 10th
Dave Clinton..... June 13th
Rich Herlihy June 14th
Barry Doland June 20th
Savery Moore June 20th

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. Next month's Semaphore will be our "Summer" issue, as the editors have the month of July off! Please note for any submissions or notices you want in for the next couple of months.
2. Hope to see you at our Annual Meeting next Monday!

..... *David N. Clinton*

RUNNING EXTRA

MBTA shortchanges southeastern Massachusetts



COMMENTARY

RICHARD PRONE

Once again, the MBTA has thumbed its nose at communities advocating schedule improvements for the Kingston/Plymouth, Greenbush and Middleboro/Lakeville lines.

After making 25 trips to the Transportation Building to make these arguments before the MassDOT Board of Directors and the MBTA Fiscal Management and Control Board, I attended a November meeting at the State House with nine local legislators, top T commuter rail officials and Paul Regan, executive director of the MBTA Advisory Board.

There, the T was presented with vastly improved rail schedules for each line, including later Boston departures leaving for the South Shore between 11:20 and 11:40 p.m., seven nights a week. Weekend and off-peak weekday trains were also improved, with better spacing and more convenient scheduling. The cost? Just one hour per day per line, with no additional trains or crews involved.

Why does the T continue to discriminate against southeastern Massachusetts? Practically every other MBTA commuter rail line – north and south – schedules the last Boston departures between 11:20 p.m. and 12:15 a.m., including the Providence, Franklin, Worcester, Needham, Fitchburg, Lowell, Newburyport/Rockport, and Haverhill lines. Why exclude us?



ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ When it comes to late-night service, cities and towns get the short end of the stick from the MBTA.

The revenue gained from these trains would far exceed the extra hour of operating costs on each line. The T has committed \$4 billion for upcoming New Bedford/Fall River rail service and the Green Line extension and new commuter rail service to Foxboro. They even found an extra \$8.5 million to repair a lightly used railroad bridge linking Onset and Buzzards Bay, which sees only one trash train a day and the seasonal Cape Flyer on weekends. Meanwhile, residents of southeastern Massachusetts have no choice but to drive the 40-85 mile roundtrip to Boston via the Southeast Expressway, which morphs into a NASCAR/Roller Derby free-for-all after 10 p.m. The only thing missing is the checkered flag at the Braintree split.

Collectively, the Greenbush, Kingston/Plymouth, and Middleboro/Lakeville lines serve 32 cities and towns. These communities

contribute approximately \$7 million annually to the MBTA and affiliated transit agencies for quality transportation. The Old Colony and Greenbush lines are excellent railroads that offer under-one-hour service to Boston.

We should be able to use rail service for Red Sox, Bruins and Celtics games, concerts, plays and other special events in town. Boston is a world class city on our doorstep. These rail lines were built to take people off the highways, not force them back on. I implore the MBTA to implement the new spring schedules they received on Nov. 15. We've waited 59 years for this, and establishing parity with the rest of the MBTA rail system is long overdue.

Richard S. Prone, who represents Duxbury on the MBTA Advisory Board, worked for 40 years in the railroad industry. He can be reached at rkprone@gmail.com.

Amtrak: Where is the public input? Where is the transparency?

Written by Joseph A. Boardman May 10, 2018



Having spent much of my productive life at the state and federal levels observing, studying, regulating and then leading a rail management team, I am appalled with what increasingly appears a unilateral violation of the public trust by Amtrak's current leadership to dismantle our interconnected, intercity rail passenger network, beginning with hollowing out of its long-distance passenger train service.

Amtrak is not a privately held corporation whose fate is to be determined by a few individuals behind closed doors. It was created by the people and for the people and Amtrak's farebox revenue. Amtrak provides a cherished public service, with opinion polls repeatedly validating support for its existence and even expansion.

The role of Amtrak leadership is to operate the railroad and its various lines of business safely, efficiently and in accordance with congressionally approved statutes. It is the role of congressional lawmakers who answer to the public to determine the fate of Amtrak, and only through a transparent legislative process.

From materials I have seen submitted to congressional staff, Amtrak management has begun surgical communications in a way that does not provide a transparent discussion of what management is doing or intending to do. Quite the opposite of being transparent, Amtrak management is limiting the substance of public briefings, denying journalists' access to relevant management officials and making decisions in isolation.

Evidence points to a covert effort to divide Amtrak's political constituencies and create distrust and discord. Consider a current effort by Amtrak management to convince opinion leaders and decision makers that providing service via the Southwest Chief passenger train, which makes 31 stops between Chicago and Los Angeles, is somehow too costly.

Confirming this intent to eliminate the service, Amtrak has informed elected officials in Colfax County, N.M., that it will not provide its match for a recently awarded congressional grant intended to sustain operation of the Southwest Chief. This directly undermines a federal grant program that, while Amtrak president, I personally brokered with BNSF CEO Matt Rose to improve the BNSF route used by the Southwest Chief—a joint benefit to freight trains and Amtrak.

Additionally, Amtrak management is engaged in “weaponizing” safety to attack more broadly Amtrak's long-distance network. Under a façade of “safety first,” there are threats to discontinue Amtrak operated passenger trains by Dec. 31, 2018, wherever Positive Train Control is not installed and operating. That is neither acceptable nor responsible.

Yet on route segments—some 100-miles or longer—where the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has decided to exclude a requirement for PTC, Amtrak responsibly intends to utilize a highly respected Federal Aviation Administration safety program to assess risks.

Certainly, commuter carriers operating in the congested Northeast will continue operating on non-PTC equipped track beyond the Dec. 31, 2018, deadline for its installation because other FRA safety measures will govern operation.

Halting New Jersey Transit or Metro-North commuter railroads because a PTC deadline cannot be met and other safety measures are in place would be ridiculous. If commuter carriers in the Northeast can continue operating beyond the Dec. 31, 2018, PTC deadline, then certainly the Southwest Chief can, also.

Indeed, there is additional mitigation for safety risks, such as Automatic Train Stop or even solar

powered switch position indicators. And, yes, it will take time and funding, but neither Amtrak management nor its board of directors has made clear whether service would be continued while those mitigations are funded and completed. If it is not made clear by July, then Amtrak management and its board is validating my allegation of “weaponizing” safety to attack Amtrak's national interconnected passenger train network.

Make no mistake: I am strongly in support of Positive Train Control technology, and my record as the nation's rail safety regulator speaks for itself. Safety conscious railroaders know that PTC is not an off-the-shelf technology, and where the FRA has allowed extensions and exclusions, there are available safety mitigations.

A pattern is emerging of Amtrak management and its board of directors seeking, on its own and without public input and transparency, to hog all Amtrak federal financial assistance to complete Northeast Corridor (NEC) rail projects such as the Gateway Program, to procure new “city pair” trainsets for off-NEC operation, and to shorten Amtrak long-distance routes so as to shift costs to states, ultimately destroying Amtrak's national interconnectivity.

I think current Amtrak management and their boards of directors have drawn a line in the sand at the foot of Raton Pass, targeting the Southwest Chief as their first—but not last—long-distance train to target for cutting.

The Southwest Chief issue is the battleground whose outcome will determine the fate of American's national interconnected rail passenger network. Said more simply, the battle is Raton Pass vs. Gateway. The history of public policy toward Amtrak is that you cannot have one without the other.

Congressional leaders have long asserted that without support for Amtrak's long-distance trains, federal support for the Northeast Corridor will evaporate.

While there is eminent good reason to fund Northeast Corridor projects, there is equivalent good reason for preserving daily train service to, for example, Dodge City, Kan., La Junta, Colo., and

Havre, Mont., where the economic impact is significant and other options non-existent.

Ignoring the political process and unilaterally abandoning service linking Denver with Albuquerque and Los Angeles is equally absurd and would not survive a transparent public process were it allowed.

Joe Boardman retired in 2016 after eight years as Amtrak president and CEO, making him second only to W. Graham Claytor Jr. as Amtrak's longest serving CEO. Previously (June 2005-December 2008), he was President George W. Bush's Federal Railroad Administrator. Earlier, Boardman was the longest serving Commissioner of Transportation in New York State history. In 2014, he was Railway Age's 51st Railroader of the Year.

Amtrak must be redefined

Written by M. E. Singer • May 15, 2018 [Railway Age](#)

Regarding Joe Boardman's May 10 Opinion piece, the former CEO of Amtrak is railing against a situation he actually created. His actions left Amtrak in disrepair after eight years at the throttle.

Despite what Boardman said, the irrefutable facts clearly indicate the first attempt ever at shaking down states for funding passenger rail infrastructure (Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico) was designed and initiated on Boardman's watch, with the support of the same Board of Directors and executive line of management who were in place when he made these decisions, as well as the other issues identified below. In practice, Amtrak withered under the leadership of Boardman, with the best managers encouraged to take buyouts during multiple reorganizations that only depleted vital institutional knowledge. An unacceptable safety culture existed, as well as questionable labor relations and lack of meaningful give-and-take negotiations, and the diminishing of a once-visible, vibrant, engaged government and public relations group built-up by Graham Claytor and nurtured by David Gunn. We saw the lack of oversight of the CAF passenger car program (note: no lounges or coaches), deterioration of menus and dining services as reduced on the *Silver Star*, payroll defalcations (timecards, overtime), and the inability to professionally work with the Class I's re: on-time performance, despite further schedule padding and excessive bonus payments from Amtrak.

This is the track record produced under Boardman's regime, with the same Board of Directors providing the same level of questionable oversight under their stewardship. Indeed, they did actually work behind closed doors in secrecy to promote those agendas that were anathema to the public.

In reality, Boardman barely provided lip service to the long-distance routes, as evidenced by the lack of any pro-formas to Congress to factually detail the number of passengers turned away, and loss of revenues, due to the lack of space on those trains; and to identify the need for more equipment to expand frequencies and to meet new route opportunities. It was on Boardman's watch that no commuter lines ever paid the operating and infrastructure depreciation costs for their access to the Northeast Corridor (NEC).

This did not change until mandated by Congress in December 2015. The NEC continued to inappropriately benefit by twisting the legal interpretation of Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles (GAAP) that pretended the NEC was "profitable" by failing to deduct infrastructure costs from revenues; transferring most NEC infrastructure and overhead costs to the long distance and state-supported corridors.

As well, the state-supported corridors historically suffered under Boardman by the same stilted, one-sided approach to GAAP by creating the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), as the non-NEC states were required to pay 85% of full costs based upon Amtrak's unique full-cost methodology, which disregarded acknowledging the basic economic approach to incremental costs. And where did those funds go? They were directed to further subsidize the NEC "black hole."

Not since 2005 has Amtrak been led by a real railroader, David Gunn. We had high hopes for Wick Moorman; however, nobody can make meaningful inroads into a dysfunctional corporate culture on a 1.5-year tour of duty.

Amtrak's Board cannot be allowed to deflect the facts of their stewardship: how they and their management team willingly served to promote the Board's singularly focused commitment—to serve

their political patrons of the Northeast—at the expense of the national system. What apparently puzzles Boardman is how quickly his inner circle turned their loyalty to the new CEO, Richard Anderson, continuing to focus on ensuring their own survival by placating a very conflicted Board.

To pretend this has not happened is against the interests of the public and illustrates how so obviously Amtrak must be redefined to serve those interests, as represented by a national system. In

the end, what is critical to acknowledge is that given the vast amount of continuing infrastructure investment required for the NEC, the initial action to force those select states along the *Southwest Chief* route to pay tribute was abhorrently wrong. Now, that should be clearly acknowledged and corrected by federal grants and funds to maintain the national network.

M. E. Singer is an observer and commentator on the passenger rail industry, identifying shortfalls and growth opportunities. He is currently Principal at Marketing Rail Ltd. in Chicago, a consultancy to achieve passenger rail customer experience and product branding. Singer has prior corporate experience in turnaround operations management, marketing, and mergers and acquisitions in the health care field.

● Preserving Boston & Maine F7A 4268

By Len Bachelder

Prompted by a brief note on B&M F7A 4268 in the current issue of the Boston Chapter NRHS newsletter Steel Wheels, 470 Railroad Club Vice President Len Bachelder wrote the summary below, which he read at the Boston Chapter meeting in June. Len thought it might be of interest to Callboy readers as well, and we agree. – ED.

As most of you know, the Boston and Maine Railroad owned 4 F7A locomotives, numbered 4265 through 4268. The first three were delivered in March 1949. The 4268 was originally a General Motors demonstration unit. It was displayed, painted for the Burlington lines, at the Chicago Railroad Fair in 1949. After the fair, it was returned to LaGrange, and sold to the B&M in October 1949. It has a few very slight differences from the standard F7A units.

The 4267 was wrecked in 1960, and although the damage was not severe, it was, with other locomotives, traded to GM the following year for more modern power. Today, the 4265 exists as a depowered body shell, filled with junk and in poor condition, at Gorham NH.

The 470 Railroad Clubs owns the 4266 and the 4268. I do not know how or exactly when the club acquired them, whether by purchase or donation or what, as that was many years ago and although I was a member, I was not then a Club officer and not a party to the acquisition. Both have been at the Conway Scenic Railroad for many years. The 4266, the last one of the four to be used in service by the B&M, was acquired in operating condition, and the 470 Club has attempted to maintain it both operationally and cosmetically over the years. Currently it is leased to the Conway Scenic Railroad for a very nominal price, and fairly regularly used by them on their Valley Train. They do not ordinarily use it on the Notch Train because of the lack of dynamic brakes.

Ever since the 470 Club gave up, due to the extremely high cost, on the plan to restore our steam locomotive (MEC 2-8-0 501 - also at North Conway) to operating condition, we have dreamed of restoring the 4268. When we got it, it was an empty shell, with the engine, generator and most working parts removed. We have tried to keep it in good appearance and painted, while the railroad, with our permission, used it as a storage shed filled with all manner of their “junk”. A couple of years ago, we purchased a former Pennsylvania Railroad GP9 from the New Hampshire Northcoast

Railroad. This locomotive, although in good mechanical condition, had been in a derailment or in some other way had suffered a bent frame, and the FRA had declared it unfit for service. Since the GP9s and F7s are basically mechanically the same engine in different carboodies, we took the opportunity to buy the locomotive for essentially scrap price with the intent to, when funds became available, remove the diesel engine and other equipment from it and install them in the 4268. We had to do some brake work, and pay a large price to Guilford and the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroads to get it the 10 miles or so from Ossipee to North Conway, a move that seemed to be halfway around the world due to a washout north of Ossipee!

Since getting the GP9 to North Conway, we have started the engine up several times to keep it from seizing up, and it runs perfectly well. Meanwhile, we have accumulated several thousand dollars in our Equipment Fund, and thanks to an extremely generous large donation this past year by a close friend of mine who is a lover of B&M F units, we now believe we have enough money to proceed with the project.

Over the past year, the Conway people have removed all their “junk” from the locomotive, and our volunteers have completely cleaned and painted the interior of the body. We have located a person with a 90-ton crane in Conway Village, and it is our plan to hire him this coming summer to make the actual transfer of the “guts” of the locomotive from the GP9 to our 4268. When that is done, Conway Scenic personnel, with the help of some 470 Club members, will begin the “smaller jobs” required to make the locomotive operational. We will do as much as we can this year, and hope to complete the job and have the 4268 operational by the end of 2018.

After the work has been done, we will probably sell the body of the GP9 for its scrap value. When we have finished, we will have the ability to operate a train with a genuine B&M F7A at each end between Bartlett and Conway Village. All of us are eagerly looking forward to seeing that happen!





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OPERATIONS REVIEW

by Paul A. Cutler III

Back in March, we had another all-Sunday session with four hours of operation surrounding a one hour lunch break. Things went pretty well except that *some* of the members forgot ECL Rule #5: "Employees whose duties connect them with the movement of trains must not absent themselves or exchange duties without proper authority. Trainmen must not delay trains to partake of refreshments." More on that later... On with the show!

Operations Review: March 25th, 2018 1st Trick

Yours truly was playing solo up in the tower as the dispatcher of both divisions.

Paul Agnew ran 5 trains: BS-5, 43, BH-7, MH-3, and HM-4. BS-5 was 30 minutes late leaving and then had a break-in-two at E-10 at the head pin (probably the loco pilot hitting the trip pin on the lead car). BH-7, a fileted COFC train, had mysterious intermittent shorts that got worse as he went along. At East Middleton, **Paul** replaced the locos but it made no difference. Turns out it was a metal weight hanging low from one of the container cars that was shorting the track (*hmm...better talk to the Mechanical Dept. chief*). On his way again, he had to be routed into the Mt. View Siding but failed to stop at the end. Instead, he ended up halfway around the White River wye. "**Oops!**" **Paul**. ☺

Engineer **Al Munn** also ran 5 trains: 502, 510, 524, BM-3, and 725. Yep, **Al** ran the entire morning rush into Boston all by himself. On 502, the first RDC (PGE) would not run. It was Bad Ordered and the train continued on without it. On the next train, the single NH RDC had one truck that was dragging (the driveshaft fell out). It was replaced with a NH Doodlebug. The last of the trio, the NH Comet, had trouble getting out of Middleton due to misaligned switches. The rest of his trains were on time without incident.

Coley Walsh was the engineer of the session with six trains under his belt: CH-2, 34, 29, 58, 525 and 734. All his trains were on time or close to it. His shift started with radio trouble as he could hear but couldn't talk to anyone. I ran downstairs, handed him my spare radio set, and he was fine after that. **Coley's** only train issue of the shift was his arrival in Cedar Hill with train 29. The Cedar Hill Stationmaster had already lined up the iron for the departing 716 when 29 suddenly arrived, nearly having a head-on collision in the terminal with 716. Folks, please let a Yardmaster know you're coming before you enter the yard interlocking. We don't have a signal system yet, so we're still running on VFR

(Visual Flight Rules). It's better to wait and be late rather than have an accident. Safety First!

Another of our scheduled first trick engineers was **Bob Farrenkopf**. He got 5 trains over the road: 101, 701, 716, HB-2, and 533. His first train ran into a little trouble. The switch E-21 had been lined up for the inbound commuter train being run by **Al**, so when **Bob** left Boston, he was on a collision course. Fortunately, they saw the issue and **Bob** backed clear without a wreck. Then, when passing the Dairy siding up on the Mountain Div., he found the iron lined for the siding instead of the main (*weird...101 is the first train*). **Bob's** only derailment of the night was on HB-2 and caused by **yours truly**...on purpose! Yep, I put him on the ground at Bethlehem Jct. because he was heading for the boxcars at Bethlehem Freight House at speed. I figured a slight derailment was better than the total devastation that would result if the three Stewart F-units took out the boxcars, the track bumper, the freight house, and probably the whole town of Highland Oaks. ☺ When it was pointed out that his Train Order said, "Take E-61 Red", **Bob** said, "Oh, is that what these are on the right?" "**Oops!**" **Bob**.

Our last (but by no means least) scheduled engineer was **Dave Clinton** with just four trains: LM-4, ML-1, MB-4, and HB-6. But that's okay; he left early to pick up lunch. I don't think anyone objects to that. ☺ **Dave** pointed out that the club ECL ore cars have intermittent shorts on LM-4. Others ran the same train later at passenger train speeds (!) and had no problems. But perhaps more insulating tape is in order?

Down in Middleton, **Jay Pease** switched MX-3 using car cards for the very first time on that job. It was a last-minute application of the system and we're finding issues to address (like industry car card pockets and a sorting shelf would be handy). **Jay** said the yard ran pretty well and that the equipment was fine...until he noticed that one coupler on his switcher had been smashed upwards in transit to the club. A little 0-5-0 air lift allowed him to switch the other end of the train (*but what about the turntable...?*). E-3 didn't work, then it did, but now a frog is dead. Over at King Coal, the new scenery is too tall for the wheel flanges, and he'd really like some wheel stops at the end of the coal tipple (*hint, hint*).

In Essex, MX-2 was under the control of **Chris** "Mr. Essex Jct." **Barlow**. The ops set up crew (of which he is a part of) got him with a "zinger"; a car going from one industry to another on the same train. After picking a car up, instead of setting it out, he accidentally brought it to Middleton. He asked what they would normally do after a mistake like that on the real railroad. **Jay**, the professional engineer, said, "There's always tomorrow. Tomorrow is another day." At the end, things got a little rushed, and **Chris** left a switch open for train

547, a speedy PGE RDC. It slammed into MX-2's caboose and only killed 30 people. **"Oops!" Chris.**

HX-4, the Cedar Hill local was captained by **Paul Cutler, Jr.** He did all the pick-ups except for the auction house because he couldn't find it. ☺ *It's on the clipboard map, I swear!* He also reported he had a car with no card and a card with no car. Dad asked for some industry car card pockets in the yard.

Bryan Miller went down to Larson on HX-1 via the "New Way" for the first time ever. This uses the cross-pit bridge in Cedar Hill and a new crossover and switch between the Steel Mill and the Coach Yard Lead. **Bryan** reported he stalled out a bunch of times (probably dirty wheels or track) and a paperwork error or two. "Not too bad," he said.

Middleton Yardmaster **Savery Moore** also handled MX-4 in his spare time. He 'fessed up to derailing **Al Munn** on 524. He lined him up, got distracted, and saw **Al** standing by the tunnel and calling dispatch. **Savery** assumed he was out and clear, told him "I got it, **Al**," and cleared the switches...only to look down and see **Al's** train just starting to depart the station and derail on the switches he had just cleared. **"Oops!" Savery.** He said it got real quiet around 1600 hours (*more on that later*) and gave him plenty of time to switch the REA facility across the mainline. **Savery** finished the MX-4 job right after he had found a loaded hopper car buried in the yard going to Patev Coal (meaning he had several cars to move out of the way first...*bwahahaha!*). In Middleton there was an error with MB-4: it was set up backwards. Instead of Boston, it was facing Cedar Hill. **"Oops!" Ops Set Up Crew.**

Cedar Hill's Yardmaster, **Fred Lockhart**, reported that CH-2 was very easy this time being a shorter train (due to a lack of registered cars, really). He had no problems, or at least nothing to write about. "I didn't set an engine on fire or anything like that," **Fred** said.

Over on the passenger side, **John Sheridan** ran the terminal as Stationmaster. Other than the aforementioned averted collision, nothing exciting happened (or at least, nothing was written down).

Taking a turn as Trainmaster, new member **Joe Coraso** handed out most of the train orders. Things got a little strange at the end, but through no fault of his. *More on that...now.*

Right, I was dispatching both divisions and mostly things were going well with five engineers. **Dave** left to get lunch, so we were down to four, but that was okay at the mid-point of the operation. Then lunch showed up at 1:00 P.M. and the four remaining engineers all went to beans (*without telling me!*). The only trouble is that, because we started 10 min. late, we still had four more trains to run: 547, BH-1, MS-9, and LM-2. Now during a Monday/Thursday operation I wouldn't mind; I have time to move annulled trains to where they need to go. On Sundays, I just don't have time to spare. These trains have to run to completion on First Trick because we're using them again for Second Trick. So I grabbed a throttle, **Jay Pease** and **Chris Barlow**, and the three of us ran some of the fastest trains you've ever seen. ☺ We all started at least 45 min. late. Both Cedar Hill and Middleton remained

staffed so we could fly these trains into a safe landing field (*thanks, guys*). The last train running, BH-1 with **yours truly** on the throttle, didn't get into Cedar Hill until 1900 hours or so. That's about 10 real min. after the scheduled end time. *Sigh.* Folks, please, if you're going to stop running trains, call me. I won't mind as it will allow me to plan ahead. If I knew folks were going to lunch at 1:00 P.M., I could have grabbed a couple guys earlier. Instead, I look up, not one train is running, and I'm thinking, "Uh, oh."

As an aside, I should mention that I almost had a colossal wreck at the Steel Mill with BH-1. Running at full throttle with my NH C-425's in order to get things done, I thought I was lined up to get into Cedar Hill Freight. Instead, I was lined up to follow MS-9 into the Steel Mill. While talking to **Fred**, I saw it out of the corner of my eye, thought "Oh, #%\$&*!!!," and hit the Emergency Stop on the throttle. BH-1 stopped just as it coupled on to the caboose of MS-9 and pushed the slack in. Not one car derailed. *Whew!* That would have been very, very bad. No doubt the engine crew had to change their trousers after that one! **"Oops!" me.**

Operations Review: March 25th, 2018 2nd Trick

At 2:00 P.M., we resumed operations with the second trick. I carried my lunch back to the tower and finished it there as dispatcher. As usual, the second trick ran much more smoothly than the first trick.

Paul Agnew ran five trains as engineer: SM-2, 43, BM-3, MH-3, and 547. **Paul** reported the ore train SM-2 was shorting at times, and that 43's PRR consist had six break-in-twos enroute due to a high-low coupler on a couple baggage cars.

Coley Walsh didn't have any problems and said he "had a lot of fun" as he handed over his borrowed radio. *Great!* He ran 510, 524, HB-2, and HM-4.

Al Munn operated 100, 29, BH-7, 533, and LM-2. On train 29, a 79mph job, not only was he on time, he got in 5 minutes early! Then on 533 he finished 8 minutes (!) early. Either **Al** ate his Wheaties or he was inspired by the Amtrak shirt he was wearing. The other three trains were 2 min. late, 6 min. late, or on time, respectively.

Paul Cutler, Jr. ran six trains: 34, MB-4, 58, 734, ML-3 and X-726. Every single one was exactly on time. Um, has this ever happened to an engineer before? I mean, ever?

Dave Clinton ran 5 trains: 502, 701, HB-6, 525, BH-1. All ran well and mostly on time. His only complaint was the ordering of the last train BH-1 because it closely follows 547 and the long waits between trains. Well, with 6 engineers you get longer wait times. With 4 engineers, there's no waiting. Five is about right. This time, we had six.

Bob Farrenkopf got to engineer ML-1, 716, 725, and SB-6. He had a little trouble getting out of the Steel Mill due to misaligned switches but the other three trains had no trouble.

Over in "The Pit of Despair" (A.K.A. Hudson Falls), **Chris Barlow** went through half a dozen switchers before **Paul Agnew** let him borrow an ancient Walthers HH660 with a monster capacitor pack. It had the weight and power reserve

to power over any rough or dirty track. **Chris** missed spotting three cars due to the loco confusion.

In Larson on HX-3, **Bryan Miller** continued his “On the Job” training program. He finished HX-1 from 1st Trick, but didn’t finish HX-3. He only reported some dirty track or possibly some dirty wheels. The area could also use a LocoNet tether for more dependable operation.

HX-2 was bitterly complained about by its engineer **Jay Pease**. He said he forgot the reasons he didn’t like the job then was reminded after he started. ☺ **Jay** said he only dropped the car cards...twice. He had a fireman in the person of applicant **David Galbraith** who said he had fun learning from **Jay**. They still got all the work done and done two hours early.

In Middleton, **Savery Moore** said it was a little bit...boring. He decided to mess around in the yard between mainline trains. **Savery** reports that Blue 4 has uneven track, resulting in derailing a 6-axle engine. He would like a note added to the yardmaster sheet to turn SM-2 so it can go out again as ML-3.

Fred Lockhart in Cedar Hill Freight said things went well and most trains were on time. He recommended that the roundhouse and transfer table stalls all get labeled with numbers on the layout. A simple decal weathered in place ought to do the trick.

Cedar Hill Stationmaster and Trainmaster **John Sheridan** handed out all orders including the Extra while also guiding in and out all the passenger trains on time. Some say he was the most “militant” Trainmaster we’ve ever had, chasing down engineers like they owed money. ☺ *Well, we can’t argue with results, can we?*

Back in the tower, I was dispatching the whole road. I had a little birdie call me on the radio and tell me that the Larson job had managed a rear-end collision in the Cedar Hill Arrival/Departure yard (*cries of “Snitch! Snitch!” are heard in the background*). My only real problem of the night was at approx. 1100 hours on the fast clock, the JMRI software crashed. I ended up unplugging and rebooting just about the entire PC hardware suite. Meanwhile, a bunch of trains are calling for switches and I got nothing. *Stress? What stress?*

All in all it was fun time, and that’s the point, isn’t it? Once we change to car forwarding, we’ll redo the entire time table and things will change. Perhaps shorter but more frequent operations are in our future? Stay tuned!

Paul Cutler III 

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Building a jet-propelled train was not rocket science for Don Wetzel

By Tomas Kellner

Hyperloop One has been grabbing headlines with the latest test of its high-speed pod, but America’s fastest locomotive nearly matched its blistering pace more than 50 years ago.

On a clear day in July 1966, New York Central Railroad engineer Don Wetzel and his team boarded a specially modified Buddliner railcar, No. M-497. Bolted to the roof above them were two GE J47-19 jet engines. Wetzel throttled up the engines and tore down a length of track from Butler, Indiana, to Stryker, Ohio, at almost 184 mph, piloting the experimental vehicle into the record books as the world’s fastest jet-powered train. Today, the M-497 still holds America’s speed record. It’s also the world’s fastest self-propelled locomotive.

In many ways, Wetzel, 86, is an unlikely hero. He was brought up by his aunt during the Depression in Cleveland, Ohio. His mother left town to run a restaurant in Buffalo, New York. His father was a truck driver for The Cleveland Press and an occasional bookie. On weekends, he would take Don on the streetcar to the train yards in the suburb of Linndale and let him run around. “One day, I was about 8, we climbed in the cab of a steam engine and they let me blow the whistle,” Wetzel says. “I was absolutely infatuated.”

Wetzel wasn’t a model student, but he loved to tinker in a shed behind his aunt’s house. When he was 16, he souped up a Whizzer motorized bicycle and gunned through the neighborhood at 55 mph. The bike was such a sensation that he was able to trade it for a 1933 Ford Coupe.

He quickly ripped off the front fenders, stenciled “Carol” — the name of his girlfriend — on the body, and turned it into a hotrod. Since he was the only senior with a car, he would sometimes take the nuns from the St. Michael School back to their convent. “The car had a stick shift and the first time it got lost in the skirts,” he chuckles. “Afterwards, the nuns did the shifting.”

Wetzel joined the New York Central Railroad after a stint in the Marines. He signed up for a correspondence course in mathematics and physics and ended up working at the company’s research laboratory in Cleveland.

He was a pilot in the military, and he quickly used his experience with jet engines, which were still fairly new at the time, to design a patented snow blower powered by a GE jet engine. From there, it was only a step to the jet-propelled train. “We wanted to prove that we could run trains faster over conventional rail and gather technical and operating data,” he says. “We didn’t think we were making history.”

[Contributed by Frank Donovan]



WORLD'S FIRST JET LOCOMOTIVE
BUILT AT COLLINGWOOD DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE SHOP-JULY 1966
The M-497 is still America's fastest train and the world's speediest self-propelled locomotive. (Credit: Don Wetzel)



Don Wetzel looks out of the cab of his jet train. (Credit: Don Wetzel)