

The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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

PRODUCTION STAFF

Publication.....	Al Munn
	Jim Ferris
	Bryan Miller
	Tom Ross
Web Page	Savery Moore
Club Photographer.....	Joe Dumas
Guest Contributors.....	Ken Buck

The Semaphore is the monthly (except July) newsletter of the South Shore Model Railway Club & Museum (SSMRC) and any opinions found herein are those of the authors thereof and of the Editors and do not necessarily reflect any policies of this organization. The SSMRC, as a non-profit organization, does not endorse any position. Your comments are welcome! Please address all correspondence regarding this publication to: *The Semaphore*, 11 Hancock Rd., Hingham, MA 02043. ©2023

E-mail: daveclinton@verizon.net Web page: www.ssmrc.org

VOLUME 43 ■■■■■ NUMBER 8 ■■■■■ AUGUST 2023

CLUB OFFICERS

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Vice President.....	Ed Bulman
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	Bob England (*24)
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ON THE COVER: At the Cape Cod Central’s “Railfan Day” on August 19th, Savery Moore captioned their recently-repainted FL9 #2011 glistening in the morning sun. The locomotive was built in September 1960 as #2038. Retained the number under PC ownership, changed to 5038 when owned by Conrail. ConnDOT bought and rehabbed and re-numbered 2011, which it retained working for MetroNorth Commuter Rail and, finally with the CCC, who now owns it and uses it on their scenic rail trips from Hyannis. (photo by Savery Moore; history by Paul Cutler III)

FORM 19 ORDERS

AUGUST B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, August 28th 8 p.m.

SEPTEMBER BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, September 11th 8 p.m.

DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, September 14th 8 p.m.

TROLLEY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 18th 8 p.m.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Sunday, September 24th

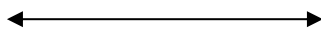
SEPTEMBER B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, September 25th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

Congratulations to **Don Pierce** on winning the July "50/50" drawing!

Congratulations to **Jim Ferris** on winning this month's "50/50" drawing!



CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

The vacation is over for a *Semaphore* newsletter columnist; it seemed short but by the time members read this column, Labor Day will be right around the corner. As we head into fall, our summer activities will come to an end, due to weather and shorter days; but then we are back into model railroading season... sounds good to me!

First up, as usual, are a few updates: the trolley system, at this time, looks like all turnouts will need a Tortoise turnout motor; some will be difficult to install, but possible. One main reason for making extra effort to install the Tortoises is once the overhead wire is installed it may be difficult to use a hand throw without causing some damage to the wire or scenery. At this time, I have installed seven out of the twelve Tortoises to be installed, excluding the car barn area. The car barn area will be attacked after the main trolley system is up and



operational. After speaking with Ron about controls for the tortoises, it was decided we would use the same Touch Toggles that we used on the new industrial area. They are significantly easier to install, as they are mostly plug-in connections, have LED'S built in, and allow multiple-location control again. The plug-in electronic technology will allow several important turnouts to be activated from the main aisle, which is a nice feature if someone is bringing interchange cars up from Larsen. I want to clarify something about the trolley mentioned in my June column: I wrote that with the two reverse loops, complete with their auto-reversers and automatically throwing the turnout for the reverse loop, that a trolley could make a complete loop. I should have pointed out that the trolley car could be left running on its own, automatically, between loops as during an open house.

Lockers: I had hoped, again mentioned in June, that the first phase of lockers might be ready by the time members read this column. We are close but probably need another month to complete. During this first phase, we have been fine-tuning our design, which has taken some extra time that will save time on the second phase. I received an email this week (I'm on the Cape) that the lockers have been sanded and are ready for finishing stain and poly. Any member is welcome to help, so if you are interested just let Jack, Roger, or myself know.

Going Forward, I personally will be spending my time at the club between the trolley and the lockers, giving the lockers the priority and the trolley as a fill-in until this phase of the lockers is complete. However, I do want to see the trolley operational; I will adjust my time, as necessary, to get the trolley done. Another area I have been pondering: I have never seen so many applicants as we have right now, which is great. They have requirements to complete. Because of the lack of trackwork on the railroad at this time, for example, we started doing "test tracks" again. I'm thinking of different changes to that because we don't do much hand laid track anymore. I also have some other thoughts for work off the railroad for applicants to get experience and complete their requirements. Stay tuned.

Scenery, not going to write much about that, thinking Savery may be due for a column of his own.

One last thing, a reminder: if you find something broken on the railroad, write me a note or email; put the notes in my mailbox, that is the only place I look for problems as I check the mailbox every time I come to the club. Thank you!

That's it for this month and questions or comments are always welcome.

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer

Semaphore Memories

AUGUST 2018 (5 years ago)

- Chicago Staging Yard under construction and initial trackwork being done.
- Icing Platform completed.
- Train time added to VIA's *Canadian*, due to continuously late trains: 8 hours to WB; 5 hour EB trains.
- Amtrak's last remaining dome car, the "Great Dome" from the *GN's Empire Builder*, to run again in the fall on the *Downeaster* and then the *Adirondack*. (Last time this was done, as car was sold in 2019-Ed.)
- Amtrak's Southwest Chief going through hell, with Amtrak's D-Bag CEO Richard Anderson suggesting a "bus-bridge" for the middle of the train's route.
- Durango & Silverton purchases first diesel locos—two MP2000NG ones from Motive Power & Equipment Solutions in South Carolina.
- Pioneer RR photographer Jim Shaughnessy passes.
- East-West Rail Study for RR service between Boston & Springfield begins. (Sound familiar?-Ed.)
- Progress continues with the overhaul of ex-C&O 2-6-6-2 #1309 at the Western Maryland Scenic RR shops.
- Two restored, historic, wooden benches brought from New York's Grand Central Station to Springfield's restored Union Station waiting room.
- PRR K-4s #1361, which sat on display at Horseshoe Curve from 1957-1985, will be restored with a new boiler at the Altoona, PA shops. 425 of these locos were made at the PRR's Juniata Shops and 75 by Baldwin; 2 remain.

AUGUST 2013 (10 years ago)

- Passenger track leads finished in Cedar Hill
- Richmond Mills area completed.
- Motivepower, division of Wabtec to furnish 14 additional HSP46 locos to the MBTA.
- Fund-raising campaign started called "Fire Up 611!".
- One of Amtrak's new "Cities Sprinter" locos, the ACS-64, comes to New England for testing.
- GE determines to transfer production of locomotives and off-highway vehicles to new facility in Ft. Worth, TX.
- Amtrak unveils P42 locomotive painted to commemorate Veterans. Loco is #42.
- Arkansas & Missouri's all-Alco fleet ends, with delivery of three SD70Aces from EMD.
- *Ethan Allen Express* (NYC-Rutland, VT) first to test "Bring your Bike on Board".
- UP reaches agreement to transfer ownership of Big Boy #4014 from Southern California Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society in Pomona, CA, back to the UP, with intention to restore it to service.

- MBTA takes over dispatching from CSX for trackage from Cove Interlocking (Back Bay) to CP45 in Worcester
 - Portland Company's property on Portland waterfront sold. Area where Maine Narrow Gauge RR runs.
 - Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway files for bankruptcy
 - Amtrak, NS and State of VA start work to extend passenger service from Lynchburg to Roanoke.
 - VIA Rail Canada substitutes bus service on route over Gaspé Peninsula between Matapedia and Gaspé, due to deteriorated track conditions.
 - July posted Amtrak's best single-month ridership in the company's history--\$2.9 million passengers.
 - First season of MBTA's *Cape Flyer* service extended to Columbus Day weekend, due to popularity.
 - Ground-breaking for the new Wachusett Commuter Rail station in West Fitchburg.
 - Stan Rydell joins SSMRC.
- ### **AUGUST 2008** (15 years ago)
- Conway Scenic RR purchases NYS&W RDC-1; previous owners: New Haven, PC, Amtrak & MetroNorth. Original NH #23 will be restored to the car.
 - Amtrak renames Northeast Corridor regional trains "Northeast Regional".
 - Chicago Transit Authority tests cars without seats to increase capacity.
 - New 500-space parking garage opens next to Worcester Union Station.
 - Large dispatching center in old Central Vermont offices in St. Albans, VT, covers 25 railroads across U.S.
 - GE celebrates 100th anniversary.
 - Genesee & Wyoming buys nine short line railroads known as Ohio Central RR System.
 - CT approves money to replace old New Haven catenary between New York City and New Haven.
- ### **AUGUST 2003** (20 years ago)
- EMD introduces SD70Ace locomotive, with reduced emissions up to 50%.
 - Maine Narrow Gauge RR Museum steams ex-Bridgeton & Harrison #7 for first time since 1941.
 - Alstom ceases operation at 100-year-old facility in Birmingham, England, leaving Bombardier as only RR equipment manufacturer in the country.
 - Five "Evolution" series GE locos testing on U.P. are 16-cylinder, 4400 HP.
 - 93-year-old Kinzua Viaduct in western Pennsylvania collapses, finishing operations of the Knox, Kane & Kinzua RR tourist line.
 - CSX demands \$30 million from state of MA to improve tracks, in order to expand commuter rail trips to Worcester.
 - 133-year-old Belfast & Moosehead Lake RR sold to Railstar Corp. of New York State.
 - Morristown & Erie RR in Morristown, NJ, selected to run state-owned trackage out of Brunswick, Maine. New operation to be called "Maine Eastern".
- ### **AUGUST 1998** (25 Years Ago)
- Bob England holds first LDC meeting.
 - Ex-Conrail rolling stock starts to get new "NYC" and "PRR: reporting marks".
 - Guilford purchases Pan Am World Airways.
 - Amtrak sells pair of FL9s to Cape Cod RR.

- Conway Scenic RR takes delivery of dome car from Cape Cod RR.
- Canadian National and Illinois Central talk merger.
- MBTA's Newburyport extension opens.
- New Boston Engine Terminal opens.
- Athearn purchases "F-series" tooling/molds from Highliners.
- \$400,000 "Rescue Truck" purchased by MBTA.
- Lockers moved from Weymouth to Building 51.
- Last "Operator" from Weymouth; Jeremy Cahill dispatcher.

AUGUST 1993 (30 Years Ago)

- \$3-million renovation of Mattapan "High Speed Trolley" line; includes rebuilding of trolleys.
- Cape Cod RR acquires second Budd RDC.
- More than 150,000 people tour Swedish X2000 train on display at South Station.
- FRA considering mandating "ditch lights".
- After 13 years, Editor switches word processing from "Wordstar" to "Ami Pro".
- New England Historic Rail considering reopening Edaville.
- Canadian Pacific seeks to abandon 200 miles of track across northern Maine.

AUGUST 1988 (35 Years Ago)

- Peter Palica joins SSMRC.
- Mark Hall proposes use of the "West Division", as part of operations.
- Amtrak places order for 50 "Pullman Standard" coaches, to be built by Bombardier.
- ICC grants 49-mile Guilford's "Connecticut River Line" to Amtrak, after maintenance suit settled in Supreme Court. Amtrak turns track over to Central Vermont Rwy.
- Delaware & Hudson part of Guilford Transportation Industries files for bankruptcy.
- Newfoundland Narrow Gauge Rwy abandonment allowed by Canadian government.
- Cape Cod & Hyannis RR operating trains from Braintree T station to Hyannis.

AUGUST 1983 (40 Years Ago)

- Ron & Dave take MassBay RRE's "Flying Yankee" 2-day trip from Boston to Bangor, ME.
- Steamtown prepares to leave Bellows Falls, VT for Scranton, PA.
- Massachusetts seeks bids for \$25-million project to improve 69 miles of track from Attleboro to Hyannis for the return of passenger service.
- EMD announces successor to its famous 645 engine will be the 710.
- C&NW purchases Rock Island line between Minneapolis and Kansas City.
- Westwood electronics firm "LTX" comes to the SSMRC for photos for their latest brochure.
- John Governor produces leatherette-bound "Rulebook"
- First *Semaphore*-sponsored "Photo Contest".

POTPOURRI

CSX TRANSPORTATION'S third heritage locomotive is No. 1982 honoring the Seaboard



System. The Seaboard locomotive joins CSX's Baltimore & Ohio and Chessie System heritage units. Each locomotive is numbered for the year that the predecessor railroad became part of CSX. They released the fourth heritage unit, a salute to Conrail. The number of each heritage locomotive – including Baltimore & Ohio, Chessie System,



Seaboard System, and now Conrail – corresponds with the date each railroad was founded. CSX Transportation took the wraps off its fifth heritage locomotive, No. 1869, that wears the classic Chesapeake & Ohio passenger scheme,



complete with script lettering and the "C&O For Progress" logo. The locomotive joins units that celebrate the history of the Baltimore & Ohio, Seaboard System, Chessie System, and Conrail.



Their latest heritage diesel, this time honoring predecessor Louisville & Nashville. The ES44AH locomotive

will wear number 1850, which the railroad explains signifies the year the L&N was chartered by the state of Kentucky. The railroad later became part of the Seaboard Coast Line, then part of Chessie System and CSX. (TN)

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CANADIAN PACIFIC KANSAS CITY unveiled its new locomotive livery today after tallying the results of employee voting on five potential designs. The



winning choice — selected by 40% of the more than 5,327 employees who participated in the online survey — was option one. In a separate vote of shareholders at the railway's investor day today, 40% also chose the same livery, CEO Keith Creel says. The livery is CP red, features the CPKC beaver and shield logo on the long hood, and ends with a splash of gold and black that begins at the radiator section of the locomotive. CPKC locomotives will wear the livery in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. (TN)

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A PLAN TO TRANSFER sustainable aviation fuel from Limestone could revive freight rail transport in central Aroostook County (Maine). Earlier this year, the Washington D.C.-based DG Fuels announced plans to build a facility at the former Loring Air Force Base. If built, the \$4.4 billion facility would provide sustainable aviation fuel to airlines along the East Coast. To transfer that fuel, the Maine Department of Transportation would need to repair 33 miles of inactive railroad stretching from Limestone to Fort Fairfield, Caribou and Presque Isle. If that happened, Loring could better position itself to become a major hub of industry again. The Loring Development Authority has struggled in recent years to retain major employers. “[With DG Fuels], there would be a level of rail use that isn’t currently being seen,” said Carl Flora, president and CEO of Loring Development Authority. The 33-mile inactive rail section starts at Loring and stretches to Maysville Street in Presque Isle. Rail service has not been operational between Limestone and Fort Fairfield since the mid-1990s or to Caribou for a decade. DG Fuels would use the rail lines to transfer wood biomass to their Loring facility for conversion into aviation fuel. Once completed, the finished

product would be shipped via an underground pipeline from Loring to Searsport, 200 miles away. The fuel would then be shipped to airline customers. The pipeline was originally used to transport traditional jet fuel from Searsport to the now defunct airport at Loring during its Air Force years, Flora said. Currently, Bangor Hydro leases the pipeline and uses a section south of Mattawamkeag to transport natural gas. (Bangor Daily News)

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THE INITIAL OPERATING SEGMENT (IOS) of Honolulu's 20-mile, 21-station autonomous (driverless) Skyline, the first urban rail transit GoA4 (Grade of Automation) system in operation in the United States, opened for revenue service on June



30th. The IOS is 11 miles long, with nine stations from East Kapolei to Aloha Stadium. Billed by manufacturer Hitachi as the first fully autonomous metro system in the U.S., it will be the first new major rail transit system to debut in the United States since 1993. (RA & TN)

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN is suing chemical manufacturers and a group of railcar leasing firms over the East Palestine, Ohio, derailment and toxic-chemical release, saying those companies must share in the cleanup costs from the Feb. 3 incident. The railroad contends the companies are liable for a share of the costs under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, also known as the Superfund Law. The suit specifically claims that the hopper car that caused the derailment was improperly maintained. It also claims there were issues with all five of the cars carrying vinyl chloride — that there were differences between the information on their certificates of construction and their actual characteristics, and that one, owned by GATX, had never been approved by the Federal Railroad Administration for vinyl chloride service. (TN)

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THE GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT Commission (GDC) announced in July that the Hudson Tunnel Project has entered the Engineering Phase of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program and that the FTA had updated the project to receive an up to a \$6.88

Billion CIG Program grant. The announcement clears the way for the Hudson Tunnel Project to receive the vast majority of the Federal funding needed for full construction. GDC said it expected the remainder of Federal funding to become available to the project through the approximately \$4 billion in Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program, Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE), and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grants that have already been applied for. Taken together, the CIG funding, along with other Federal components and Amtrak’s contribution, mean the entire project is poised to have the Federal funding it needs to undertake early work construction this year, and major construction in 2024. In addition, the States of New York and New Jersey, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey have committed to fully funding the local share of the project. (RA)

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U.S. HOUSE REPUBLICANS have released a proposed budget for fiscal 2024 that would effectively force Amtrak “to radically reduce or suspend service on various routes across the nation,” according to Amtrak President Stephen Gardner. The legislation marked up Wednesday also calls for substantial reductions in infrastructure programs benefitting passenger rail. Its release begins a negotiating process among lawmakers that follows a Memorial Day debt reduction deal hammered out between President Joe Biden and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy. The table below shows that the bulk of the appropriators’ Amtrak cuts were inflicted on the Northeast Corridor, but because corporate overhead is also allocated to long-distance and state-supported routes, the entire network would be at risk. Under the “cuts to wasteful spending” category in the House GOP’s summary are elimination of \$560 million from the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger

Amtrak appropriation comparison					
	(in \$ millions)				
	Total	National network	% of total	Northeast Corridor	% of total
Congress enacted 2023	\$2,453	\$1,193	48.6%	\$1,260	51.4%
Congress authorized 2024	\$3,650	\$2,450	67.1%	\$1,200	32.9%
Biden Administration Budget	\$3,068	\$1,841	60.0%	\$1,227	40.0%
Amtrak Request	\$3,650	\$1,950	53.4%	\$1,700	46.6%
House Republicans proposal 2024	\$875	\$776	88.7%	\$99	11.3%
% reduction from 2023	64.3%	35.0%		92.1%	

Rail program, although passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) has guaranteed \$7.2 billion for state-of-good repair projects. The Republican appropriators also seek to zero out two competitive grant programs likely to primarily benefit rural communities — the Federal Railroad Administration’s Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, for which \$500 million is authorized, and

the Department of Transportation’s RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) program, for which \$50 million is authorized. In addition, the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program — which has played a particularly significant role for short line railroads — is slated for a cut of more than 50% from current-year levels to \$258.5 million. (TN)

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RESPONDING TO AN AMTRAK request from late last year, the Surface Transportation Board announced today (July 11) it will open an investigation into *Sunset Limited* timekeeping issues. Today’s board decision also outlines the framework for the process — a detailed procedure that will continue well into 2024. Establishment of that framework is necessary since this is the first such investigation under the responsibility granted to the board under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement act of 2008. “Today’s unanimous decision reflects the board’s serious commitment to fulfilling its Congressionally-established duties under PRIIA to adjudicate disputes over passenger rail on-time performance,” Chairman Martin J. Oberman said. “The investigation that we are initiating today is the first of its kind. It involves a significant board-led component as well as party-led discovery. This framework will ensure that the board has the information it needs to fulfill its mandate to enforce the preference standards and ensure reliable on-time performance for passenger rail.” (TN)

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NICKLE PLATE ROAD SD9 NO. 358 is nearing the end of a lengthy process of restoration to operation by the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society, with Progress Rail returning the locomotive to its appearance as built in 1957. The locomotive, donated by Norfolk Southern to the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society in 2010, has been undergoing restoration for six years. (TN)



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WITH THE SARATOGA horse racing season having begun last Thursday, Amtrak has announced it will extend *Adirondack* operations 37 miles beyond Albany-Rensselaer, N.Y., to Saratoga Springs starting Monday, July 24. The New York City-Montreal train was the last state-supported corridor to be restored following nationwide discontinuances in March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Daily round trips did not resume until this April, although travel restrictions at the Canadian border were eased in 2021 and eliminated Oct. 1, 2022. Despite bipartisan political pressure from New York federal, state, and local lawmakers, Amtrak and the New York State Department of Transportation declined to operate the *Adirondack* beyond Albany-Rensselaer when trains were not running to Montreal. Amtrak and the state agency resumed this stance in late June, when Canadian National reduced authorized speeds on track north of the border. When the host railroad claimed the route lacked sufficient maintenance — to be paid for by Amtrak — to withstand rail expansion during periods of high daytime temperatures, the round trip was again cut back to Albany-Rensselaer, where many *Empire Corridor* trains originate and terminate. Amtrak spokesman Jason Abrams says the company “has explored different solutions with Canadian National and New York State Department of Transportation on resuming *Adirondack* service to and from Montreal. The current heat restrictions CN has in place [on this section of track] limit Amtrak trains within Canada to 10 mph for up to 40 miles. Unfortunately, (the parties) did not find a feasible solution for this summer which would not result in our customers experiencing significant delays of up to four hours or even potentially being stranded mid-trip.” Operationally, longer trip times would result in engineers and conductors regularly exceeding hours-of-service safety requirements under the current level of staffing. Abrams says service to Montreal won’t return “until mid-September when CN is anticipated to lift its heat restrictions. (TN)

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MONTANA RAIL LINK’S main line was put back into service on Saturday after the rebuilt Reed Point bridge over the Yellowstone River was reopened more than a week ahead of estimates. The bridge collapsed on June 24, sending 10 cars into the river and derailing an additional seven cars. Asphalt was released into the river from some of the submerged cars, and cleanup efforts are still under way. “Montana Rail Link has resumed operations with the completion of bridge construction efforts at the site

of the June 24th derailment near Reed Point,” MRL spokesman Andy Garland said in a statement to *Trains News Wire*. “Significant progress was made over the last week of construction, allowing the first train to cross over the newly constructed bridge at approximately 11:30am on Saturday, July 22nd. Construction work was completed ahead of initial estimates, allowing service to officially be restored 28 days post outage. As normal train traffic resumes, crews and contractors will remain on site to remove all equipment and material utilized throughout the process and continuing to restore the area.” MRL crews have been running BNSF Railway detour trains between Laurel, Mont., and Shelby, Mont., via Great Falls. Up to 20 trains per day have been detoured via the BNSF Northern Transcon. Bridge construction began once the last of 10 derailed cars was removed from the river and remaining cars were removed from the east side of the bridge on July 3, according to a unified command update. A temporary causeway built to access the damaged span and freight cars was used in the bridge rebuilding efforts. The railroad had estimated that the bridge would be out of service through the end of July. (TN)

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HIGH WINDS are being blamed for the derailment of a BNSF train on July 21st near the town of Fairmont, Oklahoma. BNSF said 29 cars derailed while the train was stopped because of high winds. The railroad said no one was injured and no hazardous materials were involved. The train was blown over about 4 a.m. Fairmont is about 10 miles east of Enid on BNSF’s Avard Subdivision, and is about 60 miles north of Oklahoma City. Winds may have reached 90 mph at the time; winds of 84 mph were recorded at Vance Air Force Base near Enid. (TN)

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THE ALASKA RAILROAD on Saturday, July 15, 2023, commemorated the 100th anniversary of its 1923 golden spike moment in Nenana, Alaska. With a crowd of more than 800, guests included state officials, Alaska Railroad Corporation leadership, board, and representatives from Washington, D.C., who joined the celebration “showcasing a century of progress, impact and dedication to the community and to Alaska. Over the past 100 years, the Alaska Railroad has been a lifeline, connecting communities, fostering economic growth and facilitating the movement of resources and people across the state,” the railroad said in a release. (TN)

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SEVERAL PROJECTS have been completed on Pan Am Railways’ run-down main line and yard

trackage since the June 1, 2022 acquisition by CSX. Among them:

- Rehabilitation of the Worcester Main Line between Worcester & Clinton, MA., including installation of continuous welded rail and replacement of all crossings and turnouts. The track now meets Federal Railroad Administration Class 2 standards, so the maximum authorized speed was raised to 25 mph from 10 mph. Next up: Installation of welded rail from Clinton, MA., to Harvard, MA., which will allow a speed increase to 40mph from the current 25.

- At the former Maine Central Rigby Yard in South Portland, ME, the largest classification facility in New England-CSX installed 50 new turnouts, more than 20,000 crossties, and surfaced more than 98,000 feet of track, and improved walking conditions. Rigby classifies traffic bound to and from Maine and the Canadian Maritimes. CSX says the work improved the safety and fluidity of the yard, and reduced the number of minor yard derailments that historically plagued the location.

- In Ayer Yard in Massachusetts a series of projects increased the capacity and fluidity of the yard. Ayer Yard is the interchange point for CSX and the Pan Am Southern, the joint venture with Norfolk Southern that includes the former Boston & Maine main line west of Ayer. Ayer also is a strategic point on CSX. It's where the Pan Am Railways corridor to New Hampshire and Maine begins.

- Extensive upgrades to the Freight Main Line from Portland to the end of Pan Am trackage in Mattawamkeag, ME, including the replacement and surfacing, installation of continuous welded rail, increased capacity, and installation of new defect detectors. (470)

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ROANOKE – Norfolk Southern's (née Norfolk & Western's) locomotive shops in Roanoke, Va., originally known as the Roanoke Machine Works was the city's largest employer and manufactured some of the best, most advanced steam locomotives to ride the rails. Building and service steam locomotives from 1884 and 1953, the most famous of the nearly 500 locomotives it built were the Class Y, designed to haul heavy coal trains in the mountains of Virginia and West Virginia, the Class A, which was used for both high-speed freight and passenger service, and the beautiful Class J, designed to pull fast passenger trains. In 2022, Genesis Rail Services, a company that performs heavy rail infrastructure work, cleans up derailments, and does trackwork, leased part of the former East End Shops, and has consolidated its facilities there, moving from Bluefield, W. Va.

Genesis Rail was actually purchased by another company in 2021 and is now called Genesis Rail Services II. (TN)

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UKRAINIAN RAILWAYS (UZ or Ukrzaliznytsia) and rail operators in neighboring European countries are stepping up efforts to move thousands of tons of grain from Ukraine to ports in Poland, Romania, and Germany for export around the world. The increase in rail transport has followed Russia's decision to end a deal, previously brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, allowing grain exports by sea from Ukraine, despite Russia's continued attempts to invade Ukraine. That deal had allowed the export of around 33 million tons of grain by sea between August 2022 and July this year. Following Russia's announcement July 18 that it would no longer participate in the grain deal, it has attacked many of Ukraine's main grain export ports with missiles and drones. The port of Odesa has been a primary target, but also hit have been smaller river ports in Reni and Izmail, on the river Danube in the west of Ukraine and only a few hundred yards away from Romania, on the other side of the river. These attacks have clearly damaged the ports and destroyed or spoiled tons of stored grain and cereal. (TN)

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VERMONT RAIL SYSTEM continues to make progress in repairs to flood damage sustained by its lines earlier this month, company president Selden Houghton told a local news site at the end of July. Houghton detailed the widespread damage but felt VRS had been fortunate because the flooding had not caused any bridge failures. The hardest-hit portion of the system, the Green Mountain Railroad, still has 27 state-owned miles closed because of flood damage, Joe Flynn, secretary of the Vermont Agency of Transportation, told the news site. One damaged portion of that line, in Ludlow, Vt., where tracks were left hanging 50 feet in the air



after a washout, was widely shown in national news broadcasts. Another, in East Wallingford, saw tracks left unsupported by a massive slope failure. In Ludlow, the washed-out area has been filled in and work to relay the tracks was slated to begin by August 1st. In East Wallingford, work was continuing



to shore up the hillside before tracks could be rebuilt. Picture above is 19 days after the washout in Ludlow, Vermont! (TN)

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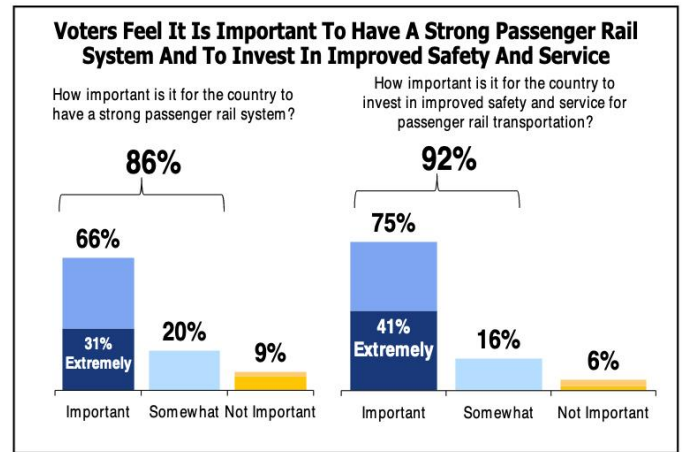
A NEW BUS SERVICE will link the train stations in Providence, Worcester, New Bedford and Fall River, aimed at bringing Massachusetts riders to Providence in time to catch their trains. Touted as a “connecting bus service”, it’s being paid for by Amtrak and run by DATTCO, a bus company in New Britain, CT. (Providence Journal)

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN will open a permanent field office in East Palestine, Ohio (site of the horrific derailment and fires in February), and has purchased property for that facility, the company recently announced. The building at 248 North Market Street will include community engagement and operational functions. It will eventually include the Family Assistance Center, currently in space leased from Centenary United Methodist Church. “We’ve pledged our long-term commitment to East Palestine and this permanent field office is a physical symbol of that pledge,” NS CEO Alan Shaw said. The company said building will receive a brick façade to better match the aesthetic of East Palestine’s downtown district. The new office is just across the street from East Palestine’s train station, which the railroad is donating to the community following the completion of exterior renovations. (TN)

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A POLL CONDUCTED by the Mellman Group surveyed 1,000 registered voters. Among its results:



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THE MBTA HAS REACHED a new labor agreement with its largest union, affecting more than 6,000 workers including bus and train operators. Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey and Boston Carmen’s Amalgamated Transit Union Local 589 announced the agreement on August 2nd. It will provide an 18% wage increase over four years, which Healey said is the largest pay increase for MBTA workers since the 1990s. The agreement focuses on improving employee retention and improvement. Efforts to retain frontline employees include longevity bonuses with increases at 10, 15, 20, and 25 years, plus select increases targeted for hard-to-fill positions such as welders and overnight shifts. It also addresses recruitment incentives such as signing bonuses. MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng said the agreement makes the agency’s jobs more competitive in the transit industry and more attractive to potential employees. (TN)

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ALSTOM AND the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) on Aug. 9 confirmed a \$315 million base order for 60 single-level commuter railcars, with options to build 313 more as part of the state’s railcar renewal program to replace its aging fleet of non-powered coaches and control (cab) cars. Delivery of the first cars is expected to begin in 2026. It is anticipated that power will be provided by six Alstom ALP-45DP dual-power (diesel/AC



catenary) locomotives that are part of a larger order by Metro-North. Based on Alstom's Adessia platform, the new railcars will be prioritized for use on the non-electrified Hartford Line, as well as the non-electrified branches of the New Haven Line, CTDOT reported.

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AMTRAK AND THE TEXAS Central Partners organization are looking formally at ways to work together to get the high-speed rail link between Houston and Dallas back on track. "Texas Central Partners ('Texas Central') and Amtrak are seeking opportunities to advance planning and analysis work associated with the proposed Dallas-Houston 205-mph high-speed rail project to further determine its viability...to potentially advance the project," Amtrak says. This felt like an obvious shoe to drop shortly after Amtrak hired Andy Byford, the brilliant and customer-focused former head of the NYC Metropolitan Transit Authority pushed out due to political clashes with then-New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. His role was explicitly for Amtrak's high-speed rail program, which left most of us asking, "WHAT high-speed rail program?" Now we definitively have our answer. "If we are going to add more high-speed rail to this country, the Dallas to Houston Corridor is a compelling proposition and offers great potential," said Byford, whose full Amtrak title is Senior Vice President of High-Speed Rail Development Programs. "We believe many of the country's biggest and fastest-growing metropolitan areas, like Houston and Dallas, deserve more high quality high-speed, intercity rail service and we are proud to bring our experience to evaluate this potential project and explore opportunities with Texas Central so the state can meet its full transportation needs." (RPA)

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THE METRO-NORTH RAILROAD has released the second in its series of heritage locomotives celebrating the railroad's 40th anniversary and honoring its predecessors, this time with a scheme



worn by Conrail FL9 units between 1976 and 1982. (TN)

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TWO GENESEE & WYOMING short lines in Georgia today asked the Federal Railroad Administration to allow them to conduct a pilot program that would test Parallel Systems' zero-emission autonomous container cars. The 211-mile Georgia Central Railway and 233-mile Heart of Georgia Railroad would like to test the battery-electric cars – which can run alone or coupled together as an autonomous train – on portions of their lines beginning next year.

"GC and HOG believe the development and anticipated adoption of this technology has the



A prototype of the Parallel Systems autonomous container rail system tests in Southern California. Parallel Systems

potential to capture new container business moving to and from the Port of Savannah, as well as reinvigorate traffic on rural rail lines and revive inland ports in Georgia – all while removing trucks from the region's roads and reducing carbon emissions," G&W said. The Port of Savannah is the fastest-growing container port in the U.S. (TN)

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THE MBTA will halt service on most of its Haverhill commuter rail line for 58 days beginning Saturday, Sept. 9, through Sunday, Nov. 5th to accommodate signal system upgrades related to Automatic Train Control upgrades to positive train control. Trains will be diverted from the Haverhill Line to the Lowell Line south of Ballardvale via the Wildcat branch, running express between Ballardvale and North Station, save for a stop at Anderson/Woburn, where they will connect with shuttle buses serving the stops that are being skipped along the Haverhill line. (TN)

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THE MBTA BOARD of Directors authorized a new labor contract that's aimed at tackling the agency's persistent shortage of key workers with increased wages and improved benefits. In addition to higher wages for entry-level employees, the proposed deal would also create longevity bonuses to help retain experienced workers, who have been leaving the agency at an unusually high rate over the past year. "Today you see a demonstration that we have your back," Governor Healey told MBTA employees in a

press conference announcing the deal at the MBTA's Cabot Yard maintenance facility. "We'll be looking to improve working conditions as you improve the safe and effective operation of our public transportation system." Carmen's Union Local 589 Vice President Billy Bernardino called it a "historic" labor agreement. "It's going to be great for the working men and women at the MBTA," Bernardino told StreetsblogMASS.

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GOVERNOR HEALEY had requested \$12.5-million to begin East-West Rail from Boston to Springfield and Pittsfield but the legislature did not include it in the recently-passed budget. This is too bad and not looking at the future of public transportation at all. (BG)

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THE BERKSHIRE SCENIC Railway Museum, Inc., is pleased to announce the lease of five unique and historic pieces of passenger rail equipment from the Budd RDC Foundation. The lease is intended to continue the care, preservation and interpretation of this equipment which has been carefully preserved and restored by the Budd RDC Foundation over the past several decades. This equipment represents prime examples of the Budd Company's efforts to revolutionize and re-invigorate passenger rail service in the 1950's. Budd RDC Foundation President, Jim Gagliardi said, "After several years of discussions with the folks at Berkshire Scenic, and observing their successes at restoring and operating their own RDC, I felt that the time was finally right to grant them stewardship of the fleet." The five pieces of equipment are:

*The three remaining cars of the experimental, high-speed trainset built in 1957 for the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad called "The Roger Williams". This was a special-built train set using existing RDC propulsion technology.



* An RDC-1, built in 1953 for the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad as #41. This car ran in Berkshire County for the New Haven and is sister to RDC #42, which Berkshire Scenic has in its collection.

*An RDC-2, built in 1956 for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as #1960. This car ran as part of the B&O's "Daylight Speedliner" between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The car is unique in that it was modified with the addition of a galley and six tables. The 1960 is one of two cars remaining that were built for that service. The other car resides at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, MD.

Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum President Tom Delasco said, "This is a significant addition to the museum's collection, and we thank Mr. Gagliardi and the Budd RDC Foundation for having the confidence in our abilities to continue the preservation, restoration and operation of these unique pieces." The equipment has been split between both Berkshire Scenic operations in Berkshire County. RDC's 41 and 1960 will reside and operate on the Hoosac Valley Service, and The Roger Williams will reside at Lenox. (NHRHTA "Forum")

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TWO LOCOMOTIVES OWNED by Precision Locomotive Services (PNLX), based in Staunton, Virginia, have been leased to the MBTA for use in cable train service. A cable train is a special train used to lay fiber optic cables underground along the railroad right-of-way, replacing pole-mounted cables. The two locomotives are PNLX 2107, an ex-UP MP20GP and PNLX 9619, an ex-CN GP40-2LW. Both were used last year by Metro North for a similar train and are already equipped with the proper PTC software to run on the MBTA's system. The T will spend roughly \$80-million to install an underground fiber cable network, which will aim to improve safety across the commuter rail system and reduce service disruptions. (RRE)

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SHORTLINE HOLDING COMPANY Patriot Rail, of Jacksonville, Fla., has acquired two New Hampshire tourist railroads, the Hobo Railroad and the Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad. The railroads operate a combined total of 54 miles of state-owned former Boston & Maine trackage. The Hobo Railroad is based in the White Mountains tourist town of Lincoln, while the Winnepesaukee Scenic is based in Meredith in the Granite State's Lakes Region. Also



included: Rail Bike Adventures, a Laconia-based operation which allows tourists to ride rail bikes alongside Lake Winnisquam. Brenda Clark, Ben Clark, and Jennifer Franz, whose family has operated the railroads for 36 years, said in a joint statement, "It has been our passion to sustain the joy that Ed Clark first created in the late 1980s for the thousands of smiling faces who rode our historic trains and enjoyed the White Mountains and the beautiful Lakes Region. Now it is time to pass this extraordinary legacy on to Patriot Rail, which has the experience, commitment and ability to take this wonderful tourist operation to even greater heights." Patriot Rail also operates the Blue Ridge Scenic Railway in Blue Ridge, Ga. "It is a privilege to assume from the Clark family these tremendous Winnepesaukee and Hobo Railroad assets," Patriot Rail CEO John E. Fenton said in a statement announcing the deal today. "Working in close partnership with the State of New Hampshire, today's announcement ensures that we continue the long tradition of providing a superb tourist rail experience in the region. We welcome the Hobo, Winnepesaukee, and Rail Bike Adventures employees to our Patriot team, and together we aim to further elevate the Clark family's treasured service for rail patrons and riders."

Patriot operates 32 short lines in 23 states. (TN)

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THE WESTERN MARYLAND Scenic Railroad has acquired dome-lounge *Silver Palace*, a well-traveled car built by the Budd Co. in 1948 for Western Pacific for use on the *California Zephyr*. Following



completion of maintenance, inspections, and upgrades, the car will join dome-lounge *Stampede Pass* in Western Maryland Scenic excursion service. (TN)

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SIEMENS MOBILITY broke ground this month on its new Lexington, N.C., plant, which aims to begin production in 2024 and expects to employ more than 500 people by 2028. The new facility, on a 200-acre site with room for expansion, will produce passenger cars as well as offering locomotive and passenger car overhaul facilities. It will include technologies

such as robotic welding, 3D printing and virtual reality welder training. Siemens says the facility will be carbon neutral when fully operation, helping the company meet its sustainability objectives. (TN)

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THE DELIVERY SCHEDULE for the MBTA subway cars being built by Chinese firm CRRC remains undetermined, but MBTA and Massachusetts officials believe the company will eventually complete its troubled order for the railcars. MBTA CEO Phillip Eng told a recent board meeting that he, MBTA Deputy General Manager Jeffrey Gonville, and three state officials including Transportation Secretary Gina Fiandana held a virtual meeting on Aug. 16th with CRRC Chairman Sun Yongcai to "hear directly that they are committed to this project," and called it productive. The MBTA ordered 404 cars from CRRC — 152 for the Orange Line and 252 for the Red Line — in two batches of contracts in 2014 and 2016, after the Chinese company underbid competitors by \$200 million. But those orders were to have been completed by September 2023. The most recent estimate had the last cars delivered by September 2026, but even when that estimate was announced in January, Gonville — then the acting general manager — said CRRC would not meet it. At that point, just 90 cars had been delivered, with no new cars arriving for seven months from the factory of CRRC's Springfield, Mass., affiliate. (TN)

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

JULY

TRAINS

- Preservation in the Prairie State
- The Keystones of Massachusetts
- Who Shot the Passenger Train--Revisited

MODEL RAILROADER

- Extending the Fun
 - Setup Night Builds Camaraderie
- Boost Your Color IQ
- DCC Currents

Setting up JMRI and DecoderPro

MODEL RAILROAD CRAFTSMAN

- Branch Line on a Shelf
 - Installing Automatic Grade Crossing Signals
- Diverging Points
 - It's Okay to Take Time for Your Hobbies

AUGUST

TRAINS

- Best of Trains: Tomorrow's Train

MODEL RAILROADER

- Scratchbuilding a Transfer Table
- DCC Currents

Setting Up Smartphone Wi-Fi Throttles
Trains of Thought
Between Perfection and Compromise
MODEL RAILROAD CRAFTSMAN
Overhead Illusions

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

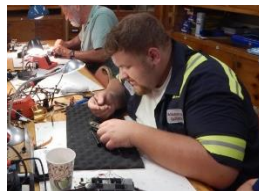
DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Dave Clinton

We had another full-house in July, starting off with **Robert Siedlinski** bringing his Atlas GP40-2W, dressed in MBTA colors. The 8-pin socket was easily spotted, so the DZ123PS was plugged in and, when tested, we thought that MTH had installed one of their awful "smoke units" in the Atlas model! Upon further inspection, we found that not only was there the 8-pin socket but there was also a 21-pin plug, with dummy connector installed. So, we removed the dummy connector, when we installed the 8-pin decoder but didn't know there was still a connector and a 21-pin plug connecting all the circuits for DC...thus we "smoked" the decoder. There really should be a warning on top of the decoder to tell the owner to make sure they remove both dummy plugs. Anyway, installation of a 21-pin decoder was good and, with the help of **Paul III**, even the ditch lights worked.



Tom Ross, now a "regular" of the clinic, brought his narrow-gauge 4-6-0 and worked on the drive gears, which were giving him some problems. He did a really nice paint job on this old-timer!



Eric Mercer worked on assembling a New York Central stock car by Roundhouse. A new project for him.



Chris Barlow brought an Atlas RS-1 "Classic", decorated for the NYC, along with a Bochmann *Acela* locomotive. He installed the DZ123PS in both and had two successes. It should be noted, though, that his RS-1 *did* suffer "The Barlow Syndrome" and didn't work after he installed the shell. So, he removed the shell and tucked some wires down and away it went...the second time around!



First-timer, applicant **Chris Wheeler** also brought a Bochmann *Acela* locomotive and his installation into the 8-pin socket was also successful. Good way to start off the "clinic experience"!

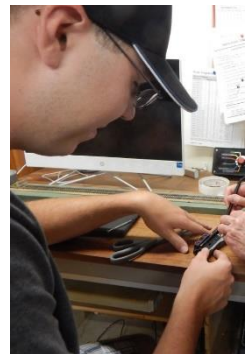


Applicant **Dylan Lavinsky** brought his Canadian National ES-44 by Athearn Genesis and after cleaning the wheels and tuning it up, talked **Paul 3** into registering it.

Speaking of **Paul Cutler III**, he brought several of the new Rapido "County Cars" and replaced the couplers with Kadee "short-shank" couplers, for closer car spacing. He added passengers, while the cars were apart. These are beautiful, streamlined New Haven cars (built as "combines") with seven different interior varieties. All done with correct interior colors, including the different seating arrangements and upholstery colors.

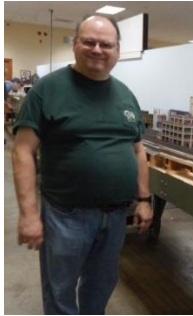


This month's clinic was attended by 5 folks, starting with **Dylan Lavinsky**, our newest member, who brought a couple of his Bochmann U25b locos dressed in the Auto-Train white, red and purple scheme of the 1970s...i.e.. "gaudy". They had a very unusual wiring set-up, so he hard-wired them with the DZ123, after making sure that no contact with the motor was being made by either of the metal weights above and below it. He was able to use the 12v bulb that came with the locomotive, so no resistor was needed.



Chris Wheeler continued his “Acela experience”, by bringing the other powered unit (the other end of the train set) and installing the DZ123PS in the 8-pin socket provided. Getting the shell back on took some time but both units proved successful on the ECL. A change of CV29 to 35 was necessary to “fool” the loco into going backwards, when it thought it was going forward! This is necessary anytime you have locomotives at both ends of the train that are facing a different direction and that have the same address.

Joe Dumas brought his Mantua narrow gauge 0-8-0 but decided to postpone the work needed on this very old locomotive to consider installing a decoder into his “new”, brass locomotive, that he obtained at the Big E this year. The brass was only 20 years old, instead of the 50-60 of the Mantua, and is a beautiful, Colorado narrow gauge 2-8-2.



Don Pierce, with **Ed Bulman’s** assistance, installed the DZ123PS decoder into the 8-pin socket provided in his limited-run P1K DL-109, dressed in the New Haven McGinnis orange, white and black scheme; the only locomotive of this class to get this scheme. A 270-ohm resistor in series with the factory bulb gave great light and the weight of the locomotive should pull any New Haven train ever run!

Speaking of **Ed Bulman**, after getting Don on his way Ed worked on two locomotives “fresh out of the box”. The first was an old Atlas “Dual-mode decoder” H16-44 dressed in New Haven orange and green. This Atlas exclusive had a pin connector, which was moved on the electronics board from one position to the other, depending on whether you were going to use it on DC or DCC. This board was not the most dependable and frequently “went up in smoke”, but Ed’s worked beautifully, at least for now. His other loco was an Atlas GP40 dressed in beautiful PennCentral black! This “Classic series” included an 8-pin socket, which took the now most-popular DZ123PS decoder from Digitrax. Ed also changed the awful “split knuckle” couplers, which Atlas insists on using, on even their most expensive locos; a coupler which is not allowed on the ECL. So, he replaced them with



Kadee “whiskers”. Both locos had L.E.D. lights, so no resistors were necessary.



The “cheering squad”, newest applicant Larry Edwards, applicants Michael Jackson, Dennis Hester and Chris Wheeler “assisting” newest member Dylan Lavinsky (at the programming cart).

Thanks to Joe Dumas for taking such great pictures each month! The next clinic will be Thursday, September 14th. Please contact me with any questions about the clinic.

LIBRARY CORNER

Thanks to **Jeff Griesemer** for donating several new railroad books to our collection this month:

- [Narrow Gauge to Silverton](#)
- [The Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway](#)
- [Central Vermont Railway](#)
- [Snowplow-Clearing Mountain Rails](#)

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

Dave Clinton, Librarian

EDITOR’S NOTES

1. **PLEASE REMOVE your personal items** from under the railroad in the train room. This is requested to happen by September 15th. The clutter has hampered discovery and repairs to layout problems, which occur more frequently now that parts of the railroad are more than two decades old. New lockers should be available to rent and store your items. There are also several vacant lockers, of the older design, available for rent. Thanks for your cooperation!

2. **Scenery Tables** are available to any members for their use. However, if you are using them for your own personal projects, please take the project home with you after each work session. Space is sometimes at a premium for Club projects. Thanks for your cooperation!
3. **We have hired** Rudy Garbely, owner of Garbely Publishing, to develop a new **Website** which will replace our 20+ year-old one, which uses a program no longer supported. Check out his work for the New Haven RR Historical: www.nhrhta.org as well as the New England Steam Corp: www.newenglandsteam.org . An exciting time for the SSMRC!
4. We had a fun and successful **“Summer Open House”**, with 183 paying folks viewing our work. Thanks to all who participated, especially running trains all day, standing on concrete floors.
5. **Savery Moore will continue his article** “A Trip to Durango” next month, so “stay-tuned”!

.....*David N. Clinton*

“Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” (Romans 12:10)

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **Al Munn** on being voted a “Life Member”. Al has been a member for 52 years and an important Semaphore staff member for over 20 years. Al’s contributions to the Club’s progress and successes have been many, including many years, thousands of spikes, and ties as Trackwork Committee chairman. Thank you Al!

A big “Welcome Aboard” to our newest member **Dylan Lavinsky** of Marshfield. Dylan has been very active, during his applicant period and has volunteered to help on several special projects. He has been accepted at the Mass Maritime Academy in Buzzards Bay and will be starting classes in September. Please come visit us whenever possible...many prayers for a successful and rewarding educational experience!



Bryan Miller is facing additional major surgery tomorrow, so please keep him in your prayers for a successful outcome and speedy recovery!

Brendan Sheehan recently had a bad fall and broke his wrist in two places. He will be going into rehab soon and our thoughts and prayers are for a speedy and full recovery. See you soon, Brendan!

It is nice to see **Ron Clough** back in “circulation” and at the Club, after his bout of medical issues. Welcome back, Ron!

It was also nice to see **Larry Strumpf** running a train at the Open House on the 5th. Larry goes to Florida over the winter and this is the first time we have seen him since last fall. Welcome back to you, also, Larry!

Welcome aboard to our newest applicant, **Larry Edwards**, from Hyde Park. We look forward to getting to know you over the next several months, Larry.

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

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

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



Jack Foley 13th
Ralph Weischedel .. 27th

Non-Registered Equipment on Bad Order Shelf

Mechanical Dept. chairman Ed Carter gives us this list of equipment, which is not identified or registered. By our Rules & Regulations, equipment cannot be left on the RR, if it hasn’t been registered. These items will be available for the owner to pick up for the next few weeks, after which they may be given to the White Elephant Table chairman for sale at our October Show and Open House. So, check these out and come and get and take home if yours: (Number preceding Reporting Marks is B.O. card #)

109 PICK	20036 40' Boxcar
110 CB&Q	19838 High cube boxcar
111 TP&W	70113 50' Boxcar
112 CG	5628 40' Boxcar
114 RF&P	2920 50' boxcar
115 WM	35005 50' boxcar
117 HLCX	81287 50' boxcar
120 LV	63680 40' boxcar
124 RDG	80289 hopper w/load

125 C&LE	24017 34' hopper
127 B&O	733156 hopper 2 bay
129 WRNX	14132 40' tank
130 KOTX	8212 40' tank
137 UTLX	78331 Tank
138 GATX	74671 Tank
139 TXC	22663 dome tank
140 NMCX	106 Dairy car
143 GBX	4401 Wooden reefer
144 VCBX	1013 40' boxcar
147 FEC	23051 50' boxcar
149 GTW	591599 50' boxcar automotive
150 BAR	9750' mechanical reefer
153 C&O	24251 50' boxcar
154 CB&Q	48500 50' boxcar
159 LV	66264 40' boxcar
160 LNE	18179 covered hopper
161 LV	7050 50' plug door boxcar
163 BM	11050' plug door boxcar
164 ASAB	7182 50' boxcar
166 CB&Q	21019 50' boxcar
169 SSW	34822 40' boxcar
172 WP	3809 50' boxcar
173 ROIX	57504 55' covered hopper
174 NDYX	816876 50' covered hopper
175 BM	5846 50' covered hopper
176 MOHX	2510 covered hopper
177 CH	23818 50' covered hopper
178 CRDX	11505 50' covered hopper
179 BAR	6004 50' boxcar
188 LV	62548 40' boxcar
189 REX	6123 40' reefer



Peter Palica: “ I finished detailing on my 3-d printed Chicago Tribune skyscraper. I randomly placed it for a quick photo in the middle of a Bryant City intersection for this photo. The building is about 20” tall but actually seems to fit quite nicely with its HO cousins on our club layout



What are You Doing?

Jim O'Brien (H): “FIRST PICTURE: Maggie Walker bank 1908. First Black woman in Virginia to own a bank. Called the Penny Savings Bank. She had the kids save their pennies and when they got 100 pennies she would open an account for them. Torn down in the 90’s. Now a parking lot. SECOND PICTURE: Shelton house, still standing. She and Edgar Allan Poe where to be married. Ten days before wedding he was found dead in Baltimore. Rumor is that the brothers did it. You can see them in the upstairs windows. THIRD PICTURE is the Colonial Theater built in 1921, torn down in the 80’s. Model is as built in 1921.”



Running Extra

ABOARD THE SILVER STAR — The announcement Amtrak is extending chef-prepared meals and table service for sleeping-car passengers to another New York-Miami train came a few days after *Trains News Wire* had a chance to sample that service on the northbound *Silver Star*. Dining car service for coach travelers on



eastern long-distance trains ended in 2018 and 2019 when Amtrak furloughed staff and switched to “flexible dining” for sleeping car passengers, whose meals are included in ticket prices. That didn’t change when management began experimenting with a slimmed down full-service dining model on the *Star*. It had introduced such service on most Superliner-equipped western trains two years earlier. As the *Star* departed Orlando on time at 7:25 p.m. on June 22, Viewliner II diner *Hartford* presented a welcome sight: an inviting, spacious dining room with white tablecloths and crisp blue linen napkins. The interior remained bright despite threatening thunderstorm-laden clouds outside, thanks to the double row of windows, high ceilings, and inventive ceiling light fixtures.

What was missing at dinner? People. Only three of eight available booths were occupied at the height of the dinner hour; two additional tables next to the kitchen were either stacked with supplies or used by crew.

I was invited to join solo patron Bill Porter; he was seated across the aisle from an Australian couple. Porter was headed to Wilmington, Del., from Fort



Lauderdale, Fla., while John and Donna Dickfos from Brisbane boarded at Orlando for New York.

First-rate food and service

The only menu difference between fare offered on the *Star* and Superliner dining cars is that a salad is offered at dinner instead of the western trains’ choice of three appetizers (one a salad with brie cheese). The reason most likely is that the *Silver Star* and *Meteor* diners operate with only one chef in the kitchen, not two. Though stainless steel cutlery is wrapped in the napkins, food is served on disposable plates at all meals. An unfortunate holdover from the “flexible dining” era is placement of three tall trash boxes and a paper garbage bag at the end of the car in space designed to accommodate passengers with disabilities. This

setup may be convenient for servers clearing tables, but is a needless intrusion in an otherwise elegant dining room.

Nevertheless, the food quality, preparation, and service were excellent. Porter and Donna Dickfos reported that the oven roasted Atlantic salmon with lemon caper wine sauce was flavorful but not fishy, if somewhat dry, while John Dickfos and I had tender “Amtrak’s signature flat iron steaks” cooked as ordered.



Table flowers add an inviting touch, although sunlight emphasizes the train’s unwashed windows. Bob Johnston

The three dinner wine choices are a significant step up from the mini-serving Barefoot brand selections offered with “flexible” meals. Breakfast and lunch items duplicate what is served on the Western Superliners and were prepared with flair.

Minimum staffing

What currently isn’t replicated on the *Star* and *Meteor* is allowing coach passengers to purchase meals in such a fabulous space. On this trip, overnight capacity on the *Star*’s three coaches was showing 90%; a seat check survey walking through the train after dinner revealed about half of the more than 150 passengers going to Northeast Corridor destinations and a quarter headed for the Carolinas and Virginia.

It took more than a year following another “pilot,” where business-class customers were allowed to buy dining car meals on the *Coast Starlight*, for coach passengers on other Superliner-equipped trains to gain that purchase option. The opportunity has not been extended to coach travelers here despite three months of *Star* experience, though doing so has been a stated goal. In an email, spokeswoman Kimberly Woods says the *Silver Star* pilot “met all of our expectations — needing only minor tweaks as we learned more about the service in real time. This expansion allowed for a seamless expansion to the *Silver Meteor* — evolving from a ‘surprise and delight’ onboard one route to a promotable product on both.”

The company's goal has established a dining car model that is cost-focused on minimum staffing rather than generating extra revenue and spreading "surprise and delight" to those who aren't inclined to pay sleeping car prices or necessarily travel overnight.

Before meals in a bowl were introduced, Amtrak dining cars on eastern trains served sleeper and coach passengers with one or two chefs in the kitchen and a lead service attendant, plus one or two servers. This employment level is currently handling coach passengers on a space-available basis on the western trains; with a bit of staffing creativity (maybe with incentives and cross-union cooperation) extra serving personnel might be added at certain meal periods.



The Viewliner's spacious kitchen, as viewed from the hallway leading to the cafe car.
Bob Johnston

What's next?

According to a roster obtained by the Florida Association of Railroad Passengers through a Freedom of Information Act filing, seven of 25 Viewliner II dining cars remained inactive at the end of April 2023. The three eastern long-distance trains that have them, the *Star*, *Meteor*, and *Lake Shore Limited's* New York section, need a total of 11 to protect regular assignments. The other seven active diners are available as "protect" standbys to substitute while diners cycle through maintenance, which is mandated more often for food service cars than other passenger equipment.

One train that lost the sidelined cars, the New York-New Orleans *Crescent*, clearly needs to get four of these back again, especially since it serves many of the nation's fine dining locations and Amtrak is actively leading a proposed expansion of a section to Dallas-Fort Worth, Tex.

Given the Superliner shortage, and the fact that 17 Viewliner I sleeping cars are listed as "inactive" in the April 2023 report, another worthy candidate is the Chicago-Washington *Capitol Limited*. Together, both trains would require 7 active sets of equipment for daily operation and serve at least one endpoint where protect Viewliner II diners are already stationed.

The *Silver Star* journey reinforces the perception that when decked out as originally intended, instead of resembling a low-budget cafeteria lunch room, Viewliner II dining cars offer a distinctive travel asset Amtrak should exploit on as many trains and to as many customers as possible.

A press release announcing the *Meteor's* "traditional dining" debut has it right: "Whether it's the provision of delectable chef-prepared meals, an exquisite dining ambience, or the opportunity to enjoy a truly unique travel experience, Amtrak aims to create a memorable journey for all passengers." Now it's up to management to discover the corporate will to make that happen, and perhaps gain some word-of-mouth converts to rail travel in the process.



Analysis: Railroads need to polish their tarnished image. Here's how

Railroads have a great story to tell, but they need to grab the public's attention first. And nothing can do that like the steam locomotive. Bill Stephens, *Trains* 7/6/23

When my wife and I had another couple over for dinner back in April, the cork was barely out of the wine bottle when our friends popped the question: What on earth is going on with railroads?

In the wake of the Feb. 3 Norfolk Southern derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, and intense media coverage of subsequent wrecks both large and small, our friends wondered why so many trains were running off the rails. They also asked about labor strife and how, in 2023, railroads could be so backward as to deny their unionized workers sick days.

Both were fair questions, and naturally I tried to clear up the misconceptions. Despite the headlines, railroads are safe and until now the unions and railroads had traditionally negotiated really good long-term sick leave benefits at the expense of paid sick days.

But perception equals reality, right? And the reality is that the railroad industry's image has taken a beating over the past two years. It has one black eye from derailments, another one from labor upheaval and massive job cuts, and a bloody nose from the fallout of service problems that followed the onset of the pandemic. No wonder the public, employees, customers, lawmakers, and regulators are alarmed.

You can argue how much of the industry's reputational damage has been self-inflicted and how much has been the result of media piling on and a public that knows next to nothing about railroads. But we all should agree that this turn of events is too bad, because railroads have a good story to tell, especially when you compare trains and trucks.

You know the details. Railroads are far safer than 18 wheelers. Due to their significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions, trains are better for the planet. Freight trains operate over a heavily taxed and privately funded network, while 80,000-pound big rigs beat the tar out of publicly funded highways, don't come close to paying their way, and contribute to traffic jams.

Yes, railroads are sharing Association of American Railroads talking points all over social media. The problem with Facebook, Twitter, and the like is you're either preaching to the choir or attracting trolls. Plus, railroads face a noisy social media landscape, where they're competing for eyeballs with Taylor Swift, the latest political outrage, and whatever's going viral on TikTok.

It's hard to grab the public's attention – and harder still to keep it long enough to explain why we need railroads.

Yet railroads have at their disposal the ultimate public relations tool: The steam locomotive. Nothing can attract people to railroads like a living, breathing mainline steam locomotive. They're a nostalgic novelty in the era of Tesla, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality.

Which is why the industry should assemble a steam-powered train or two to criss-cross the continent coupled to cars that contain exhibits on railroad safety, history, technology, and how moving freight by rail benefits all of us. They could even put an exclamation point on progress by tucking a Wabtec or Progress Rail battery electric and a Canadian Pacific Kansas City or CSX hydrogen fuel cell locomotive between the tender and the exhibit cars.

The train would create a spectacle in every city and town it visits. People would flock trackside. National and local media would show up. And railroads could tell a positive story, including reminding folks of the vital work railroads do, from keeping the lights on and hauling crops to delivering your SUV and the imported goods that ultimately wind up on Walmart shelves and in Amazon warehouses.

Even though they were replaced by diesel locomotives nearly 65 years ago, steam locomotives, regardless of size, continue to fascinate.

By virtue of its size, Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 is the most impressive railroad ambassador ever created.

But it's by no means the only one. Plenty of other locomotives – Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4 No. 765, Norfolk & Western 4-8-4 No. 611, Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816, Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 No. 261, Santa Fe 4-8-4 No. 3751, and Southern Pacific 4-8-4 No. 4449 – have star power too. Any of them could lead a barnstorming trip in celebration of railroading's past, present, and future.

No railroad has recognized the power of steam quite like UP. But the other Class I railroads, with the exception of Canadian National, have at one time or another used mainline steam to pull people to the railroad. Steam's allure is why CPKC CEO Keith Creel took the 2816 out of mothballs and will have it on the point of the business train from Calgary to Mexico City this summer in honor of the CP-Kansas City Southern merger.

There's no denying big steam's ability to captivate the public: Just look at the throngs who have come out to gawk at the Big Boy and then toured the "Experience the



Union Pacific" exhibit car. There's also no denying that the Class I systems – which are making record profits – can afford to organize, outfit, and dispatch a steam train that shows off the power of railroading.

The question is can railroads afford not to take dramatic steps to burnish the industry's image? Railroading is on the defensive. It's time to play offense, with steam leading the way.



The Experience the Union Pacific car offers a multi-media walk-through exhibition that provides a glimpse of the past while telling the story of modern-day railroading. Imagine a train full of similar cars that tell the story of railroading.