



# The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



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*The Semaphore* is the monthly (except July) newsletter of the South Shore Model Railway Club & Museum (SSMRC) and any opinions found herein are those of the authors thereof and of the Editors and do not necessarily reflect any policies of this organization. The SSMRC, as a non-profit organization, does not endorse any position. Your comments are welcome! Please address all correspondence regarding this publication to: *The Semaphore*, 11 Hancock Rd., Hingham, MA 02043. ©2020  
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**ON THE COVER: Remember when?**

## FORM 19 ORDERS

### SEPTEMBER B.O.D. MEETING (ZOOM)

Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup> 8 p.m.

### OCTOBER, BUSINESS MEETING (ZOOM)

Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> 8 p.m.

### OCTOBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>

## CONTESTS

The **37 participants** in “What have you been doing” over the last five issues were pictured on the cover of LAST month’s “Special Edition”. **Can you name them?** The person naming the most will win the prize and if more than one, a drawing will be held. This will be for the October Business Meeting.

## CHIEF’S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

We are slowly making progress on the railroad. As reported last month, we have been putting down roadbed and laying track on the new section, we can only go so far as we need to separate the forty feet of bench work into sections that we can easily place on their sides, so that wiring of the electrical busses, switch machines and all the other things needed can be installed comfortably without getting down and working under the layout. Before that happens we will install all the track feeders from above; most all of the mainline have the feeders already installed. Some of the scenery crew has been getting to the club on Monday nights lately, to resume working on their projects on the railroad. I don’t have any updates on that at this time. Looking forward to getting to the club myself on Monday and Thursdays as, long as we are all safe.



That’s it for this month. As always, any questions or comments please get in touch with me if you don’t see me at the club.

Fred Lockhart  
Chief Engineer

## SEMAPHORE MEMORIES

### SEPTEMBER 2015 (5 years ago)

- Cedar Hill control panels being installed
- Holyoke, MA becomes stop for Amtrak’s *Vermont*; first intercity train to stop there since 1966.
- Construction begins on Amtrak layover facility for *Downeaster* trains in Brunswick, ME.
- Central Maine & Quebec RR becomes operator for Maine-owned ex-MEC Rockland Branch, previously operated by Maine Eastern RR.
- Bi-level passenger cars being built by Nippon Sharyo at Rochelle, IL, fail compression test, eventually leading to loss of contract and change to single-level cars.
- Groundbreaking ceremony for construction of \$95 million building for construction of new Red Line and Orange Line subway cars by China Railway Rolling Stock Corp. (CRRC).
- NS pares back its “Triple Crown” RoadRailers services, cutting routes and laying off 200 or its 240 employees.
- Both P&W and VTR purchase their first 6-axle locomotives: pair of SD70M-2 to each road, previously owned by the FEC.

### SEPTEMBER 2010 (10 years ago)

- Cumbres & Toltec Scenic RR sees repair of fire-damaged Lobato Trestle at \$2-million.
- Alaska RR begins 80-mile extension to Fort Greely from North Pole, Alaska.
- Long-time customer of B&M RR, Fletcher Granite abruptly closes its doors.
- Quaboag Transfer of Palmer, MA, operator of major industrial park, bankrupt.
- GE announces that it will supply engines and other key components to the 20 new MBTA locos to be built by MotivePower in Boise, Idaho.
- Amtrak awards \$298-million contract for 130 new single-level passenger cars to CAF USA of Elmira, NY.
- Governor of California announces State will seek help from China building \$44-billion high-speed rail system in the state.
- Frank Shely, long-time caretaker of Bare Cove Park, passed away at age of 90.
- Chatham, MA RR Station Museum celebrates 50<sup>th</sup>.
- Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum has ground-breaking for new roundhouse.
- Toronto Railway Historical Assoc. purchases LRC locomotive from VIA Rail Canada; last loco to use Alco-designed 251 prime mover.
- New RR station serving Green Airport in Warwick, RI, set to open for MBTA commuter trains.

### SEPTEMBER 2005 (15 years ago)

- Spence Miller, 25+ year president of MEC, passes.
- NS replaces 6-miles of track over Lake Pontchartrain, outside New Orleans, 10-days after Hurricane Katrina demolishes it.

- MBTA launches \$25-million program to rehab ½ the passenger car fleet—single-level coaches.
- Conway Scenic RR replaces FP9s on Notch Train with ex-QBT U23b #21 because of dynamic brakes needed.
- Three legs of the SSMRC connected and ready for Fall Open House operation.
- Steve Peers joins SSMRC.
- U.P. introduces “Heritage” series of EMD SD70Ace locomotives, with MoPac #UP1982 and WP #UP 1983.

**SEPTEMBER 2000** (20 Years Ago)

- Johnstown America introduces the new “Aluminum Vehicle Carrier”, an 89-foot, bi-level autorack car, with a 50-year lifespan.
- Acela Express trains certified by FRA for speeds up to 150 MPH.
- Club goal of having continuous loop of track appears reachable for Open House in October.
- Trains magazine introduces Rochelle, IL, Webcam.

**SEPTEMBER 1995** (25 Years Ago)

- Edaville Entertainment enters into 16-year lease with Ellis D. Atwood Corp., owner of Edaville.
- Amtrak president Thomas Downs proclaims Amtrak can “wean” itself from government subsidies by the year 2002.
- New England Central RR named “Short Line RR of the Year” by Railway Age magazine.

- Broadway Limited service ends, after 93 years of service over the PRR from New York to Chicago.

- Paul Agnew joins SSMRC.

- Amtrak’s “All Aboard America” fares offer up to 30-days and unlimited stopovers for \$278 coast-to-coast.

**SEPTEMBER 1990** (30 Years Ago)

- Amtrak introduces the “New England Express”, running Boston to New York in 3 hr. 55 min.
- I.C.C. approves sale of D&H to CPR.
- Conrail tears up last 2 miles of Dorchester & Milton Branch to Baker Chocolate plant.
- First freight train to Rockland, ME, in over five years; line to be operated by Maine Coast RR.
- Dwight Smith, one of three founders of Conway Scenic RR in 1974, retires as president and GM.
- St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR builds locomotive shop at Lewiston, Jct., Maine.

**SEPTEMBER 1985** (35 Years Ago)

- 1<sup>st</sup> time in Club history: 3 candidates for president. (November elections at that time).
- “Project Filene’s” in full swing for holiday showing.
- Steamtown struggling in Scranton, PA, having to use diesels because of no operating steamers.
- Bombardier goes out of freight locomotive business, ending production of its HR-series.
- Guilford closes Mechanicville Yard and re-opens Mohawk Yard in Scotia, NY.
- MEC’s Crawford Notch station dedicated as the Appalachian Mountain Club’s visitor info center.
- MBTA opens temporary Harvard Square Station for bus and trolley transfers, while Red Line is extended to Alewife.

- Amtrak institutes 25% discount for seniors.
- Framingham Station purchased for proposed restaurant.
- N&W announces that articulated loco #1218 will be restored to mainline running for excursions.
- U.P. retires last steam-powered rotary snow plows.

**POTPOURRI**

**THE SEASHORE TROLLEY MUSEUM** has acquired 25-tonner #150 from the P&W, to use in switching cars at the museum. The GE was built in 1945 and delivered to the Seashore this July 24<sup>th</sup>. (470)



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**COMPLETE SHUTDOWNS** and complete satisfaction go hand in hand for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The agency stopped service on the Green Line E Branch to complete some much needed track maintenance in the month of SEPTEMBER, and the results were positive. The MBTA says crews were able to handle a year’s worth of overnight- and weekend-only work, and the cost was 70 percent less. Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack have been touting the new ways the MBTA has been executing its plans. On the E Line, workers replaced more than 30 miles of track, upgraded seven road crossings and five pedestrian crossings, and improved stations. The work will help trains move faster, saving commuters about 1 minute per ride. (RA)

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**CHICAGO’S PULLMAN** National Monument held a ceremonial groundbreaking Monday to mark progress on the landmark Clock Tower building at the one-time factory for railcar



construction. The Labor Day ceremony recognized the facility as a key site in the history of the U.S. labor and civil rights movements. (TN)

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**NJ TRANSIT** is beginning a pilot program offering vending machines selling personal protective equipment at stations as part of its COVID-19 safety procedures, introducing the first two such machines at Newark Penn Station and Hoboken Terminal. Five more stations will be equipped in the weeks ahead, offering such items as disposable and reusable face masks, hand sanitizer, and rubber gloves. NJ Transit joins New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority in offering such machines. (TN)

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**SWITZERLAND HAS OPENED** its 9.6-mile Ceneri Base Tunnel, completing its "New Railway Link through the Alps" program that also includes the 34.5-mile Gotthard Base Tunnel, which opened in 2016, and the Lotschberg base tunnel, completed in 2007. Agencie France-Presse reports the newest tunnel — which is expected to handle 180 passenger trains and 170 freight trains — shaves 40 minutes off the travel time between Zurich and Milan, Italy, which is now just three hours. The three-tunnel project cost \$26.4 billion. The new tunnel will be fully operational in December. (TN)

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**AMTRAK WILL EXPAND** the carry-on bike program on *Northeast Regional* trains as of Tuesday, Sept. 8, and will add the program on three state-supported operations — the *Keystone Service*, *Downeaster*, and Amtrak Hartford Line — as of Sept. 15. There is a \$20 fee for the service, and reservations are required. After entering the origin and destination when booking a ticket on the Amtrak website or Amtrak's smartphone app, an icon with a number of spaces available will display if bike service is available. Customers should proceed 'Add Ons' step to add bikes to a reservation. Customers can also call 1-800-USA-RAIL to add a bike reservation to an existing reservation. Customers are encouraged to arrive at the station at least 30 minutes prior to departure. All panniers and bags attached to your bicycle need to be removed and consolidated before boarding. (TN)

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**UNION PACIFIC** will close one hump at Bailey Yard in North Platte, Neb., consolidating car sorting to the newer, westbound hump on the world's largest railroad yard. The North Platte Telegraph reports the eastbound hump, which opened in 1968

and sorts cars to a 64-track yard, will be shut down. Hump operations will continue in the 50-track westbound yard, which opened in 1980. In a statement, Union Pacific said it did not expect the changes to have a significant impact on the approximately 1,600 employees based in North Platte. UP spokeswoman said in a statement that the changes reflect "improved customer shipment processing times" and "are a testament to the team's operational excellence and safe, reliable service to customers." (TN)

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**A WOODEN BRIDGE** near the U.S.-Canada border, used for interchange between Canadian National and Genesee & Wyoming's New England Central, has been closed as result of a bridge inspection as of September 2<sup>nd</sup>, according to a post on the Rails & Ports Facebook page. The website bridgehunter.com says the 3,800-foot timber stringer bridge at East Alburgh, Vt., with a 102-foot steel swing span, dates to 1912; the swing span, previously operated with a hand crank, was automated in 2011. A report on the automation of the swing span indicates the bridge has an "unusually soft foundation;" the Rails & Ports post indicates the bridge is inspected daily because the base causes occasional shifts. (TN)

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**A NEWLY MANUFACTURED** Schnabel Car, WECX 801, built by Kasgro Railcar, Newcastle, Pa., is being called the "World's Largest Railroad Car." The 231-foot, 400-ton, 36-axle behemoth rises 18 feet above top-of-rail and has a load limit of more than 1,000 tons. It's larger than its sister car, CEBX 800, which was built by



Krupp of Germany in 1980 for ABB for U.S. service. WECX 801 is Kasgro's largest railcar to date, according to President and CEO Joe Crawford. "Normally our biggest car would be a 20-axle or 22-axle Schnabel Car," he told WYTV News. "This is a 36-axle Schnabel Car. It's the biggest car ever built in North America. We had to replicate all the [CEBX 800] drawings and redo them to U.S. AAR standards. We've been building this car for a year." Kasgro hired 15 additional employees to construct the car. A Schnabel Car is a specialized type of railcar designed to transport

heavy and oversized loads, where the load itself becomes part of the car. The load is suspended between the two ends of the car's two units by lifting arms; the lifting arms are connected to a pivot above an assembly of pivots and frames that carry the weight of the load and the lifting arm. When a Schnabel Car is empty, the two lifting arms are connected, and the car can usually operate at speeds up to 25 mph. The word Schnabel is from the German word "Tragschnabelwagen," meaning "carrying-beak-wagon," because of the tapered shape of the lifting arms, which resembles a bird's beak. Some Schnabel cars include hydraulic equipment that will either lift or horizontally shift the load while in transit at low speeds (no more than 15 mph) to clear obstructions along the car's route. WECX 801 can shift up to 40 inches laterally and 44 inches vertically. Routing is determined and arranged with the railroads by the Railway Industrial Clearance Association (RICA). WECX 800, which will be owned and utilized by Westinghouse Nuclear to transport nuclear reactor containment vessels, will require an operating crew of six. It's scheduled to enter revenue service at the port of Charleston in July. There are 31 Schnabel cars in Europe, 30 in North America, 25 in Asia, and one in Australia. (RA) Where is John Holmes when you need his expertise on Schnabel? ☺ -Ed.

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**THE WESTERN WILDFIRES** are wreaking havoc on the West Coast and several inland locations. People have lost their homes, been evacuated, and are dealing with a heavy smoke cloud that aggravates any respiratory ailments. And, all of this is happening before the traditional start date of the wildfire season. Western railroads throughout history have built "water trains" to be on standby in this region in case a fire broke out due to sparks from a locomotive or other causes. Union Pacific is employing a modern water train that consists of two rail cars that hold 12,500 gallons of water each, along with a pumping device to disperse the water, much like a fire truck does, to fight wildfires approaching their lines. The train travels back and forth over a seven-mile area, and has recently been focused on UP's Canyon Subdivision not far from Quincy, Calif., where fire has interfered with traffic flow through the area. Jerry Rhea, UP's manager-Bridge Maintenance and Engineering said "The team does a fantastic job working as one with our fellow Engineering co-workers and Transportation crews. Safety and communication have been excellent to keep trains running while protecting our

infrastructure. We're seeing very valiant efforts on everyone's part." (RA)

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**THE EAST BROAD TOP** Railroad has received a \$100,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission to assist in the installation of a fire suppression system in the railroad's machine shop complex. "Fire suppression is a critical component of our stabilization and preservation effort at the East Broad Top," East Broad Top Foundation General Manager Bradley Esposito in a press release, calling the grant a tremendous vote of confidence in the EBT Foundation's efforts to preserve and operate this National Historic Landmark for future generations." The upgrade will allow use of the shop for public demonstrations as well as ongoing essential repairs as the narrow gauge railroad works to resume operations. (TN)

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**FOR THE FIRST TIME** in the nearly 200-year-old history of North American railroading, a woman has been named chief executive of a Class I railroad. On Jan. 1, 2021, BNSF Executive Vice President Operations Kathryn M. "Katie" Farmer will succeed Carl R. Ice as President and Chief Executive Officer. She will also assume leadership of BNSF's Board of Directors. Ice will retire at the end of 2020 and remain on the company's board. (RA)

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**THE MBTA WILL RESTRUCTURE** schedules on commuter rail lines as of Nov. 2, including suspension of its pilot commuter rail program serving Foxborough, Mass. In changes announced Monday, the agency says it will "level out" service during the day, eliminating current gaps in mid-day service. MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak said in a press release the changes "are being made in response to changing ridership patterns" as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, "including when and how commuter riders travel as many work locations in downtown Boston continue to be closed." The changes will result in 544 weekday trains, compared with 505 in fall 2019, with most of the additional trains serving Fairmont, Brockton, or Lynn, Mass. The Foxborough pilot is scheduled to resume in spring 2021. (TN)

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**A SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> CEREMONY** to mark the 100th anniversary of the Union Station in New Haven, Conn., featured announcement of a letter of intent to spend \$65 million to renovate and develop the facility used by Amtrak and commuter railroads. The letter of intent will establish a new

lease and funding agreement between the Connecticut Department of Transportation and City of New Haven, with plans to revamp the basement, first, and second floors to allow new retail space, as well as improvement to allow future use of upper station floors and public restrooms. The station, commissioned by the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad, was designed by architect Cass Gilbert, best known for his 57-story neo-Gothic Woolworth Building in Manhattan. (TN)

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**A GROUP OF STATE** legislators has urged MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack to exercise the state's right of first refusal and purchase a Pan Am Railways route for future passenger service. MassLive.com reports the state has that right of first refusal for any railroad property in Massachusetts, and the six legislators are urging its use to purchase a line from Fitchburg, Mass., to North Adams, Mass., known as the Route 2 Rail Corridor or Northern Tier Rail. Pan Am has been for sale since earlier this year.

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**THE AGING NORTH AMERICAN** boxcar fleet will remain large enough to handle demand in the coming decade even though boxcars are being retired at a faster rate than new cars are being built, a Norfolk Southern official told a shipper conference on recently. Shippers and railcar leasing companies have expressed concern over the retirement cliff coming in the next few years, in which nearly half the fleet of 102,000 cars will hit retirement age or be sidelined by rising maintenance costs. Leasing companies say that at current default rates, it makes no financial sense to build new cars. But Paddy O'Neill, assistant vice president of fleet planning and optimization at Norfolk Southern, says those fears are overblown. "The pending boxcar shortage is just plain fake news," he says. Although retirements will continue to outpace the building of new cars, O'Neill says railroads won't need as many. New cars carry more freight and will make more revenue trips per year as part of the North American boxcar pool and due to higher railroad velocity, he contends. (TN)

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**ENDING A 10-WEEK SHUTDOWN** of the Vermont Rail System line through the community, the city of Middlebury, Vt., held a ceremony on Friday to mark the completion of a \$72 million tunnel project, replacing two 1920s-era bridges through the middle of town. The 360-foot tunnel provides sufficient clearance for double-stack container traffic, and

sets the stage for an extension of Amtrak's *Ethan Allen Express* from its current northern terminus of Rutland, Vt., to serve Middlebury and Burlington, Vt. The passenger service is expected to begin in 2021. Completion of the tunnel means Vermont Rail system is no longer forced to make a lengthy detour, using New England Central RR rails. (TN)

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**A MAN REMODELING** a bungalow-style home in Newton, Kan., made an unexpected discovery — the home, built in 1929, was originally constructed out of two 1880s-era Santa Fe boxcars. Ryan Welker first realized the situation when he discovered a tin roof while trying to run some new electrical line. Further work uncovered an 1873-built date on one of the cars. The remodeling ended up making use of the beams in the car roofs as part of the house's ceiling, and exposed some of the original wood car sides as part of the walls in some rooms. (TN)

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**NORFOLK SOUTHERN** will idle the hump at Enola Yard outside Harrisburg, Pa., on Friday, the fifth such move the railroad has made in the past year under its shift to a Precision Scheduled Railroading operating plan. "As of Sept. 25, 2020, Norfolk Southern will idle the hump at the Enola Yard. All cars will be sorted and attached to outbound trains through flat switching. This will shorten the amount of time a rail car waits to leave the yard for its destination, improving Norfolk Southern's service to its customers," spokesman Jeff DeGraff says. "The change impacts a limited number of jobs at the site; the yard's diesel shop will not be affected," DeGraff says. "The Harrisburg area is one of Norfolk Southern's three largest hubs; a productive and efficient Enola Yard is key to helping the region continue to grow as the economy rebounds." NS has reduced its reliance on major terminals as part of its shift to Precision Scheduled Railroading. By pre-blocking more traffic at origin and focusing more on block-swapping en route, NS has siphoned switching volume out of its hump yard network. The reduced volume at some classification yards means it's more efficient to convert the hump yards to flat-switching facilities. Over the past year NS has idled the humps at Allentown, Pa.; Sheffield, Ala.; Linwood, N.C.; and Bellevue, Ohio, which had been the largest classification yard in the East. After Enola is idled, NS will have five active humps: Elkhart, Ind.; Conway, Pa.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Birmingham, Ala.; and Macon, Ga.

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**DELAWARE-LACKAWANNA** Railroad Alco C420 No. 405 gently broke through a ceremonial ribbon officially opening Genesee Valley Transportation's Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad Von Storch Locomotive Shops. Located in the Green Ridge section of Scranton, the steel structure features two 200-foot tracks inside, with an 83-foot walk-in inspection pit. A 20-ton crane will allow shop forces to perform most major locomotive work. The building will serve as the maintenance base for GVT's growing fleet of 35 active Alco and Montreal Locomotive Works diesels that work on the company's four railroads in Pennsylvania and New York. Showing the company's diverse roster, five Alcos carrying the schemes of GVT, Delaware & Hudson, Central Railroad of New Jersey, and Lehigh Valley stood outside the shops during the ceremony. In addressing attendees including Scranton's mayor and representatives from other elected officials' offices, Genesee Valley Transportation President David Monte Verde remarked that the locomotives pay homage to the railroads that once served the Scranton area. The new shop occupies land that once was the site of Delaware & Hudson Railway's roundhouse and primary yard for the Scranton area, adjacent to D&H's large Von Storch mine and coal breaker. All are long gone. Today, Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad serves customers along the remaining 23 miles of D&H between Scranton and Carbondale. This route and the former Delaware, Lackawanna & Western main line over the Pocono Mountains are operated by Delaware-Lackawanna under a public-private partnership with owner Pennsylvania Northeast Rail Authority. GVT paid for the \$2.5 million facility. The new Von Storch shop replaces a cramped two-track facility in South Scranton built in 1985 by an earlier operator of the ex-D&H trackage. That building will remain in use for track equipment maintenance. (TN)

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**THE CANADIAN PACIFIC HOLIDAY** Train is the latest casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the train's annual trip across the CP system in the U.S. and Canada will be replaced by donations to food banks in communities along its network, as well as an online concert. "COVID-19 has created many challenges for communities across our network and has only increased the need at local food banks and food shelves," CP President and CEO Keith Creel said "It is our honor to continue to donate to communities across our network this year, even if

the train itself will not run. The spirit of the Holiday Train program and the Christmas spirit will carry on this year through our virtual concert. We will have the Holiday Train rolling again spreading Christmas cheer as soon as it's safe to do so!" The railroad says the 2020 program will draw attention to food security issues, while ensuring donations go to all food banks that would ordinarily receive them, including those that typically host a Holiday Train event in alternating years. Details of the benefit concert will be announced when they become available. In the 21 years since CP launched the Holiday Train, it raised \$17.8 million and collected 4.8 million pounds of food for local food banks in communities served by the railroad. (TN)

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

**TRAINS**

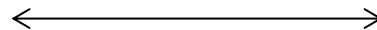
Santa Fe's Southern Pacific Fiasco  
Carolina Crossing Curtailed  
Commentary-Brian Solomon  
Engines of Change

**RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN**

Making Rock Molds-Part 2  
Painting & Weathering  
AK Weathering Pencils  
Diverging Points  
Preservation Points

**MODEL RAILROADER**

A Department Store for Main Street  
How to Populate Passenger Cars  
Detailing a Diesel Locomotive  
Freight Cars of The '70s



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

**EDITOR'S NOTES**

- 1. In case you don't know by now, our October Show and Open House has been cancelled.
- 2. Our SSMRC "Big E" group has decided to not participate in next January's "Amherst Railway Society's Big Train Show" in West Springfield. The consensus was "why take a



chance...it's not worth it". We have been assured of our space at the 2022 Show.

3. Things are returning a-little-at-a-time, as small groups of members meet at the Club to work on projects at different times. We must continue to be vigilant, though, and follow the guidelines for safety.

..... *David N. Clinton*

"Our world is not divided by race, color, gender or religion. Our world is divided into wise people and fools. And fools divide themselves by race, color, gender or religion." (Nelson Mandela)

## MEMBER NEWS

**Bryan Miller** is back in the hospital, with complications from his second operation. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

**Bill Garvey** is at the Elliott Center Rehab in Natick and is trying to get transferred to a Randolph location, to be closer to his family. Keep up the rehab work, Bill, so you can get back to the Club!

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

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

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

- Eric Mercer ..... October 1
- Dan Peterson ..... October 17
- Paul Bonanno (H) ..... October 17
- Eric Wilde ..... October 25
- Joe Corsaro..... October 26
- Bill Hallsen..... October 28



Meanwhile, I've heard from these folks on **WHAT ARE YOU DOING?**



**Gunny:** "Beth & I have been still working in the yard and taking walks during the day. I

have been still working as the Range Safety Officer at my Gun club when the police departments come to qualify for firearms training. The state of Mass. has started having the Hunter safety course again so I am back teaching hunter education."

**Jay Pease:** "Yes I am still alive!! After my heart attack at the end of February I had an epiphany. Life is too short, Life is too precious. So, I have lost 30 lbs. since then I am eating much less and better. The wife and I have bought our retirement rig. I know I still have 4 years before retirement but why not start the dream early. I have made it a point to look for the good parts of life and ignore the bad things. I have been doing some modeling here at home and spending a lot of time at the Worcester model railroad club in Webster where I am the Ops Chairman and rolling stock 'Chore Boy' Still not fond of scenery but I try. Hoping to get down soon and see all of you. Maybe I'll come down and stay in the rig for a few days! Anyway hope you are all well and will see you soon."



**Peter Palica:** "Here is a nice little fall submission from my N-scale collection. It is called Pumpkin Hollow and is from the Charles Wysocki Hawthorne Village Series. In many respects these pre-painted resin models are far superior to expensive plastic and wooden kits."



**Paul Cutler III:** “I recently received a pair of Walthers ready to run 36-seat heavyweight diners and two sets of brass car side kits to convert both diners into New Haven RR prototypes. First problem is that each car must be disassembled down to its component parts without breaking anything. The brass car sides, meant to be used on an old Rivarossi passenger car, are too long for the Walthers car. These can be easily trimmed to size without much problem. The next issue is a number of partition walls inside the car do not line up properly with the windows, but these have been removed and relocated if necessary. The largest issue is that the dining tables do not line up with the exterior windows, which means all 36 chairs and 12 tables must be removed and re-spotted. Since the seats and tables are well glued, I had to use a



hobby chisel to cut them off the floor (without losing any), sand the remnants down, and then paint over the scars. Fortunately, Polly Scale Signal Green was a close enough match to the factory floor color. Next, I have to mark out where all the tables must go to line up with the brass car side windows. I should also paint all the table tops white while I'm at it, then install all the tables and chairs. After that, I have to figure out exactly how to install the brass car sides and how to paint the car.

“In addition to that project, I'm already working on the next issue of the *Shoreliner* magazine for the NHRHTA, which features the NH's Private Commuter Clubs. It includes the South Shore Club Car on the Greenbush line, but it is mostly about the New York City cars.

“Lastly, I purchased a ProtoThrottle, which is a much more realistic-looking and operating DCC throttle using levers instead of round knobs. It operates via a WiFi connection and can talk to any DCC system, but you also have to purchase the correct WiFi device for each DCC system you use it on. I would not recommend it for

beginners or casual operators, but for those who want the ultimate operating experience (especially when switching) it can be a game changer. You can't throw mainline switches with it, you can't M.U. engines together, but when I tried it out at the Springfield show I knew I really wanted one. If you think switching is boring, this might change your mind.”

**Chip Mullen:** “OK, after building a bathroom, finishing out our laundry/utility room, installing solar panels and emergency generator switch and re-staining the deck, I have decided to call it quits with home projects.

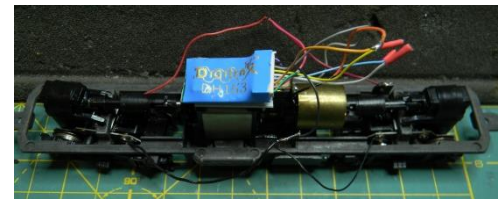
“I dug into my box of 'put off train projects' and came up with an old Stewart RS-3 kit in Boston & Maine livery, that I picked up at a train show in Tampa about 20 years ago, or so. I decided to build this unit and see if it would work pulling a B&M wreck train centered on Skip Burton's 250-ton B&M wreck crane. The engine's body came out pretty good, if lacking today's finer details. I made a couple headlight fittings using 3mm LEDs and



plastic tubing that worked out well. After careful cleaning, lubing, motor isolating, and soldering electrical pick-up directly to the trucks, I got the engine running surprisingly quietly and smoothly with a Digitrax DH163. Yes, the solder joints in the picture are not insulated. That's because the DH163 was just a temporary test. The engine isn't "good enough" to justify a high quality sound



decoder from TCS, Soundtraxx, ESU or QSI. So, I'm going to try an Ebay special, which is really an unbranded MRC sound decoder. Yes, I know, MRC decoders are crap and this one probably will be too, but I'm going to give it a try with an ESU sugar cube speaker and see what happens. To be continued.”

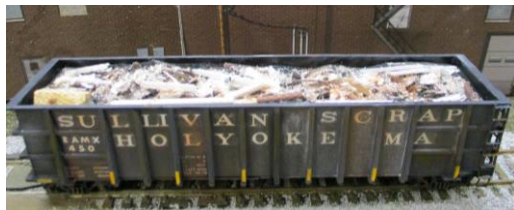


**Brendan Sheehan:** “Not too much has changed since last month, though I didn't take any vacation. Suppose no news is good news, right? I did do some railfanning at the Walpole Train Station for maybe 10 or 15 minutes. Caught 1 Commuter Rail

outbound (forgot my camera). The locomotive was an F40 decked out in the new livery. I gotta say I love the new paint scheme!"

**Ron Clough:** "Not much has changed with me in the last month. I am still dealing with trying to clean out Mom's house. The more I dig, the more I find stuff to go through. After the house being occupied by my family for the last 68 years, it isn't easy, but I'm making progress. Just wish my brother, Larry, was around to help, but he is gone, also. Beyond that, I still am receiving mail and PayPal orders for the Boston Street Railway Assoc. and go to the warehouse in Wollaston once or twice a week to fill and ship them. For the Club, I get down there a few times a week to pick up empties and try to keep the outside presentable but haven't done much inside. I've done some mowing, but due to the lack of rain, mowing is not needed often, other than to keep the weeds in check. Before my last big mowing session last week, it took nearly an hour to walk around and pick up litter, stones and dog sticks before the mower found them. The refurbished clock looks and sounds great."

**Ben Saint-Cyr:** "I have added some photos of the cars I just finished."



**Roger St. Peter:** "Still working and golfing...nothing much else. Got lots of repairs keeping me busy."



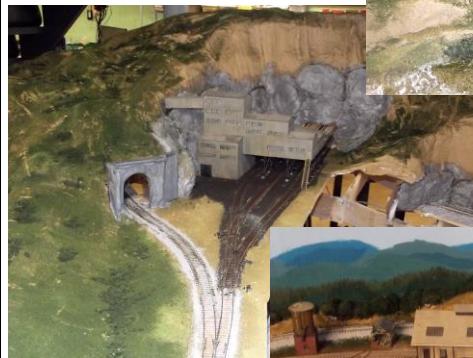
**Bob Knapp:** "Dan's house finished, last siding job in Scituate. Camping on the Pemi River in Thornton, NH, with new camper. Keeping busy and still time to go and relax camping"



**Dan Peterson:** "My house is finished! I recently purchased a 36-gallon aquarium and have a tank-full of Tropical Fish; very fascinating and mesmerizing!"



**Kurt Kramke:** "Here are more photos, still have to make and add trees along with other details. I just replaced 524 wheelsets. I miss the club and cannot wait to be able to visit again."



Ye Ed: I finally completed my LNE RS-2 with LokSound and become semi-familiar with the LokSound Programmer. It runs nice and the lighted number boards are a “classy” touch. Presently, I’m working on a couple of VIA Rail Canada LRC coaches (Light-Rapid-Comfortable). These were introduced in the early 80s and just became available from Rapido. As by Rapido standards, they have complete interiors and lighting, as well as directional markers, which are turned on by the “wand” included. I’m numbering an un-numbered,

adding the diaphragms and stirrups, which were too prone to shipping damage, so included in a baggie. Next is installing a flashing red light on the rear of an EL 200<sup>th</sup>



Anniversary Caboose by Athearn; Athearn makes nice replacement Caboose trucks for power pick-up. Finally, putting contented passengers inside the New Haven Dining Car “John Carver” will turn into a series of “amputations” to make them fit!

**RUNNING EXTRA:**

Here is Les Tyrala setting up our old “Dew Drop Schoolhouse Calendar Clock”, after spending much time over the past two months restoring it to operating condition. Les attended our March Show and “out of the blue” asked if we would like him to restore the clock, as his business is “Antique clock restoration and preservation”. He gave me an impressive resume and the Board agreed to take him up on his offer.



The 1909-era clock, which has been in the Club for the past 40+ years, has never worked, in my memory. It is made of Poplar and stained mahogany manufactured by the E.

Ingraham Co. of Bristol, CT. The original paper dial had badly delaminated and the replacement paper



dial was mis-aligned by 4 minutes and had deteriorated badly. Les scraped off both old paper dials and glued the new face onto the original zinc pan and aligned correctly. He replaced several parts of the mechanism and latches on the case, replaced the bezel glass with the original Victorian glass he stocks, and stripped and restored the woodwork to its original look. His comment about the clock: “Although not a railroad-grade timepiece...may have been suitable for a station outbuilding.”



It is simply beautiful now and a great addition to our main hall, thanks to Les’ generous donation. The Secretary has agreed to wind the clock on a weekly basis. A note for proper care is that it winds counter-clockwise and the hour-hand

should never be moved backwards. At the end of DST, the clock should be stopped and re-started after the “fall back” hour. (By the way, the testing equipment he has hooked to the clock allows him to hear the “tick-tock” inside the mechanism and registers the “Beats per Hour”, so that he can tell it is working properly and can set it.) Thanks, Les, for your hard work!

**Former Amtrak president Gunn sees perils in service cuts**

Former Amtrak president David Gunn believes the company’s plans to cut most long-distance trains to triweekly operation beginning in October will lead to a permanent reduction in serviceable rolling stock, and cost the company employees with the expertise necessary to run the system in the future. “If you want to preserve the network, you have to keep it running to attract passengers back,” Gunn said in an interview with *Trains News Wire* from his home in Nova Scotia.

Amtrak President and CEO William Flynn and Stephen Gardner, Amtrak’s senior executive vice president and chief operating and commercial officer, contend the company’s plan to cut

departures will, in fact, maintain routes while conserving cash. Those cuts also figure into plans to furlough almost 2,000 workers while also further trimming management.

Gunn disagrees with the core premise of cuts. “It takes a long time to train somebody,” he says. “If they get rid of a lot of these engineer, conductor, and road foreman professionals, you’re not going to have the people to run the trains. More important, with the way they are running the place [emphasizing cost cutting], the equipment not in use will be cannibalized, and you’ll wind up with yards full of cars and locomotives full of missing parts.” That was the organizational mentality he encountered in 2002 upon taking the helm at Amtrak when it teetered near bankruptcy. Because the company had been running out of cash for several years, there was intense pressure to cut spending. “Mechanical people were being pushed to lower expenses,” Gunn recalls. “If, say, an air compressor goes out and there’s a piece of equipment parked there, you just grab something off of it instead of buying a new part. Your bottom line looks great to your bosses — for the short term — until you need that car or locomotive you just cannibalized.” Gunn and Jonathan Klein, his newly hired Chief Mechanical Officer, put an immediate stop to the practice once they assessed how many spare cars and locomotives, maintained in a state of good repair, were needed to run the network.

Klein moved cannibalized Amfleet I coaches and P40 locomotives to the company’s Bear, Del., heavy maintenance facility and began an inventory of out-of-service Superliners on the back lot at the Beech Grove shops. “When Klein stored locomotives, he had the cab doors welded shut so mechanical forces would keep out,” Gunn quips.

The company had been taking delivery of P42 locomotives as late as October 2001, to help beef up mail and express, but Gunn’s decision to de-emphasize that business after analyzing costs and revenues meant many P40s, which began arriving in 1993, could be sidelined at Bear. Along with those cutbacks, under Gunn, the company developed an organizational chart and budget that could account for every authorized position — for example, the number of trainmasters, engineers, and Red Caps needed at every location. With that preparation, Gunn says, “We were able to drop headcount by 4,000 without a hiring freeze or

buyout. I think the people in the field bought in to our attempt to bring costs under control because it made sense.”

Gunn and the company’s board of directors never considered reducing long-distance train frequencies, in part because an attempt to do so during mid-1990s cost-cutting weakened the system until daily service was restored. It also led to elimination of two routes. “The other thing,” he says, “if you take trains off, you lose the slots [from host railroads] and probably would never get them back.” Despite mismanagement that had left the company in dire financial straits, Gunn says, “We were able to get the largest appropriation Amtrak ever had up until that time because we had the support of politicians from both parties. I remember taking both Montana senators on the *Empire Builder* — Conrad Burns was a curmudgeon, but he was a big supporter of the train. We got the money because we paid attention to the long-distance trains, not because we were running trains between New York and Washington.

“Congress thinks they’re not subsidizing the Northeast Corridor except on capital, but the NEC is in more trouble than the long-distance trains,” Gunn continues. “If you can’t give Congress a reason to for keeping the long-distance network together, then you can’t give them a very good reason to subsidize that corridor.” He observes, “You never had a situation until (former president) Joe Boardman left in 2017 where management wasn’t trying to preserve Amtrak; you always had the guts of the company fighting back. It’s completely disingenuous the way they are selling this triweekly plan. In this environment, management should keep daily service to preserve the network at least until we know that things will return to something approaching normal.” (TN)

### **How an Ontario Man is Combatting Pandemic Chaos with Life-like Model Railroad** (“Tapestry” on CBC Radio 9-18-20)

If 2020 had a motto, it could well be: What fresh hell is this?

It’s no wonder people have been turning to baking — and other wholesome pursuits — in an attempt to soothe their weary, worried psyches in this year of the pandemic.

Jason Shron's hobby doesn't involve sourdough starter, yeast, or all-purpose flour. Instead, the Thornhill, Ont., man has spent years creating a model train layout in his basement, which he says has been putting him in a meditative state long before 2020 started putting human beings through the wringer. "This model railroading, and this project, offers me solace. It offers me peace. It offers me order, especially during a time that is chaotic," Shron told *Tapestry* host Mary Hynes. "It is something that can be controlled, that can be ordered. It's brought that wonderful sense of presentness to me — where I can be present; where I can experience the moment fully."

Shron describes the project as a kind of spiritual discipline. It doesn't sound too far-fetched: the endeavor calls for the same qualities you might learn at the foot of a guru, rabbi, or monastic. He has long been learning how to pay attention, be present, and honor this very moment — free from any electronic device.

"It's not a screen," he said emphatically. "There's something meditative when you actually build something — you're creating something — and then the very repetitive motion." Shron described building a forest, planting "hundreds of trees — one at a time." I'm using something very physical, very material, doing this motion over and over again, to reach that spiritual level."

Shron said the benefits of that practice stay with him when he leaves the model railroad in his basement and returns to the rest of his life. "By calming myself like that, by getting into that zone — and this is for any hobby, really — when you get into that zone, it's like feeding the godly soul," he explained. "Because I then have more patience to go spend time with my children, I'm less likely to lose my temper."

Shron's layout is a life-size replica of the Kingston Subdivision line from Toronto to Brockville, Ont. The first section he built was Lyn Road in Brockville. The full-size Via Rail car he also constructed occupies a different part of the basement.

Shron and his family are dreaming of the real-life Via Rail trips they'll take once pandemic restrictions are lifted: an overnighter to Winnipeg figures prominently in the plans. His wife, Sidura, has been wholly supportive

of the hobby, although Shron suspects she may not have known just what she was getting into when they first started dating. "It wasn't until we bought the house and she joked with a friend: 'Yeah, he says he's building a full-sized train down there,'" Shron recalled. "And the friend said, 'I've known Jason a long time. If he says he's building a full-sized train down there, he's going to build a full-sized train down there!'"



Lyn Road in Brockville today (left), and constructed on Jason Shron's model railroad (right). (Submitted by Jason Shron)

Shron says his university degrees in fine arts and art history have been unexpectedly useful in creating the model train layout, particularly a lesson in his second-year painting class on letting go of perfection. "The teacher said to me, 'Jason, you're too controlled... You're trying to do every detail on that apple or whatever. You have to relax. Just let the brush flow, let the paint flow and just take whatever's left on your palette and just do something in three minutes, OK? Stop trying to get the stem perfect,'" Shron recalled. "And so I did. And the best painting I ever did in my entire life was the three minute painting at the end of that class when she told me to stop worrying about the details."

Shron says his scale model may not be perfect in every last detail, but that's OK. "The point is, anyone who looks at [it] says, 'That's Lyn Road!'"



<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/tapestry/should-i-stay-or-should-i-go-1.5728686/how-an-ontario-man-is-combatting-pandemic-chaos-with-life-like-model-railroad-1.5728724>