

The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



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“The Chief’s Corner”	Fred Lockhart
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The Semaphore is the monthly (except July) newsletter of the South Shore Model Railway Club & Museum (SSMRC) and any opinions found herein are those of the authors thereof and of the Editors and do not necessarily reflect any policies of this organization. The SSMRC, as a non-profit organization, does not endorse any position. Your comments are welcome! Please address all correspondence regarding this publication to: *The Semaphore*, 11 Hancock Rd., Hingham, MA 02043. ©2022
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VOLUME 42 ■■■■■ NUMBER 8 ■■■■■ AUGUST 2022

CLUB OFFICERS

President.....	Jack Foley
Vice President.....	Rich Herlihy
Treasurer.....	Will Baker
Secretary.....	Eric Mercer
Chief Engineer.....	Fred Lockhart
Directors.....	David Galbraith ('24)
	Bob England ('24)
	Roger St. Peter ('23)
	Gary Mangelinkx ('23)

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ON THE COVER: CSX SD70ACC rebuild. Originally built as SD70MAC. At Bear Mountain State Park, June 20th this year around 6:30 p.m. on CSX’s Hudson River West Side freight line. (Photo by Dominic Mirabello)

FORM 19 ORDERS

AUGUST B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, August 29th 8 p.m.

SEPTEMBER BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, September 12th 8 p.m.

DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, September 15th 8 p.m.

SCENERY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 19th 7:30 p.m.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

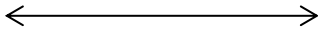
Sunday, September 25th

SEPTEMBER B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, September 26th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

Congratulations to **Fred Lockhart** on winning July's "50-50 Raffle" and it was his birthday--and then he won this month's "50-50", too. I hope he plays the lottery this month!



This month's "Word Find" puzzle was solved by 15 members:

Paul Cutler, Jr.	Jim Ferris
Savery Moore	David Galbraith
Ron Clough	Gunny
Don Pierce	Bob Farrenkropf
Will Baker	Bryan Miller
Rick Pierce	Dan Peterson
Al Munn	Mike Dolan
Doug Buchanan	

Congratulations to **Rick** and **Doug** for the winning drawings for a Tangent Models LV gon and UP Boxcar!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

Why do I write this column every month? Good question, the short answers are these: there are members who don't make it to the club on a regular basis; it may be work-related or members who have headed to warmer climates for the winter--for whatever the reason--it keeps them up-to-date on the railroad. Another important reason is that information about the railroad construction is passed between members and as it is passed,

misinformation creeps in. So once a month this column gives me the opportunity to put out the correct information; those are the main reasons. Mike Dolan started this column during his tenure as Chief Engineer years ago and, truthfully, I enjoy continuing it.

On to progress. Being summer, it's "slow", which is not un-expected. But here is what I have seen: Benchwork Committee is still working on the backdrop in the staging room and they have repaired another section behind the future Harbor Scene; it still needs the seams finished and re-painting. The Trackwork Committee has finished laying the track for the trolley loop at the end of the new area, near the entrance to the staging room. The Electrical Committee has installed more dwarf signals on both ends of the Cedar Hill arrival/departure yard; previously only turnouts 346, 347, 348 and 16 had them, so now it is a visual to confirm turnouts are correct. The Scenery Committee continues on their projects; mostly on the larger one that will be on the backdrop in the Middleton yard--multiple buildings over about an eight-foot section.

At the August Business meeting, I passed out a survey to see how many members would want a larger locker to store their trains. These new lockers would allow two boxes side-by-side and, depending on the size of the locker chosen, would determine the quantity of boxes. Included in the back of the newsletter is a copy of the survey. If you are interested in a new locker, please return the survey to my mailbox or to me at the September Business meeting. If you're not going to be at the club before then, email me at lock46@verizon.net. Returning the survey form is not a commitment for a locker. After we see the results of the survey and determined the expense to the club and the size of the project, we will then confirm your request.

One last subject, please **clear** all turnouts that you may throw in the course of running your trains including yards, your effort will be appreciated.

That is it for this month, your questions or comments are always welcome.

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer



AUGUST 2017 (5 years ago)

- Plan approved to open staging room to be walk-in and staging connected to Mountain Division. Plans presented for trolley station and harbor scene and industrial area.
- PO Box discontinued; Roger installed mailbox.
- Celebrated 25th annual “Cookout and Pool Party” at Jim South’s home in Braintree.
- 25th anniversary of awarding of license for SSMRC to occupy Building 51 from the Town of Hingham Selectmen.
- William L. Withuhn, author, historian, preservationist and curator of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, dies at 75 years old.
- Amtrak’s ex-GN “Great Dome” operates on the Downeaster train through September, probably for the last time, due to its pending retirement.
- Completion of a second mainline track between Albany and Schenectady ends decades-old bottleneck causing delays for Amtrak passengers.
- Amtrak passenger trains return to Roanoke, VA, after 38-year hiatus.
- CP reintroduces heritage logo to side of locomotives, featuring beaver, maple leaf, company name and year of incorporation in a circle on the long hood.
- GE shifts production of its diesel-electric locomotives from its facility in Erie, Penna. to Texas.
- Costs to restore C&O 2-6-6-2 #1309 increase to \$1.8-million, casting some doubt on project.
- NKP Berkshire #757 in Strasburg, Penna. transfers ownership of the loco to the Mad River & NKP RR Museum in Bellevue, Ohio, where restoration is planned. In the mid-60s, NKP #757 was the first locomotive to be donated to the future RR Museum of Pennsylvania, saving it from an uncertain fate.

AUGUST 2012 (10 Years Ago)

- Cedar Hill Yard classification ready for testing; open for Fall Show.
- Hunter Harrison appointed president and CEO at CPR.
- VIA Rail Canada announces 9% cut in work force and reduction of frequencies of *Canadian* and *Ocean* routes.
- *Downeaster* carries over ½-million passengers—first time in 10-year history.
- MBTA commits \$38-million to buy 7 new locos from MotivePower, Inc.
- GE rolls out 5,000th “Evolution Series” loco (to UP).
- Nippon Sharyo opens new passenger car facility in Rochelle, IL, to build 120 new passenger cars of all types.
- Genesee & Wyoming to acquire RailAmerica.
- MBTA pays CSX \$50-million to acquire 21 miles of track, Framingham-Worcester. Adds 7 round-trips to Boston, making total of 20 daily.
- Amtrak launches “e-Ticket” program for all trains, after pilot program in *Downeaster* a success.
- “Countdown signs” (next train arrival) introduced on Red Line at South Station, as a pilot program.

- GE introduces first new production prototype locomotive, which satisfies “Tier 4” emissions.
- MBTA ridership surpasses 400-million for first time.

AUGUST 2007 (15 years ago)

- 30,000 discarded, defective, concrete ties donated by MBTA to Nantucket’s Sconset Beach Preservation Fund.
- Study of direct rail link from Canada to Alaska finds cost of 1,178-mile project to be \$10.5-billion.
- Valley RR #40 joins sister #97, after 4-yr under repair
- Amtrak’s Downeaster adds 5th round-trip Boston-Portland.
- Amtrak begins use of wireless credit card machines.
- South Bay Interlocking closes, as manned interlocking, with control transferred to South Station.
- BNSF begins construction of 3rd mainline through Cajon Pass, enabling up to 150 trains/day to use the route through the California mountains.
- Floor of NECR’s 1851 tunnel under Bellows Falls lowered, to allow double-stack cars passage.
- Operations Committee begins system of members getting “block of numbers” to register locomotives.

AUGUST 2002 (20 Years Ago)

- “Record” 32-page *Semaphore* published.
- Member Bob Larson passes.
- Hobo RR completes rehab of ‘Roger Williams” 2-car set, which is returned to Danbury RR Museum.
- Morristown & Erie RR purchases all six ex-Amtrak, ex-New Haven FL9 locomotives.
- VIA Rail Canada begins operating new “Renaissance” equipment on overnight train from Montreal to Toronto.
- Super Steel Schenectady delivers first (and only) of seven Rohr rebuilt *Turboliners* to Amtrak.
- Amtrak decides not to bid on pending MBTA Commuter Rail contract.
- Colorado Railcar unveils prototype Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) car.
- *Downeaster* begins seasonal stop at Old Orchard Beach in Maine.
- Multiple-alarm fire brings down old Montreal Locomotives Works building in Montreal, where over 7,000 locomotives were built from 1904-1990s.
- 30’ flagpole ordered for installation at Building 51.

AUGUST 1997 (25 Years Ago)

- Work begins on renovation of Canton Viaduct (1835) for electric, high-speed service.
- Old Colony test trains running on Middleboro and Kingston/Plymouth Lines.
- “Heritage” sleepers make last run on Amtrak’s *Night Owl* to Washington, DC.
- NS and CSX file 15,000-page application for control of Conrail.
- Restoration work on B&M Pacific #3713 “The Constitution” begins at Steamtown in Scranton, Penna.
- U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers releases plans for major rehabilitation of Cape Cod Railroad Bridge at Buzzards Bay.
- Groundbreaking for renovation of Worcester Union Station.
- Thrall introduces articulated, bi-level auto carrier.
- Super Steel Schenectady wins \$20-million contract to rebuild two Amtrak Rohr *Turboliners*.

● Large, picture article about SSMRC in Boston Globe.

AUGUST 1992 (30 Years Ago)

- Town of Hingham grants SSMRC license to Bldg. 51.
- Jack Foley joins SSMRC.
- Club Cookout held at Jim South's for first time.
- Amtrak receives \$55-million to rehab Hell Gate Bridge.
- Swedish S-2000 trainset tested on Northeast Corridor.
- Rome Locomotive Works in Rome, NY, closes.
- Metro-North Commuter Rail Road acquires former MBTA FP10 locomotives.
- MBTA proposes five sites for new Commuter Rail stations on the Worcester Line.

AUGUST 1987 (35 Years Ago)

(no issue)

AUGUST 1982 (40 Years Ago)

- Conrail reports first ½-year profit in its 6-year history.
- Guilford receives OK to purchase Delaware & Hudson.
- Amtrak offers door-to-door package express service in Northeast Corridor.
- Chicago-Toronto service starts; run jointly by Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada and called the *International*.

POTPOURRI

MOST HARTFORD LINE service by CTrail and Amtrak will be replaced by buses for almost two months beginning July 18 to allow the Connecticut Department of Transportation to complete infrastructure projects in Hartford and Windsor, Conn. At Hartford Union Station, the platform canopy will be replaced, with new roofing and lighting over the passenger platforms, as well as gutter replacement to improve drainage and prevent flooding. A slope stabilization project in Windsor will include track work and maintenance of the Hartford Line communication and signal system. As a result, bus service will replace most trains from July 18 through Sept. 11. A detailed bus schedule will be posted by Friday, July 1; bus departures may be earlier than the usual train departure times. Train fares will be in effect for the bus service, which will stop at all Hartford Line stations. (TN)

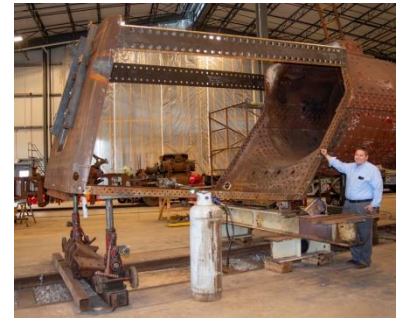
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THE ROCHELLE City Council has approved more than \$30,000 for the first part of a three-phase plan to upgrade the Rochelle Railroad Park, the popular facility at the crossing of BSNF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad main lines. The council approved a \$30,750 contract with engineering firm Willett, Hofmann & Associates for design of improvements at the railroad park gift shop. Work will include restroom improvements, accessibility upgrades, new doors, new siding, and a ramp and deck from the parking lot.

Overall, about \$135,000 in improvements are planned, using American Rescue Plan Act funds. The council discussed other improvements including more lighting, improved locations for live-streaming cameras, an elevated viewing tower, and a heated, enclosed area for winter viewing. (TN)

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THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD Technical & Historical Society has met and exceeded its goal of raising \$100,000 toward the construction of a new firebox for PRR Class K4s 4-6-2 steam locomotive No. 1361. Owned by the Railroaders Memorial Museum, the engine is in the midst of a \$2.6 million overhaul to restore it to operating condition. Built in PRR's Juniata Shops in 1918, the 150-ton passenger locomotive was retired in 1956 and the next year was put on display at the nearby railroad landmark, Horseshoe Curve. It was one of 425 K4s-class engines built by



Juniata (350) and Baldwin Locomotive Works (75). The type dominated the carrier's passenger-locomotive fleet for nearly 40 years, until the last were retired in 1957. The only other survivor is No. 3750 (Juniata, 1920), located at the state-owned Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg. In 1985, the Altoona museum removed No. 1361 from Horseshoe Curve and restored it to operation in 1987-88, but it has remained idle since then. (TN)

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AMTRAK'S MAPLE LEAF has resumed service to and from Toronto, marking the first cross-border rail service to be resumed since pandemic-related cuts in 2020. Amtrak announced this morning that the northbound Maple Leaf, operated in conjunction with VIA Rail Canada, would operate to Toronto today (Monday, June 27) with the first southbound train from Toronto to New York on Tuesday, June 28. (TN)

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SPRINGFIELD UNION STATION has received a \$1.75 million federal rail infrastructure grant for track improvements, the U.S. The Department of Transportation announced June 30th. The project will develop preliminary engineering and environmental clearance for track, signal, and infrastructure improvements, according to the statement. The track work will include additional platforms, additional crossover tracks, storage tracks, a new layover facility, and other work that will support the Amtrak Springfield Line,

the CSX Boston Albany Line, and small segments of the former Armory Branch and Knowledge Corridor, which runs north from Springfield through Holyoke and Northampton to Greenfield. The project will improve efficiency, reduce travel times, improve passenger accessibility for intercity passenger rail services, and reduce freight and passenger rail conflicts on corridors in the Springfield area. The federal government said the Massachusetts Department of Transportation will provide a 50% match. Also, an Enfield, Connecticut, station project received up to \$13.9 million. At the station, construction will include a 500-foot level boarding platform, a utility building with a waiting area, and station parking. Track and signal work are needed to support the platform and the clearance will be improved by raising the bridge and lowering the road. The Connecticut Department of Transportation will provide a 50% match. (Mass Live)

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THE “DISCOVER MAINE RAIL PASS” is the best choice for a flexible and budget-friendly Maine travel experience this summer. Passengers can enjoy up to 10 one-way trips between any Maine station within a 7 day period for just \$19 per person. With stops in Wells, Saco, Portland, Freeport, Old Orchard Beach and Brunswick, passengers can discover historic cities, beautiful beaches, outlet shopping, world-class dining, theater, entertainment and more...just steps from the Downeaster Stations.

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THE CITY OF NEWTON mayor and City Council are asking Mass. state lawmakers to allocate \$85-million toward long-sought upgrades at three MBTA commuter rail stations in the City. All of them along the MassPike: Auburndale, West Newton. and Newtonville. They want all three stations replaced, to the tune of \$170-million. (BG)

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A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE in weekday service on Metro-North’s Waterbury Branch and new express trains between New Haven and New York’s Grand Central Terminal highlight new schedules that took effect Sunday, July 10. Reflecting recent infrastructure upgrades, the number of weekday trains on the Waterbury Branch will go from 15 to 22, a 47% increase. Metro-North completed the



addition of Centralized Traffic Control on the Waterbury Branch in 2021, eliminating the last dark territory on its 217-mile system, while also adding new sidings to make possible the expanded service. (TN)

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THE GOVERNORS of New York and New Jersey have signed an agreement detailing how the two states will fund their portion of the Northeast Corridor’s Gateway Bridge and tunnel projects. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy addresses funding for the Portal North bridge over the Hackensack River in New Jersey and the Gateway Tunnel project to build two new tunnels between New Jersey and New York’s Penn Station, then rehabilitate the existing bores. The federal government will provide approximately 60% of the funding for the bridge project; the states will split the remaining cost 50-50. They will also evenly split their portion of the tunnel project. “The Gateway Hudson Tunnel Project is vital to the Northeast corridor, and today’s announcement is a critical step forward in turning this vision into reality,” Hochul said. “By signing the Phase One Memorandum of Understanding, we are establishing the framework to get this project over the finish line and are making good on our promise to modernize the state’s transportation infrastructure and create a mass transit system worthy of New Yorkers.” Murphy called the agreement “a pivotal milestone toward the completion of the most significant transportation project not just in New Jersey, but in the entire United States.” The agreement is a major step toward completing federal funding this year, which could allow construction of the tunnel to begin in 2023, although a former Federal Transit Administration official said that the funding agreement might not be completed until 2024 because of its complexity. (TN)

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AMTRAK CASCADES service to Vancouver, British Columbia, is now set to resume in September, according to transportation officials in Washington state and Oregon. Amtrak was able to advance the schedule from its most recent estimate of December 2022. The cross-border service halted in May 2020 when the Canadian border was closed to non-essential travel. In preparation for resumption of service to Vancouver, Amtrak had begun qualifying runs north from Seattle for crews in February, but then announced the service would not begin until December because of shortages of on-board crew members and mechanics. Officials

in Washington and Oregon protested that decision, saying it was “not acceptable.” (TN)

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THE MBTA on July 14th reported on its progress to address ongoing safety concerns raised during a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Safety Management Inspection (SMI) last month. Over the last several weeks, the MBTA has implemented safety plans to address track conditions and maintenance, updated safety trainings and directives, and has addressed staffing shortages. “Following the FTA’s initial safety review, the MBTA was asked to implement changes to the system to improve the way it is run and operated,” said MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak. “I am pleased that the MBTA has completed many of those updates and continues to make progress on many more. These recommendations will make the T safer and more reliable for both our riders and our employees. Over the coming weeks, we will continue to work closely with these safety experts to improve the MBTA system.” (RA)

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PREVENTING A NATIONAL rail strike that could have begun Monday, July 18, President Joe Biden has established a Presidential Emergency Board to investigate the ongoing dispute between railroads and workers. Biden will name the members of the three-person board, whose members can not have any financial or other interest in either a rail labor organization or a railroad. The board will have 30 days from its establishment, effective Monday, to deliver a report recommending a resolution to the dispute. After that, the Railway Labor Act specifies there can be no work stoppage for another 30 days, except by agreement of both sides.

“The President’s goal is to make sure America’s freight rail system continues to run without disruption, delivering the items that our families, communities, farms and businesses rely on,” according to a statement from the White House. (TN)

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NEW YORK CITY and the State of New York have agreed on a plan to pay for renovation of Penn Station, the nation’s busiest passenger rail facility, and redevelopment of its surrounding neighborhood. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams announced the agreement on



Monday. The deal will allow developers to build 10 high-rise buildings — nine office buildings and one residential skyscraper — with fees assessed in place of taxes that will go toward rebuilding of the station and improving amenities in the neighborhood. “The current Penn Station is unsightly, inefficient, and impossible to navigate, and New York commuters deserve better,” Hochul said. “This agreement brings us one step closer to a beautiful, modern station worthy of New York with vibrant open space, lively streetscapes, and better, more seamless connections to local transit.” Said Adams, “A state-of-the-art transportation system is at the heart of our ability to have a prosperous life and a prosperous city, and the key to an equitable recovery. The new vision for Penn Station is to our generation what the Empire State Building was to previous generations: a symbol of our resiliency and a project that will define our city for decades to come.” (TN)

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DUTCH TRAINS run entirely on wind energy. One windmill running for an hour can power a train for 120 miles, and around 5,500 trips are facilitated every day. The system allows around 600,000 passengers to commute daily without any emissions. (Green New Deal, courtesy Peter Palica)

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THE INAUGURAL RUN of Amtrak’s *Ethan Allen Express* from Burlington, Vt., arrives at the Ferrisburg-Vergennes station on Friday, July 29, 2022. The train had previously originated and terminated in Rutland, Vt. The station — added to the National Register of Historic Places in May 2021 — is a Rutland Railroad building dating to the 1850s, relocated approximately



1,000 feet, reoriented, and restored. The initial trip required a bus bridge between Saratoga Springs and Albany, N.Y., because Amtrak service has been suspended past an Albany building said to be at risk of partial collapse. (TN)

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AMTRAK on Monday, August 1st, restarted train service across Upstate New York, including Syracuse, after suspending it last week over safety concerns from an old warehouse’s

crumbling wall. The section of track had been closed to passenger trains west of Albany on Friday over worries about the structural integrity of the nearby Central Warehouse, a privately owned structure north of Albany's downtown. Parts of the facade had already come down, and an engineering report said a collapse of part of a wall was likely. In a statement, Amtrak said crews had done some cleanup and construction work, including clearing out debris and stabilizing the inside of the warehouse. Train service was restored with a speed restriction. The service suspension had caused a hassle for train operations including the new service from Burlington, Vermont, to New York City, with customers having to get off the train and take a bus for a portion of the trip. (Central NY News)

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AN EXAMPLE OF UNION PACIFIC'S new paint scheme, the first on an EMD locomotive, is now roaming the railroad. Photographer James Hickey SD70ACe No. 8620 leads manifest MNPRO-26 at Buffalo Bend/Point of Rocks, Neb., near the town of



Sidney, on July 27, 2022. The new standard paint scheme features a larger UP shield and smaller American flag on the nose, and the return of "Union Pacific" lettering on the carbody. (TN)

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THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION has released its long-anticipated rule proposal to require two-person crews for trains, drawing predictable, and strong, reactions from railroads (which are opposed), and unions (which are in favor).

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking would require two-person crews except for "certain low risk operations and circumstances where mitigating measures are in place to protect railroad employees, the public, and the environment." It would also allow railroads to petition the FRA to continue legacy operations with one-person crews

or to receive approval for new operations with fewer than two crew members. (TN)

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CANADIAN NATIONAL'S PLAN to turn the Port of Halifax, Nova Scotia, into the "Prince Rupert of the East" is gaining traction. In June CN launched a second pair of intermodal trains that serve Halifax, where terminal operator PSA now owns both container terminals and has made improvements. The port also has expanded berths and added cranes so it can accommodate larger container ships. "Last month we started a second daily service out of Halifax, and after four weeks we have moved 24% more containers and reduced PSA's ground count by 27%. I'm very excited about the prospects for Halifax and our partnership with PSA," Doug MacDonald, CN's chief marketing officer, said on the railway's earnings call recently. CN has experienced rapid traffic growth in Western Canada for more than a decade, including container traffic through Prince Rupert, British Columbia, and now aims to fill up its underutilized Eastern network. "The Port of Halifax, which is solely served by CN, has significant opportunities to attract additional container business," MacDonald says. (TN)

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THREE NON-PROFIT GROUPS say they have made an offer to Norfolk Southern buy the right-of-way of the inactive Saluda Grade — when active, the steepest main line in America, averaging a 4.7% incline with a brief stretch of 5.1% grade — with plans to turn it into a 31-mile rail trail. (TN)

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THE MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE has passed a transportation bill including \$275 million in funding for the East-West Rail project, which would extend existing rail service west from Worcester to Springfield and Pittsfield, Mass. (TN)

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ON THE EMBATTLED MBTA, the decision to shut down the entire Orange Line for one month to replace and repair tracks is a high-stakes gamble that could finally lead to faster, more reliable subway service — or be the biggest transit calamity yet in a year full of them. For perhaps hundreds of thousands of Orange Line riders, though, the announcement on August 3rd by top officials could translate into a very bad day — or 30 of them. From the evening of Aug. 19 until the morning of Sept. 19, the MBTA will shut down Orange Line service to finish badly needed fixes on its train tracks. The shutdown will come just as students are starting classes, and many workers are considering a post-summer return to downtown offices. "This is an

unprecedented service diversion for the MBTA,” said T general manager Steve Poftak. “We have never shut down an entire line in this way in order to make sweeping improvements. But we’re doing this because it’s the fastest, most efficient way to deliver benefits to our customers.” If not for the full line shutdown, Governor Charlie Baker said, it would take the T around five years during weekends and evenings to finish the work. (BG)

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RECONSTRUCTION of the South Attleboro MBTA commuter rail station is expected to get underway in the fall. Demolition of the pedestrian bridge will be the first step. Service to this stop was suspended in February 2021, due to deterioration of the pedestrian bridge. Rusted stairs and walkways made it unsafe. The project is expected to cost \$60-million. (SC)

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THE SECOND SET of new Siemens equipment for VIA Rail Canada corridor service has been delivered. With Union Pacific ES44AC No. 5275 providing power for the entire trip from the Siemens plant in Sacramento, the new trainset was delivered to VIA’s Montreal Maintenance Centre early on Saturday, Aug. 6. VIA is receiving 32 of the bidirectional trainsets powered by Siemens Charger locomotives with cab cars as part of a C\$989 million order. The first of those trainsets arrived in Montreal in September 2021 and began testing in April. Deliveries are expected to continue through 2024; VIA has said the first of the equipment could enter service later this year. (TN)



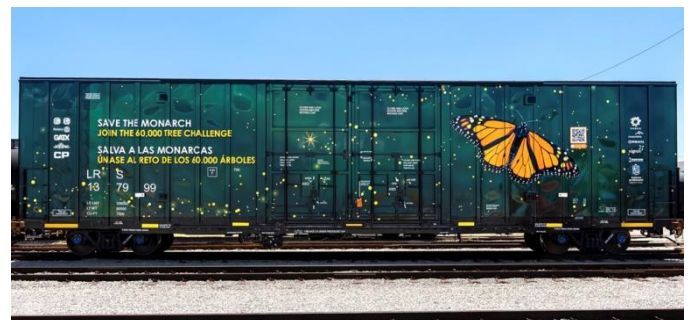
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TWO ROCKSLIDES in a three-day period recently have led to the full closure of the White Pass & Yukon dock at the Port of Skagway, and the dock is expected to remain closed for the remainder of the 2022 sailing season. Slides on Wednesday, Aug. 3, and Friday, Aug. 5, both damaged the dock, with the Friday slide causing significant damage to shipping containers used to create a tunnel to protect pedestrians from falling rocks. Skagway Mayor Andrew Cremata has declared a state of emergency as a result of the slides, which should help the community attract federal and state assistance to deal with the mountainside above the

dock. “It’s a tremendous problem,” Cremata said at an Aug. 6 meeting. “I guarantee you it is one we’re going to solve before next season because we don’t have any other choice.” One of the two berths on the dock had previously been closed after a June rockslide and an engineering assessment that a possible “catastrophic” slide was possible for the hillside above the dock. The WP&Y dock is the only one in Skagway capable of handling the largest cruise ships, so some are now bypassing Skagway for other locations. Cremata estimates the city may lose as much as half its expected tourism for the cruise season. The White Pass & Yukon, which is heavily reliant on traffic from the cruise ships, is Skagway’s largest employer.

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KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN, Canadian Pacific, and equipment leasing company GATX are among the parties launching an effort to save the monarch butterfly by contributing to its habitat at a preserve in Mexico. The Save the Monarch Butterfly 60,000 Tree Challenge North American Boxcar Tour aims to raise \$100,000 to plant 60,000 Oyamel trees, a fir tree that only grows at altitudes of 7,800 to 11,800 feet, at the El Rosario Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary in Michoacán, Mexico. The boxcar for the tour was recently completed at the GATX shop in Hearne, Texas. It features a crowd-funded QR code than can be scanned to make a donation to the effort. The boxcar is scheduled to begin a tour this fall that will include stops in Windsor, Ontario; Chicago; Kansas City, Mo.; Laredo, Texas; and four Mexican sites — Nuevo Laredo in the state of Tamaulipas; Monterrey, Nuevo Leon; San Luis Potosi, in the state of the same name; and Morelia, Michoacán. The tour will conclude at the butterfly sanctuary. Events in coordination with local Rotary clubs will generate awareness and raise funds. The



groups involved in the fundraising effort say the monarch is estimated to have only a 10% chance of survival above the extinction threshold over the next 30 years. “KCS is proud to work in partnership with CP, GATX, Rotary and NASCO to drive the 60,000 Tree Challenge,” KCS CEO Patrick J. Ottensmeyer said. “In addition, we are installing

waystations throughout our U.S.-Mexico network in support of monarch conservation.” “The CP and KCS networks align with the Monarch’s annual migration route, providing us with a unique opportunity to help protect and restore critical habitat,” said CP CEO Keith Creel. “CP is very happy to join with KCS, GATX, Rotary and NASCO to support and promote the recovery of the monarch butterfly.” GATX CEO Robert C. Lyons said his company “was thrilled to help produce a custom-designed boxcar to celebrate and raise awareness of the journey of the monarch butterfly in addition to making a financial contribution to support the 60,000 Tree Challenge. We are proud to join forces on this innovative environmental initiative.” (TN)

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VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN WORKING

nearly non-stop for several weeks, finishing a number of last-minute details leading up to the Saturday, Aug. 6, 2022, opening of the Wiscasset Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum’s Mountain Extension and Trout Brook Station. (TN)



Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington No. 9, an 1891 Portland Co. 0-4-4, rides the newly installed turntable at Trout Brook Station.

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AMTRAK HAS SPECIALLY WRAPPED one of its ACS64 electric locomotives to promote a National



Geographic exhibit on King Tut in Boston and Washington. This is not the first time Amtrak and King Tut have been linked. An Amtrak Cascades F59PHI was wrapped to promote a King Tut exhibit at the Pacific Science Center in 2012. The current exhibit, “Beyond King Tut: The Immersive Experience,” marks the 100th anniversary of the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in Egypt. It is appearing at SoWa Power Station in Boston through Oct. 2, and then moves to the National Geographic Museum in Washington. (TN)

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A SERIES OF NORTHEAST CORRIDOR efforts to replace century-old infrastructure highlights 11 passenger-rail projects receiving more than \$233 million in Federal Railroad Administration grant funding. The grants announced August 18th by the U.S. Department of Transportation are part of the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Program. The projects included are in eight states. In New England:

..In Connecticut, up to \$65.2 million for replacement of a bridge over the Connecticut River, and up to \$20 million for replacement of two power substations on the state-owned New Haven Line. The existing bridge, between Old Saybrook and Old Lyme, CT, opened in 1907. The new bridge will provide additional clearance for marine traffic, allow train speeds to increase from 45 mph to 70 mph,



and reduce the number of delays for bridge openings. This is the second award of \$65.2 million for the project, following one in 2020. The new substations on the New Haven Line, used by more than 350 commuter trains and 60 Amtrak trains, will be more reliable and energy efficient, less costly to maintain, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

.. In Massachusetts, up to \$7.6 million for replacement of the more than century-old South Elm Street Bridge on the MBTA’s Haverhill Line, which is also used by Amtrak traffic. (TN)

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WORK CONTINUES on preparing East Broad Top’s 2-8-2-type engine No. 16 (Baldwin, 1916) for a return to active service. The narrow-gauge railroad, a National Historic Landmark, last used steam power in 2011, just prior to the shutdown that put the 33-mile railroad into a deep freeze for more than eight years. In 2020, a new non-profit group, the EBT Foundation Inc., was formed to buy the property from its previous owner, the Kovalchick Salvage Co. of Indiana, Pa. While four of the six Baldwin 2-8-2 Mikados on the property (Nos. 12, 14, 15, and 17) saw service during the 1960-2011 tourist era, it was No. 15 that closed out steam operations — and regularly scheduled passenger service. After that, EBT ran a few motorcar trips for the Friends of the East Broad Top, but steam was done. When the foundation took over in 2020, it resumed tourist service with a diesel-electric center-cab switcher, General Electric

No. M-7, while planning to bring steam back. Among the engines, No. 16 (1916) was judged to be the best candidate for restoration — largely because it hadn't run since 1956 — and work began almost immediately. EBT's Mikados fall into three sizes. No. 12 is the smallest and oldest (1911, 56 tons), while Nos. 14 and 15 are of medium size (1912 and 1914, 73-75 tons). Nos. 16-18 (built 1916, 1918, and 1920) are the largest engines (81-82 tons). All three are equipped with superheaters, thermal efficiency devices that preheat and dry steam before discharging it into the cylinders to produce movement. Superheating is a rarity for narrow-gauge engines, as most American narrow gauge railroads were declining or abandoning by the time superheating became common in steam-locomotive design in the early 20th century. EBT No. 16 successfully passed its hydrostatic boiler test on May 17, 2022, and since has been test-steamed with Federal Railroad Administration staff observing. The FRA was satisfied with the test. "That allows us to install everything back on the boiler," says EBT Master Mechanic Dave Domitrovich. "We don't have to take it off again before running it." A considerable amount of finishing work remains. (TN)

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EMD CELEBRATED its 100th anniversary at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union on Saturday, August 20th. Festivities were led by the CEO of present owner, Caterpillar's Progress Rail. (TN)

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

JULY

TRAINS

Surf's Up!

Gambling on the Es

Why We Love the 4-6-2

Boomer Locomotives Hustle

MODEL RAILROADER

A Mill Pond for the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes

Blend a River into a Backdrop

DCC Currents

Using Mini and Cell Phone Speakers

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

Scratchbuilt Billboard from a Photo

Corrugated Steel from Tin Foil

Diverging Points

Why Compete?

AUGUST

TRAINS

Good issue all about RRs in the Commonwealth of Virginia

MODEL RAILROADER

A Mill Pond for the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes
DCC Currents

Useful Connectors for DCC Wiring

Trains of Thought

A Blank Canvas

RAILROAD MODEL CRAFTSMAN

Model a Highway Overhead Bridge

DCC Sound Upgrade for Brass Steam

Diverging Points

Dreams

News sources: Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Trains

"Newswire", Railway Age, Railpace Newsmagazine,

RRE "Callboy", "The 470", Patriot Ledger, Rail

Passenger Assoc., Attleboro Sun Chronicle.

LIBRARY CORNER

New books will be displayed on the table in the Break Room for a month and can be checked out, by using the check-out sheet on the Break Room counter. They will be filed alphabetically in the Library afterwards.

New this month:

Trackside around New England 1967-2020 by Jeremy and Jeffrey Plant; Morning Sun Books 2022. This publisher's usual hundreds of all-color photos on 128 pages don't disappoint. For those of us in our "later years", the book brings back happy railfanning memories of New England's railroads!

Don't forget we have a great DVD collection in the mailroom. Filed alphabetically. No need to sign out but please return to the book return tray in the Break Room when you're done. Happy reading and viewing!

Dave Clinton, Librarian

DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

For the July clinic, **Eric Mercer** brought two of his Athearn "Blue Box" F7s to install Digitrax DH123D decoders. In each, he drilled and tapped the frame so he could install a 2-56 screw, in order to provide a "ground" wire (black) connection for the decoder. He installed 3mm LEDs with 470-ohm resistors for the headlights. All went as planned and now he has

four units: A-B-B-A, which he will be painting in Northern Pacific's handsome green/black scheme.

Paul Cutler III brought his New Haven EP-5 electric to program an up-date from Rapido, which allows the pantographs to be lowered, even when the sound is on. This was a gripe from several modelers, which Rapido took care of, as good customer service.

Jeff Griesemer brought his "heritage" Bowser Pennsy T-1 4-4-4-4 loco, which he built from a 1980's kit. The gargantuan tender is fabricated from white metal and brass and the loco boiler and chassis is white metal...so it is very heavy! He hadn't worked on this loco in years, so wanted to see about DCC installation. What we found was eye-opening: a Pittman DC70X motor for each of the engines...and facing in opposite directions! Together they drew a little over 1-amp, so the Digitrax DH123 should fit in the boiler between the motors; we'll see. It ran great on DC, considering it's been about 20-years. He fixed the drawbar and got experience disassembling, so after installing the decoder, he can add the "detailing kit" parts and then paint this monster. BTW, it is NOT an articulated locomotive. The Pennsy had 50 of these.

For August, **Dan Peterson** was the only participant. He brought his new Maersk GP60M for decoder DH126D, which just plugged right into the 9-pin socket on the factory board. The DH126D replaces the former DH123D, as the new board now has a plug to add a "current keeper" capacitor; the Digitrax PX112-2 plugs in perfectly.

He also had quite a night trying to fix the truck bolster on his "Air Products" 75' tank car from Broadway Ltd. He wanted to add the F.R.E.D., which comes with its own pre-wired circuit board for the "Flashing Rear End Device" but the factory bolster had a brass tube, which interfered with the new truck. After much grinding with the Dremel and hand-filing and support from **Paul Cutler III**, he was finally able to successfully-attach the new truck and away he went flashing to everyone through town!

The next clinic will be Thursday, September 15th. Please feel free to email or speak to me with any questions about the clinic.

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. **Roger St. Peter** has asked, again, that folks NOT use the Club as a "lumber dump". We **do NOT NEED any more wood** dumped on the wood carrier, despite how good you may think it is! Please stop...and thanks.
2. **Fred Lockhart** has included a **survey about lockers** on the back of this newsletter. Please complete with your interest in lockers and place in his mailbox. Thanks.
3. "**The Operator**" will return next month, after a 2 ½-year absence!
- 4.

.....*David N. Clinton*

"A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." (Ecclesiastes 3:4)

MEMBER NEWS

Savery Moore wrote a great article for the July Railpace Newsmagazine. Titled "Edaville Railroad Celebrates 75 Years", he included several pictures he took that weekend, April 23-24. Congrats, Savery—a really nice story/article.

Our condolences to **Ed Bulman**, on the death of his mom "Betty" on June 30th. It is always difficult to lose your mother, no matter your age.

(Note: 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:

Jack Foley September 13th
Ralph Weischedel September 27th



PROJECTS

From **Chip Mullen**: "For several months now I have been assisting Dave Galbraith as he has been working on the narrow gauge scenery behind the smelter. As part of that project, as Dave worked

down the steep slope toward the water with rocks and foliage, he and I decided that the waterfall scenery could use some TLC and possible improvement. I decided that the artistry of the upper stream, the upper and lower falls and the two pools behind the dams were quite good and were really only in need of cleaning and possible top coating to give the water some luster. The cleaning was accomplished with good old tap water and paper towels, and then I covered the stream and both pools with dappled Modge Podge. At the lower dam there was a fairly obvious seam between the dam top and the water surface. I filled this in using Noch Water Effects and then painted each of the falls with more Modge Podge to give them a watery luster. Photo 1 shows the result of this clean-up and rework of the upper falls area. The lower pool under the bridge was originally just a piece of painted Plexiglas with the protective film left in place; there were no surface effects in this area. Over the years this film had come loose and was peeling. I completely removed that film and then made a new water base using toilet paper. The process consisted of applying a coating of white glue mixed in a 1:3 ratio with water. I placed squares of toilet paper over the wet surface and then applied more diluted glue to the top of the toilet paper coupons once the entire surface area was covered. I applied this top coating with a medium/soft bristle brush working the paper into shapes resembling ripples, waves, wakes, eddys, etc. Once dried I painted the toilet paper, which was now hard, with black, blue, and green paints blended to give the appearance of depth and shallows. In this case I also blended in browns to simulate silt buildup downstream of the bridge footing. After the paint dried I covered the area again using Modge Podge heavily dappled to build up a better 3 dimensional look and give that water luster to the



finished project. Photo 2 shows the final result of this redone lower falls area.

finished project. Photo 2 shows the final result of this redone lower falls area.

Peter Palica: Here's my just-finished latest 3D printed project—the N-scale Disneyland Train Station.



Jesse Collins has had an interesting visitor at his Diesel locomotive “garage”: Amtrak’s ACS-64 #606 wrapped



at the Wilmington, Delaware shop advertising

National Geographic’s “Beyond King Tut” display at the SoWa Power Station in Boston through October 2nd.

Our friend **Kevin Linagen** had an exciting experience this past weekend, when he and friend Joe Burgess were invited to display their restored caboose at the Mass Coastal RR’s “Railfan’s Day” held at the Hyannis yard. First picture is the cars waiting in Middleboro yard to be picked up by Mass Coastal, after being brought down from Braintree by CSX. Second pic shows some of the many visitors to the display of cars and locos, all of which were open to the public. The best part was that Kevin and his friends got to ride in the caboose all the way from the Quincy Shipyard!



See a nice Youtube of the event at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBcs_c0Opxs

First new coach arrives at East Broad Top

By Dan Cupper, *Trains* | July 20, 2022

Three more cars will soon augment railroad's open-air fleet



The first of four new East Broad Top passenger cars is lifted off the truck that brought it from its builder in Bellingham, Wash. (Dan Cupper)

ROCKHILL FURNACE, Pa. – “The newest passenger car in the United States.” That’s how Brad Esposito, general manager of the East Broad Top Railroad, described the rolling stock that arrived Tuesday, July 19, at the narrow gauge tourist line and National Historic Landmark. It is the railroad’s first new passenger coach in more than a century.

After the gleaming, dark-green car made a week-long cross-continent trip via low-boy truck from Hamilton Manufacturing in Bellingham, Wash., cranes gently set it on new trucks that ride on modern-day Timken roller bearings. Although constructed of modern materials, the car resembles EBT’s circa-1890 rolling stock used during the first half of the 20th century. Hamilton has built dozens of similar-looking narrow gauge parlor cars for the White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad in Alaska. The 53-foot-long car – the first of four – brings sorely needed inside seating capacity to EBT. Since its revival in 2020, EBT has relied on a collection of open-air cars, converted in the 1960s from boxcars and flatcars, and two wooden cabooses. Sparingly used are two other pieces, a 1907 Billmeyer &

Small office car, No. 20, and a 1926 Brill steel gas-electric car designated M-1.

Additionally, EBT’s roster contains three 19th-century wooden-body cars, but they are well-worn and are in various stages of restoration. The new cars will allow EBT to reduce the wear and tear on the historic fleet when it returns to service, says Wick Moorman, president of the nonprofit EBT Foundation, Inc., and retired head of Norfolk Southern and Amtrak. In a statement, he says: “They’ll enable us to recreate the experience of a trip on the EBT in years gone by, while saving the original equipment for special occasions which will prolong their life.”



Longer by three feet than any of EBT’s existing coaches and three inches higher, the new car holds 52 passengers. It will be joined shortly by two additional coaches and a 40-seat combine that is equipped with dual power lifts, one on each side, and capacity for four wheelchairs. The car’s interior features wood paneling, wooden window frames, and red upholstered seats for 52 passengers. With a steel underframe and superstructure, the car features composite-material, PVC-like sides that give the appearance of tongue-and-groove wood siding. Inside, natural wood paneling throughout, with wooden window frames, completes the vintage look. The car is equipped with electric lighting, an audio system, a modern toilet, and a Baker heater and baseboard ducts for cold-weather operation. The trucks were fabricated by Hamilton, but the wheelsets are being supplied by Olympic Railway Supply of nearby Tipton, Pa.



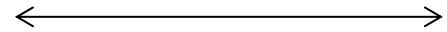
The Hamilton coaches are patterned after, but don’t exactly mimic, EBT cars No. 14 and 15, which the line bought secondhand from the Boston, Revere Beach & Lynn Railroad in 1916. The other existing EBT coach is No. 8, also bought from BRB&L the same year. Esposito says the railroad relied on the expertise of DuPont de Nemours, Inc. (now DowDuPont) to closely match the paint color to that

of EBT's existing passenger rolling stock. The brand selected is Imron, a durable industrial grade that is used on many railroad restoration projects. Lettering – probably in a goldish-yellow hue — will be hand-applied in the next few weeks, Esposito says. Orange lettering on Nos. 8, 14 and 15 is believed to have been strictly a tourist-era application, he adds.

While the converted open cars have served steadily, the railroad has eagerly awaited the new fleet, says Jonathan Smith, the foundation's director of sales and marketing. "This is the product people expect when they come for a train ride," he says. "We're moving the bar up a bit." The first car — to be numbered 21 — is expected to go into service next week after testing and break-in. Esposito consulted with veteran EBT historian and author Lee Rainey to determine an appropriate series for the new cars. The coaches will be numbered 21-23 and the combine will be numbered 17. After the car was lowered onto its trucks, foundation staff added finishing touches, installing brake rigging, brake hoses, truss rods, and new Sharon-style three-quarter-size knuckle couplers.

As this was going on, former railroad owner and current foundation board member Joe Kovalchick pulled in to size up the scene. Asked his reaction to seeing a new car on a 150-year-old railroad, he said, "I'm in awe over the whole damn thing, the whole rebirth. There's no turning back now. This has been a godsend to have this whole thing unravel the way it has." EBT is in a revival after being shut down from 2011 to 2020, when the foundation was formed to purchase from the Kovalchick family 27 miles of the 33-mile former coal carrier. Also part of the deal were six Baldwin 2-8-2 Mikado steam locomotives, freight and passenger cars, and historic shops, eight-stall roundhouse, station, and general office. It was Kovalchick's father Nick, an Indiana, Pa., scrap dealer, who had bought the line and saved it from scrapping in 1956 after the end of its common-carrier days. The father reopened the railroad in 1960 as a seasonal tourist-hauling line on 4-1/2 miles of its original 33-mile main line, starting with engines Nos. 12 (1911) and 15 (1914). Over the next several years, EBT also restored Nos. 14 (1912) and 17 (1918) to operating condition. The foundation has stated its intent to eventually restore all six engines, starting with No. 16 (1916), which is nearing completion.

Further on the horizon is the restoration and reopening of parts of the main line that have lain untouched since the 1956 closure. The foundation revived limited scheduled diesel public passenger service in 2021, and opened this season with an expanded five-day-a-week program, running Wednesdays through Sundays. Later this year, EBT will mark the 150th anniversary of the start of construction in 1872.



Railroads ignore train crew complaints at their own peril: Analysis

By Bill Stephens | August 11, 2022, [Railway Age](#) magazine

Crew shortages could get worse if rank-and-file find new contract underwhelming

If there's one thing all railroaders have in common, it's the ability to complain about anything and everything. They're world-class grumblers. So when train crews and labor unions bash the railroads for this, that, and the other thing, sometimes you have to wonder if they're crying wolf.

Wonder no more. The union-management pot, which is normally set on simmer, is boiling over at the big four U.S. Class I railroads. And it's prompting railroaders — even those with 10, 15, or 20 years of experience — to pull the pin before they've reached retirement age. In other words, they're voting with their feet. This tells you that railroaders aren't just bitching about their demanding jobs. They've had it. As ol' Johnny Paycheck would sing, "Take this job and shove it."

None of this should come as a surprise. CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific have for the past couple of years earned the dubious distinction of being among the worst places to work, according to the job-rating site Glassdoor. UP and NS ranked No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, due to their low ratings from their employees, while CSX held the No. 5 spot. Go back to 2008, though, and you'll not find a railroad among the 50 worst companies on Glassdoor's list.

What's changed? It's not one thing, railroaders say. It's everything. A massive wave of layoffs began when E. Hunter Harrison brought his Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model to CSX in March 2017. Since then, rail employment levels have fallen nearly 30% as NS and UP adopted PSR and BNSF Railway began running a leaner operation, too. In many cases this puts more work on the shoulders of the railroaders who kept their jobs — and has meant fewer

←—————→ Opinion: We've come full circle

David C. Lester, Managing Editor, *Railway Age Magazine* 7/25/22

During the 1970s, the railroad industry as a whole was struggling. Some thought nationalization was imminent, and rail service was generally in the toilet.

Fifty years later, after Staggers, huge mergers, massive technology and physical plant investments, big new or remodeled headquarters buildings, strong financial performance, and PSR, rail service has returned to the toilet. Recognition of this by shippers and the federal government resulted in Surface Transportation Board hearings on April 26-27, entitled "STB Hearing on Urgent Issues in Freight Rail Service." Regulators, shippers, and railroads gathered for these two days to listen to shippers tell horror stories about how poor rail service had cost them millions of dollars.

Hearing transcripts and videos are available on the web, but my colleague Frank Wilner, *Railway Age's* man in Washington, offered some highlights in a recent piece on the hearing: "The American Farm Bureau Federation reported unfilled grain car orders up 47%. The Fertilizer Institute said a railroad told customers to 'curtail' shipments, menacing maximum crop yields owing to a short window for fertilizer application. Ranchers said they are 'depopulating' (killing?) herds owing to feed shortages. Increases in dwell time (cars not moving), said a witness, elevates storage fees even when the customer has 'no control' over the delay. A municipality said its water supply system is dangerously short of chlorine. A shipper said a car destined for Galesburg, Ill., was detoured to Nashville to alleviate carrier congestion, arriving in Galesburg 33 days late." What a mess.

After this airing of grievances during the hearing, the STB directed the railroads to develop and submit service recovery plans "that would specifically describe their key remedial initiatives and promote a clearer vantage point into operating conditions on the rail network." I've read the four reports; unfortunately, they appeared to have been written by Harvey Milquetoast.

The STB was not happy and ordered the four railroads "to provide additional information on their actions to improve service and communications with their customers and additional detailed information to demonstrate their monthly progress in increasing the size of their workforces to levels needed to provide reliable rail service." There were similar stories from other shippers, but too many to discuss here. One observer said that he had never seen the service situation this bad in thirty years of railroading. And, it is bad. It's a fact that freight railroads are the lifeblood of much of our economy. And, except for intermodal freight, many of the products carried by rail are not topics for household discussion. Fertilizer? Chlorine? Feed for herds of cattle? Certainly not things we have on the tip of

days off under attendance policies that crews view as draconian. Then there are PSR-related operational changes, such as running fewer but longer trains. They take longer to build and are likely to encounter more mechanical mischief en-route. Conductors don't want to walk 2 miles or more to find and fix a defect at the back of the train.

A side effect of longer trains is running with lower horsepower/ton ratios. The combination of heavier trains and no horses to spare makes for longer trips for conductors and engineers. They also say that TripOptimizer and LEADER, the energy management systems that act like advanced cruise control and help conserve fuel, also slow transit times. Ditto for throttle and speed restrictions some railroads use to save fuel.

And then there are the national contract negotiations that have been stalled since 2019. Railroaders have worked through the pandemic as front-line workers and have now gone nearly three years without a raise. Talk of one-person crews, with conductors shifted to the ground, doesn't help and has been a stumbling block in negotiations.

Add all this up, and it's not hard to see why railroaders are a disgruntled lot. Listen to what one railroader recently posted on Trainorders: "After 25 years my quality of life AND pay are worse, and so is my home life and health. I feel like I really did make a deal with the Devil when I hired on. Railroad life has never been great, but at least back in the old days you made decent money, could layoff pretty much when you needed, and had regular jobs to look forward to when your seniority allowed. Now it's all gone ... And the carriers have the balls to say we're just overpaid complainers. A pox on them."

Longtime union leaders say they can't recall labor-management relations or morale being this bad at the big four systems. As experienced railroaders leave at higher rates than normal, it exacerbates the railroads' ongoing crew shortages as new hires are hard to find and even harder to keep, which of course snowballs into operational and service problems that then demand even more crews.

Credit CSX CEO Jim Foote for saying several times this year that railroads need to mend fences with their unionized employees and negotiate new contracts. "That is the biggest transformative change that CSX can make, and that is the biggest transformative change that the industry can make: Finally, finally, finally building a better rapport with our employees and having a better working relationship with them," Foote told the North American Rail Shippers conference. His counterpart at NS, Alan Shaw, also seems intent on improving relations with labor and has been listening to railroaders out on the ballast.

But things could get worse before they get better. One crewman tells me that if the new contract doesn't include a hefty raise that would make the job worthwhile, he expects anywhere from a quarter to a third of the people in his terminal to walk away.

our brains that kick off red signals when we hear about poor rail service. What is the government (i.e., the STB) supposed to do when they hear these horror stories? Sit back, relax, and say, "oh, it'll get better?"

I believe the STB is on the right track, despite the Association of American Railroads' concerns such as its assertion that there is no explanation by the STB around how it will use requested information. While the AAR may have a point, I believe the level of crisis warrants giving the STB a relatively free hand at gathering data from which it can draw actionable conclusions. Moreover, with the seriousness of the situation, I was surprised to hear the AAR point out the need for STB data, "[to] undergo a Paperwork Reduction Act analysis." So, let's sit around and perform a paperwork reduction analysis while shippers lose business and rot.

While the pandemic had some impact, I believe our current situation is primarily the result of the industry having Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) thrown back in its face. Power storage? Worker layoffs? Sound familiar? With PSR, roads had planned to create super railroads, running efficiently with minimal crews, minimal locomotives, and three-mile-long trains that would cut expenses to the point where shareholders would fawn over the company's impressively low operating ratio and load their pockets with short-term profits from rising stock prices. Power and worker shortages have put the rail industry behind the 8-ball, and the economy is suffering for it. I've written in this space before that the stakeholders of most significant companies include the customers, employees, the communities in which they operate, and the shareholders. Over the past several years, the excessive attention paid to shareholder value has left the other three significant stakeholders in a lurch.

While some believe the STB is overstepping its bounds and placing an unnecessary burden on the railroads, I disagree. Indeed, the longer it takes for the Class 1s to get their acts together, the more we will hear now distant thunder around the possibility of re-regulation of railroading. Class 1 leadership needs to study the history books on railroading in the 1970s and read about how the Interstate Commerce Commission regulation left the railroads to wither on the vine and some to die on the vine. The rail industry is in a much better position now to meet the needs of all stakeholders and has a bright future ahead if it can get back on track. Otherwise, railroad service will remain in the toilet, and the industry will haul a smaller percentage of the nation's freight than it does today.

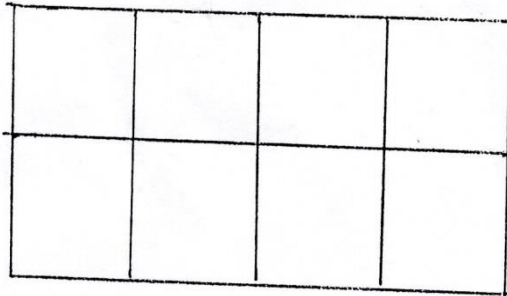


From the archives: B&A double-headed eastbound freight at West Brookfield, Mass. Locos: 2-8-4 #1416 Berkshire-type and 4-6-2 #576 Pacific-type. Stopped for water (tower behind Pacific). Photo by Robert A. Buck 9-7-1947. (Good example of using a freight loco and a passenger loco to power a freight-Ed.)

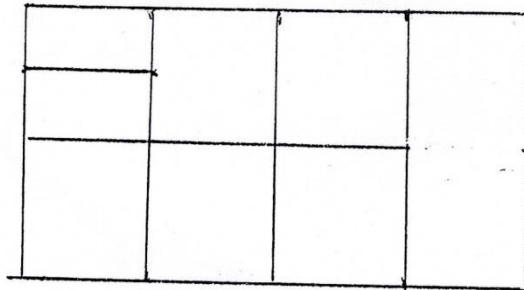
Survey For Locker Demand

There are very few un-used lockers for members to rent, the ones that are available will not hold the long white train boxes that many of the members use to carry their trains. So the purpose of this survey is to find out how many members would want larger lockers if they were available, the basic locker design is the deeper of the two locker sets in the "headlight room". This is the only set of the larger lockers that we currently have that will hold a double row of the train boxes, the design of the existing locker consists of 8 units, but new lockers could easily be modified to divide a unit in half for 2 smaller lockers or combine a top and bottom unit into a larger unit without changing the outside dimensions of the whole unit. At the current time each locker in the existing locker set rents for \$88.00 per year, price would be adjusted for a larger or smaller locker. Once we know the demand we can plan this project for cost and time frame. Below are a sketch of the existing locker and a sample version of it modified, not to scale.

Existing



Sample



Name _____