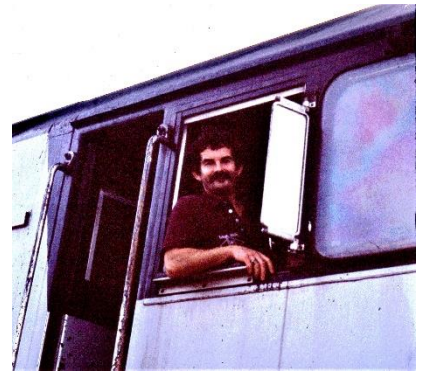


The Semaphore

David N. Clinton, Editor-in-Chief



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“Behind the Scenes”.....	Savery Moore
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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. ©2024
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VOLUME 44 ■■■■■ NUMBER 3 ■■■■■ MARCH 2024

CLUB OFFICERS

President.....	Jack Foley
Vice President.....	Ed Bulman
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Chief Engineer.....	Fred Lockhart
Directors.....	David Galbraith (*24)
	Bob England (*24)
	Roger St. Peter (*25)
	Gary Mangelinkx (*25)

ON THE COVER: Pictures from our March 9-10 Show and Open House.
(Joe Dumas)

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FORM 19 ORDERS

MARCH B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, March 25th 8 p.m.

APRIL BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, April 1st 8 p.m.

DCC & EQUIPMENT TUNE-UP CLINIC

Thursday, April 11th 8 p.m.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Sunday, April 21st

APRIL B.O.D. MEETING

Monday, April 29th 8 p.m.

CONTESTS

Congratulations to applicant **Robert Siedlinski** on winning this month's "50/50" drawing!

For **APRIL Business Meeting**, you will find a Word-Find Puzzle at the end of the newsletter. Extra copies are available on the wood case inside the train room door. Don't forget to put your name on your entry and good luck!

For our Amtrak birthday celebration at the **May Business Meeting**, find "Amtrak's Named Trains", a crossword puzzle in the back of this issue. "6-down" is completed, as the train was discontinued in 1995 and would be too difficult for most to find. "4-down" may also be a problem; it is the "Gulfcoast". Extra copies are available in the train room. Good luck and don't forget to put your name on the entry!

CHIEF'S CORNER

Fred Lockhart

Since the last issue of the *Semaphore*, the club in general has been getting ready for our Spring Open House and Show. So, as a result, the only work on the railroad was some last-minute maintenance. Let's review how the show went with regards to operation: overall, the DCC system worked well, no problems like we had in the afternoon operations session that we had a couple of



weeks before--where we lost control for about twenty minutes. Turns out, the suspected cause was a legacy throttle that had not been updated. The only problem we had was the track power got shut off several times; again, probably a throttle that the "emergency stop" is set to "global" meaning when it is used it shuts down the whole railroad, not just the loco being operated by the throttle. We will be checking throttles again.

I'm not going to focus on giving out "OOPS" awards here; rather discuss some basics for better operations. First is preparation: members should check all of the equipment they might be running during the show, inspect as if it is going to be "registered". That means checking wheel gauge, cleaning wheels, if necessary, coupler height and the glad-hand height. Also, car weight, truck swivel and how free-rolling the car is. Next, run the train on the railroad several loops to check it. During the week of the show, "work nights" are suspended so members can test their equipment. By testing, you may find in a train you need to shift some cars around to eliminate derailments. On the day of the show, an important thing to remember is to maintain a safe distance between trains. Because of our Reverse sections, that means about twenty-five feet; that gives you more of a margin to avoid a collision. It should also alleviate most of the back-ups at the reverse section above switch #155. All trains should maintain the same speed. Engineers should lead their train to check for the train ahead. If you do have to stop, go to the rear of your train to warn the train behind you, and if we have a dispatcher notify him right away. For show operations, switch #155 is thrown for normal show operation. If you throw a switch, you must also clear it after your train is past it. Again, if we have a dispatcher engineers will request him to throw and clear the mainline turnouts. Show operations are different from all other ops, we want to entertain the viewers and have fun at the same time, the need to keep trains moving is very important.

For long-time members, sorry that this column this month may be too repetitive and boring but it is a good reminder for you. For our newer members it is important information to be remembered for future shows and open house events.

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

Fred Lockhart
Chief Engineer

Semaphore Memories

MARCH 2019 (5 years ago)

- Benchmark started on outside of leg 3, from Bryant City east.
- United Rail acquires New England Southern RR of Concord, New Hampshire.
- GE Transportation and Wabtec Corp. merge.
- New Commuter Rail station opens on the Fairmount Line: "Blue Hill Avenue".
- Cog Railway cosmetically restores the railway's first mountain-climbing steam locomotive "Old Peppersass".
- MBTA unveils first of 10 rebuilt F40PH locos; the \$3-million price tag on each should extend life 20 years.
- Talks underway concerning establishing the *Berkshire Flyer* between NYC and Pittsfield, Mass. by way of Albany.
- Two Amtrak "Pacific Parlour" cars sold to Steam Railroading Institute's passenger car fleet. The cars were built as Santa Fe Hi-Level lounges by Budd in 1956 and used until 2018 by Amtrak on the Coast Starlight.
- MBTA inquires with Amtrak about leasing electric locomotives for testing on its south side Commuter lines.
- Joe Boardman, Amtrak's 9th and second longest-serving president and CEO passes.
- MBTA makes \$10 weekend fare permanent for unlimited weekend commuter rail pass.

MARCH 2014 (10 years ago)

- Cedar Hill passenger terminal operating in time for Show.
- Demolition crews start preparation for rehab of Springfield Union Station.
- First new PATH station platform opened at World Trade Center, since 9/11 attack.
- Central Maine & Quebec Rwy begins operation over bankrupt Montreal, Maine & Atlantic tracks, which it bought at auction in January.
- Keolis North America awarded \$2.6-billion, eight-year contract to manage, operate and maintain MBTA Commuter Rail.
- Amtrak president and CEO Joe Boardman receives "Railroader of the Year" award from Railway Age mag.
- Changchun Railway Vehicles Co., the largest maker of transit and rail passenger cars in the world, plans to build 126,000-sq.-ft. rail car assembly plant on 40-acre former Westinghouse site in Springfield, MA.
- Worcester gets 9 more weekday round-trips to Boston, upping the total to 20.
- BNSF plans to add 500 locomotives and 500 new employees during the year, as business is "booming".
- With the purchase of MEC Pacific #470 from the City of Waterville, New England Steam Corp. looks to raise \$100,000 to move the locomotive to a sheltered location for restoration.

MARCH 2009 (15 years ago)

- New RR station opens in Saco, ME, replacing 135-year-old structure.
- CSX closes Framingham yard, moving operations to new yard in E. Brookfield, MA.

- MBTA introduces "Next Train" LED boards technology at North & South side Commuter stations.
- Surface Transportation Board clears way for NS and Pan Am Railways joint venture called "Pan Am Southern"
- BNSF takes delivery of first ES44C4 loco and ES44AC, with only four of its six axles powered.
- Trolley line named "South Shore & Boston Street Railway".

MARCH 2004 (20 years ago)

- New Hampshire Northcoast RR receives replacement power for GP9s, in the form of ex-Conrail GP38-2s.
- MBTA buys ex-Ohio Central GP40 for switching.
- Amtrak donates F40 #307 to North Carolina's Transportation Museum in Spencer.
- Edaville RR's parent, Cranrail Corp., put into Chapter 7 bankruptcy. Edaville operated by Delli Priscoli's "Caboose Entertainment".
- Funding for Fall River/New Bedford Commuter Rail considered 5 years away.
- MBTA agrees to install quad gates at some Greenbush Line crossings.

MARCH 1999 (25 Years Ago)

- Old Middleton Yard from Weymouth installed in Bldg. 51, with 6-foot-extension inserted in the middle.
- Washington County RR of Montpelier, VT becomes part of New England Central RR.
- Amtrak unveils new high-speed train for Northeast Corridor and names it "Acela".
- Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada offer "North American Rail Pass".
- State signs contract with Cape Cod Central to run tourist and dinner trains.
- MBTA rehabs 1944-era PCC trolleys for service on Mattapan-Ashmont "high-speed trolley line".

MARCH 1994 (30 Years Ago)

- Bob Knapp voted into membership in SSMRC.
- Amtrak prohibits smoking on all non-overnight trains.
- Rumors of BN and Santa Fe merger.
- \$11-million auto distribution center planned for E. Brookfield on Conrail mainline.
- 125th anniversary of Cog Railway, with new museum opening at Base Station.

MARCH 1989 (35 Years Ago)

- Northampton St. station of Orange Line "EI" donated to Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, ME.
- MBTA orders first "double-deckers", with Kawasaki to build 75 cars.
- Amtrak announces new Philly to Atlantic City service.
- Study begins on restoring Commuter Rail to Worcester

MARCH 1984 (40 Years Ago)

- BN reopens Stampede Pass line, due to congestion through Cascade Tunnel.
- VT Historical RR starts tourist train from Bellows Falls to Chester, VT, taking over where Steamtown left off, with its move to Scranton, PA the previous year.
- North Abington depot destroyed by arsonist.
- MBTA acquires GP9s from BN.
- C&NW's massive Chicago terminal to be torn down for high-rise office building.

- VIA Rail moves out of CPR's Montreal "Windsor Station" consolidating trains in CN's "Central Station". Commuter trains continue to use Windsor.
- *Gulf Coast Limited* inaugurated for service during New Orleans World's Fair.
- UP scraps DD40X locos, preserving one.
- BC Rail receives first of GF6C electric locos from EMD, for Tumbler Ridge electrification.
- Scranton Hilton Hotel opens in old Delaware, Lackawanna & Western station in Scranton, PA.
- N&W "J" class loco #611 named "National Landmark" by American Society of Mechanical Engineers.
- MBTA adds 30 trains to 84 already feeding into South Station, many using unpopular ex-GO Transit (Toronto) single-level cars with bus interiors.
- "Berkshire Scenic Railway" of Lenox, MA, is newest tourist line to open in New England.

POTPOURRI

AmeriStarRail has proposed its plan to Maine DOT for scheduled passenger excursions on the former Maine Central Rockland Branch, to be operated as the MidCoast Maine Central. The expansive proposal includes motorcoach excursions to also connect Boston, and Acadia National Park, with MidCoast Maine train excursions and tourist attractions. (RP)

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PALMER, MASS. will likely be a stop on the planned Compass Rail, which is the new name for the East-West Rail. MassDOT recommended Palmer as a stop, after studies done last year. The stop will be located directly behind the Steaming Tender restaurant, formerly Palmer Union Station. The restaurant aims to build more parking spots, a ticket booth, and a high and low-level platform with stairways to create walking access from Main and Bridge Streets. (RP)

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THE TOWN OF ROCKINGHAM, Vermont, has finally put some money down on the purchase of the Bellows Falls train station. The action by the Select Board in late January is the first financial commitment to the \$250,000 purchase and eventual renovation of the station, which is currently owned by Vermont Rail System, and sits on land owned by the state of Vermont's Rail Division. Ultimately, the town hopes to renovate the station for a tenant, such as a small brewery or restaurant, and leave plenty of space for the Amtrak station. (RP)

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THE MBTA'S NORTHSIDE Train Dispatcher office finally moved from Cobblehill/Somerville to Iron Horse Park in North Billerica. They will be

headquartered in a brand-new building constructed over the last two years near the old B&M offices and shops. It is still a question when, or if, the current CSX/Berkshire & Eastern dispatchers still housed in the old B&M office at Iron Horse Park will move into the new building. (RP) Sure makes sense to me!-Ed

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NORTHEAST CORRIDOR TRAINS began to transition to "fixed seating" on March 1st. In other words, half of each car will have seats facing forward, while the other half will face the rear. The Northeast Regional trains, plus the Carolinian, Empire Service, Vermonter, and Amtrak Virginia, will all make the change (*Ethan Allen* and *Downeaster* already do this). Jim Matthews, president of the Rail Passengers Association, said: "We think this is a creative and clever way to add significant capacity to a heavily used service while sidestepping the towering ten-year backlogs for new equipment we now face in the U.S. – backlogs which are significant obstacles to our realizing any near-term service gains anywhere. On its face, it's simple enough. If you leave the seats in place in this configuration at the endpoint stations, crews no longer need to spend the time and effort swapping the seats to face the direction of travel. This effort is not trivial. To do this work now crews must wye the trains in New York and Washington, which takes about three hours each time. With the new procedure, trains can stay on the platform to be prepped for departure – which means fewer yard moves, and less time deadheading between the station and mechanical facilities. The train can be turned and ready to go in one hour! Saving that much time lets Amtrak add four more round trips on the Northeast Corridor between New York and DC on most days – eight one-way frequencies – along with two more Sunday round trips. Adding that many trains will mean as many as 3,500 seats per day added to the NEC's capacity, helping to relieve peak congestion and even creating some room to lower fares. In other words, just like a scrappy baseball team finding ways to "manufacture" runs without a big power hitter, Amtrak managed to manufacture a 16 percent increase in the number of departures without having to buy and put in service the trains you would need otherwise to operate it. Think about it: you could try to buy and introduce 24 new train cars, waiting many years for it to happen...or just change what you're doing today to do it more smartly and create the same number of seats for sale". (RPA)

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ON MONDAY, MARCH 4TH, Amtrak scheduled four additional *Northeast Regional* round trips weekdays and two on the weekends between New York and

Washington, D.C. The decision to reconfigure seating in each coach so that half of the seats face in different directions means trains can forego a time-consuming, non-revenue trip to a wye or loop track at Washington and New York, allowing trains to be sent back out more quickly. (TN)

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UNION WORKERS OPERATING the MBTA's commuter rail operator for its contract operator, Keolis, are prepared to strike over wages and other conditions, the president of one union told the MBTA's board earlier this month. "We don't want to strike, but we will when we are legally able to," Transportation Workers Union Local 2054 President Ed Flaherty told the board. The union said that it has been working for 238 days without a contract, that its members are among the few workers in Massachusetts without sick time, and that pay for first-year workers is so low that they are eligible for food stamps and Section 8 public housing vouchers. While a strike is difficult under the Railway Labor Act, the National Mediation Board can grant "self help status" and allow a strike without legal penalties after a series of mediation efforts and 30-day cooling-off periods, the union said. Flaherty said that while the two sides continue to negotiate in good faith, the current disparity between MBTA workers for his union and those at Amtrak in a similar position is 12%, and by 2028 it will be more than 50%, and the story is the same for those employed by similar systems in New York. (TN)

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CSX TRANSPORTATION CEO Joe Hinrichs has debuted railroad's latest heritage locomotive, this one honoring the Family Lines System. It is the 11th locomotive in the CSX series, and like the others combines the current CSX scheme at the front of the



locomotive with the predecessor scheme on the long hood. "This celebrates a time when Seaboard Coast Line, Clinchfield, and L&N rail lines all came together from 1972-1982, eventually becoming Seaboard System before CSX became a reality," Hinrichs

wrote. "Another great job by our team in Waycross, Ga [where the locomotive was painted]. We enjoy celebrating our past while creating the future together as ONE CSX team! Thanks everyone." (TN)

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A TRACK CREW BEGAN RESTORING East Broad Top Railroad's main line south of here this week, a first step toward reopening the narrow-gauge steam tourist line's 20-mile route to Robertsdale, Pa., a former mountain mining center that produced the semi-bituminous coal that was EBT's revenue-freight lifeblood for more than 80 years. About three dozen people gathered for informal remarks at the State Route 475 rural grade crossing about a mile south of EBT's headquarters, yard, and shop complex. They represented a combination of EBT Foundation, Inc., employees and volunteer track-crew members of the Friends of the East Broad Top Railroad, a nonprofit auxiliary group that counts 2,100 members. "This is a big deal," said Brad Esposito, EBT general manager. "It's a big deal for East Broad Top, a big deal for the Friends, and a big deal for the community. This is not happening anywhere else in the U.S., bringing a monster back to life." This is the first segment to be restored that has not seen trains of any kind since 1956. The railroad had previously restored the mile of track from the shops to the crossing, but only for speeders and light work trains. (TN)

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METRO-NORTH RAILROAD has unveiled the fourth locomotive in its heritage series, this time wrapping P32AC-DM No. 217 in Penn Central colors. The locomotive made its debut today on a



Hudson Line train departing Croton-Harmon at 7:58 a.m. and arriving at Grand Central Terminal at 8:55 a.m. "Every new wrapped locomotive reminds us of the incredible history of rail travel in the region that preceded the formation of Metro-North Railroad," Metro-North Railroad President Catherine Rinaldi said. "These wraps give rail enthusiasts and

everyone who uses Metro-North every day an opportunity to step back in time as they travel down the scenic Hudson River.” (TN) Specially for PACIII!-Ed

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CHICAGO COMMUTER TRAIN operator Metra has announced it will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) challenging manufacturers to convert three of its older F40PH-3 diesel locomotives to battery power. This follows work by Wabtec and Class 1 BNSF on a battery-electric locomotive and by Canadian Pacific (CP) on a hydrogen fuel cell (HFC)-powered locomotive, both for rail freight. MTA’s Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) also announced on April 19 that it will test a prototype battery-electric multiple unit that operates on third-rail power or batteries along the 21km, non-electrified Oyster Bay Branch in New York. Metra reported on April 21 that its board has approved the RFP, which will be released “in the coming days.” A contract is slated for award this autumn, with the first zero-emission, battery-powered locomotives delivered about 30 months later. (RA)

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FANS OF THE FLYING YANKEE, an eye-catching train that called Concord home for two decades before ending passenger service in 1955, have put



in a bid to own the train and help decide its future. “Our goal is to restore as much as possible, try to use the original parts as we can ... and to run the train, not to put it in a museum,” said Jacob Eidsmoe, marketing director for the Flying Yankee Assoc. “We’d be keeping it in New Hampshire, that’s a given.” The association has submitted a bid to the state, which announced last month that it wanted to sell the train and cars for a nominal amount and was accepting proposals for the “purchase, relocation and encouraged preservation.” The Department of Transportation is reviewing all proposals that were submitted by the Jan. 4 deadline and will be posting details and requesting permission from the governor and Executive Council “in a few weeks,” said DOT spokesman Richard Arcand. (Concord Monitor)

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THE MBTA could become the second transit agency in the U.S. to operate battery-electric commuter trains under a proposal put forth by its contract operator, Keolis, to increase service on the MBTA’s Fairmount line. Bid solicitation documents posted Friday on the MBTA website seek a fleet of battery-electric multiple unit trainsets to operate on the nine-station, 9.2-mile Fairmount line, offering service every 20 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes on weekends. That would be a significant increase from current operations with Keolis’ standard diesel-powered commuter trains, which run every 45 minutes on weekdays and at 90-minute intervals on weekends. (TN)

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DIESELIZATION CAME LATE to the Milwaukee County Zoo’s railroad, but it has arrived. The zoo announced on March 14th, that it has sold the two steam locomotives for its 1.25-mile, 15-inch gauge railroad — No. 1916, the *Henry J. Grant*, a 4-4-2 built in 1961, and No. 1924, a 4-6-2 built in 1972 — to the Riverside & Great Northern Preservation Society, a non-profit Wisconsin Dells tourist railroad. The two steam engines had shared operating duties with two diesels. Proceeds from their sale will help fund purchase of two new diesels, the first of which, a Tier 4-compliant unit, is expected to arrive in fall 2024 or winter 2025. The zoo said in a blog post that the changeover “is anticipated to decrease particulate emissions by 90%,” and that the change “embraces up-to-date technology, improves engineer ergonomics, and enhances guest experience with the ability to operate year-round, weather permitting.” Details of the second diesel acquisition are yet to be determined. (TN) Engineer seating doesn’t look very comfortable on the steamers!-Ed.



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PASSENGERS WHO DRIFTED in to the westbound *California Zephyr’s* crowded Sightseer Lounge leaving Chicago on March 19th found themselves in the middle of an Amtrak-sponsored onboard event commemorating the first runs of the original Burlington-Rio Grande-Western Pacific streamliner on March 20, 1949. They were treated to an informative lecture by Thomas Whitt, director and president of the Illinois-based Burlington Route Historical Society. He brought along a generous

supply of detailed handouts tracing the pre-Amtrak history of the CZ, and its speedy shovel-nosed predecessor, the *Pioneer Zephyr*. (TN)



A certificate given to passengers on Tuesday's Zephyr. Bob Johnston

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THE FINAL CHAPTER of the long history of coal-powered trains on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad came Saturday, March 23, with a round-trip excursion between Durango and Cascade, Colo., handled by a Baldwin Class K-36 2-8-2 No. 481. The locomotive will now be converted to oil firing, completing conversion of the roster that began with K-37 No. 493 in 2020. The process was hastened by fire concerns, including settlement of a federal lawsuit stemming from a 2018 wildfire in which the railroad agreed to new operating procedures during periods of elevated fire risk. The railroad has also made increased use of diesel locomotives, including four units purchased from the White Pass & Yukon. (TN)



K-36 No. 481, the last coal-fired Durango & Silverton locomotive, handles its final excursion before conversion to oil firing on Saturday, March 23, 2024. William C. Diehl

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GENESEE & WYOMING on Sunday, March 23rd, marked the 125th anniversary of the company's founding with a flag-raising ceremony at its

headquarters and the release of a trailer for a full-length video. The original 14-mile Genesee & Wyoming Railroad was incorporated on March 24, 1899, when Edward Layton Fuller and his financial partners purchased the short line out of bankruptcy to transport salt from their mine at Retsof, N.Y. Today's Genesee & Wyoming Industries, the holding company for more than 100 short lines in North America, dates to 1977, when Fuller's great-grandson, Mortimer B. Fuller III, bought a controlling interest in the G&W. He established the holding company to diversify the business, first with a focus on railcar leasing and management. The Staggers Act of 1980 spawned Class I railroad spinoffs, which allowed GWI to launch 11 short line railroads between 1985 and 1996. It has expanded ever since, including operations in Europe, Mexico, and, at one time, Australia. (TN)

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

TRAINS

- Fixing the Funnel
- Gotthard Pass Revival
- Touring the *Abraham Lincoln*
- In My Own Words
 - Unstoppable* on the Santa Fe
- Gallery
 - Bridges and Railroads
- Travel
 - Come for the Trains, Stay for the Food and Service

MODEL RAILROADER

- 6 Tips for Successful Weathering
- Structures for Freemont
- Model Railroader Hall of Fame
- Step by Step
 - Build a Cast Hydrocal Structure Kit

MODEL RAILROAD CRAFTSMAN

- Scratchbuilding Palmer Union Station
- Scribe-and-Break Styrene Construction

PASSENGER TRAIN JOURNAL (2024-1)

- Trailblazer: The Lure of the North
- Remembering the *Northlander*
- Harley's Hornet
- The Amtrak Diaries, Part 10
- North American Intercity
 - The effort Required to Start Anything
- Rail User's Network
 - Are the Stars Aligned for East-West Rail?
- Capitol Unlimited
 - Passengers to Amtrak: Dream Big Dreams
- Transport Action Canada
 - Canada Must Look Beyond HFR

CLASSIC TRAINS (Spring 2024)

- Tender Boosters on the B&M and the MEC
- Gem State Steam Gems

London Calling

GMDD's diesel birthplace (Ontario)

For the Love of Pennsy

Milwaukee Road's *Hiawatha* Fleet Stands Out

News sources: Boston Globe, Trains "Newswire", Railway Age, Railpace Newsmagazine, Rail Users Network, Rail Passenger Association, 470 Club.

EQUIPMENT REFRESH CLINIC

A very busy clinic this month. **Eric Tedeschi** brought two BNSF locos; the first was from Fox Valley—a first for the clinic. A GP60 with 21-pin socket. The ESU 21-pin decoder slipped right on and away he went. The second was a Bochmann SD40-2, with an 8-pin receptacle. The pins on the 8-pin plugs are made with a delicate metal for good conductivity (some say gold) but very easy to



bend, which is what happened. The loco didn't work, so upon removal it was discovered that two of the pins had bent down and not gone into the receptacle. Bending them back, even being so very careful does not usually end well but we got them back. Problem occurred when the plug was reinserted, one broke off inside the receptacle. Only cure is to return the locomotive to Bochmann for repair.

Jim Ferris brought an Atlas GP40 dressed in Conrail blue. The locomotive had been decoded



but not working lately. A broken power wire was found on the plug, so an easy fix was to replace the wire harness from the decoder, 9pin to 8-pin, and Jim was all set for the main line.

Will Baker had a Broadway Limited 2-8-2 in New Haven paint, which kept shorting. **Paul Cutler III** discovered that one of the tender trucks had gotten turned around, and was picking up from the same rail as the other. This is normal for steam locos, where the loco picks power from the right side and the tender from the left rail. But in BLI, the loco picks up from both rails—and so does the tender; one truck picks up from the right and the other truck from the left, so it was shorting from the locomotive. A simple fix and a learning situation for all! Does anyone know of other manufacturers that do this on steam?

Eric Mercer stopped by to check on proper LEDs and resistors for his F7 Athearn loco, that he's rebuilding. He found that the 3mm seemed a perfect fit.



Chris Wheeler struggled all night with an Athearn R-T-R Amtrak Genesis dressed in the 40th Anniversary scheme. The light board came with an 8-pin plug, which should have been an easy install. This was an Ebay purchase, and turned out to be just the opposite situation. The previous owner had installed a lump of solder and clip on the bottom motor lead, to make contact with the chassis, even though Athearn had installed a wired connection from the chassis to the light board, so that when the dummy plug was removed, and a decoder installed, power would have to go through the decoder and not directly to the motor. Well, the previous owner by-passed that "would have to go" situation. This was not visible (until the motor was removed) and two decoders were "fried", the light board was thought to be defective and Chris hard-wired another decoder, which also got fried. The close hearing from **Paul Cutler III** heard the shorting (it was "shorting night in the clinic!"), which caused Chris to remove the motor and find the "Rube Goldberg" under the motor. Removing that extra wire and solder and putting down Capton Tape under the motor took care of that, so it was back to using the factory light board! Whew... quite a learning experience here... a 3 ½-hours-worth! The Ebay description should have included this change of wiring to warn purchasers to be aware, but it probably didn't. Something to keep in mind when purchasing used equipment from folks you don't know.

Paul Cutler III brought two Atlas "Classic" RS1s dressed in New Haven and both with different schemes. They are prior to Atlas installing 8-pin receptacles, yet one had LED lights and other incandescent! There is a special replacement board for Atlas, the Digitrax DH165AO (for "Atlas" and "Other"). He was successful installing and kept the original board to use as a "template" on how to bend the replacement LEDs, so that they would shine down the factory "light tubes".

Photographer **Joe Dumas** even had time to install a DZ123PS into his Athearn R-T-R D&RGW SW1000. It was a "piece of cake" and he was on his way in 5 minutes!



Overall, a successful evening, but also a frustrating one for some folks. Thanks to Joe Dumas for the pics. The next Clinic will be **Thursday, April 11th at 8 p.m.** Let me know if you have any questions about the clinics.

LIBRARY CORNER

Dave Clinton

Donations to our Library collection this month:

From Ye Ed: [Delaware & Hudson Steam Locomotives 1828-1953](#). Everything you could possibly want to know about D&H steam power in this new 232-page, hardcover book from Garbely Publishing Company.

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

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. Honorary member **John Walker**, who comes up from Maryland for our Spring and Fall Shows, has posted a great **YouTube video** he took while here. Check it out:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4AS0FjrpqA>

2. Speaking of the **Show**, **Jack** reports that we had **1,066 paying visitors** during the Show & Open House the weekend of March 9-10.

Thanks to all who helped make it another great show!

3. **My "15 Minutes of Fame"** came with this month's issue of Greet Hingham, a monthly magazine sent to all Hingham households. They have been including our Club open houses for the past six months, after I asked about the possibility of doing so. Surprisingly, they wanted to do an article about me, since I live in town, so thus "Meet 'Mr. Amtrak'" on page 38. The magazine arrived on March 2nd and I heard from two of our visitors during the show this month that they "saw me in the magazine", though nothing by the other three Hingham members of the Club!

....*David N. Clinton*

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." (Barack Obama)

MEMBER NEWS

A big **welcome back** to the "fold" to **Chris Barlow**, a long-time member, who had to resign last fall. He has returned "bigger and better" and missed the excitement of the SSMRC, as much as we missed him!

Our newest member, **Ed Seyerlein**, was welcomed aboard in December and I finally got his picture; here's Ed:



Congratulations to our new **Honorary Members** voted at this month's meeting:

Bill Hallsen
Fay Chin
Lenny Visnick

Bryan Miller is continuing treatment and finding that getting his memory back is a long process. Continued good wishes to him.

Peter Palica is recovering at home from a total hip replacement operation on March 6th. He looks

forward to returning to the Club next month. Best wishes from all of us to you, Peter!

Dan Peterson starts his treatments this week, so we wish him the best and complete recovery.

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

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

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

David Galbraith..... April 3rd
Chip Mullen April 7th
Dick Grimm..... April 15th
Rick Pearson..... April 20th
Tom Ross April 25th
Jack Doyle..... April 27th



Running Extra

Rail industry's future hinges on outcome of proxy fight at Norfolk Southern: Analysis

A victory by activist investor Ancora Holdings would put an unhealthy focus back on the operating ratio and crimp volume growth

The proxy battle that activist investor Ancora Holdings is waging against Norfolk Southern isn't just about the direction NS should take and who should run the company. It's a fight for the future of the railroad industry. The Cleveland-based activist investor seems to be taking the position that railroads shouldn't grow. They argue that intermodal, the only business segment that's gaining volume, isn't profitable enough to make up for the delays it inflicts on lucrative merchandise and bulk traffic. So Ancora says NS should forgo intermodal growth and instead maximize the efficiency and profitability of its carload and bulk business, all while slashing costs and boosting productivity.

This is a fine strategy if you're a short-term investor. The stock price will rise and you'll pocket a handsome return well before the cash cow is milked dry.

But if you're thinking long term, the fatal flaw with this approach should be obvious to anyone who follows railroading. Carload business is in long-term decline, and you can't forever earn more and more money on less and less business.

Every year the Class I railroads tout how their industrial development teams attract new rail-served facilities. What they don't say — but traffic data show — is that merchandise business is a leaky bucket. Carloads are draining out the bottom of the bucket faster than new business is trickling in. Overall carload volume has been sinking for decades, a trend that has been most pronounced in the East. And there's no sign that will change.

In Norfolk Southern's case, carload traffic has fallen 9% over the past five years and 7% over the past 10. Meanwhile, coal volume is down roughly 50% in both periods.

The railroad's intermodal traffic, on the other hand, surged 9% over the last five years and posted an identical gain in the last 10 years. But since hauling containers comes with an operating ratio above 60%, the Ancoras of the world say more intermodal traffic shouldn't be on the railroad.

Ancora also wants NS to shed loose carload traffic that requires multiple handlings en-route. Jacking up rates so that freight hits the road always has unintended consequences. Will it prompt some facilities to abandon rail altogether? Are carloads that "don't fit the network" the keys to keeping a short line or branch line viable?

NS CEO Alan Shaw has sought to stem the decline of carload business while at the same time gaining new intermodal traffic. Both goals require providing consistent and reliable service year in and year out. Shaw's "better way forward" strategy, outlined at the railroad's investor day in December 2022, aims to do just that.

The idea is that by not furloughing train crews during a downturn, the railroad will have the resources at the ready to respond to the eventual upswing in traffic. In the short term, carrying surplus crews raises the operating ratio. But Shaw says it will pay off in the long term. First, it avoids service recovery costs and lost volume. Second, maintaining service levels through thick and thin will allow shippers to build more of their supply chains around the railroad, which in turn will bring NS new traffic, higher revenue, and bigger profits.

"Leadership's operating plan has resulted in higher costs, shrinking margins, and a worse operating ratio," Ancora notes with a firm grasp of the obvious. This is a feature of the NS strategy — not a bug — and it's exactly what Shaw said would happen in a low-demand environment.

Ancora says Shaw's service and resiliency theory is untested and unproven. But we know the results of not keeping a sufficient buffer of train crews: Lost freight volume. The periodic bouts with crew shortages have plagued the industry for more than a decade. The culprit for most of them? Wall Street's focus on the operating ratio, which has prompted railroads to run leaner than they should.

Ancora's call for cost-cutting and crew furloughs is tone deaf. The railroad industry has just come out of the mother of all crew shortages, which prompted a backlash from shippers and regulators while diverting freight to trucks.

The pandemic-related crew shortages further damaged relationships with rail shippers who were already weary of disruption from the implementation of Precision Scheduled Railroading operating models at the publicly traded U.S. railroads. That does not bode well for the intermodal traffic that has been railroads' growth engine, or for the carload traffic that generates two-thirds of the industry's revenue.

A major carload shipper, for example, shifted more than 40% of its rail traffic to trucks during the widespread service problems on the big four U.S. railroads in 2022. A quarter of the company's normal rail volume remains on the highway — and it may never return. Railroads cannot get caught short of crews again and must break the cycle of staffing-related service failures.

Across the industry, rail executives are concerned about Ancora's proxy battle at NS. The message it sends: Short-term activists will take aim at any railroad that reduces the emphasis on the operating ratio while trying to create an upward spiral of service, growth, profits, and investment. And that, they say, will have a chilling impact on rail volume and the long-term prospects of railroads, their employees, customers, and shareholders. (By Bill Stephens | [Trains](#)-February 27, 2024)



Meet “Mr. Amtrak”

Model Railway Club provides special place
for railroad enthusiast David Clinton

I was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and moved with my family to Detroit, Michigan, and then Chatham, New Jersey. After receiving a bachelor's degree, I went to work at a large insurance company becoming a Surety Bond underwriter, which lasted for 44 years, until retirement ten years ago.

I have lived in the same home on Hancock Road in Hingham for 51 years and have been a railroad enthusiast, both prototype and model, my whole life. I started as many “boomers” did, with a Lionel train set at Christmas at the age of four. By age 11, I realized that the HO scale (1:87) was much more realistic than the larger scale and switched over, building several model train layouts in the basement.

When Amtrak took over 95% of America's intercity passenger trains in 1971, I instantly became a supporter. I am known as “Mr. Amtrak” around the South Shore Model Railway Club, which was founded in 1938 and is located in Bare Cove Park. I joined the club in 1978, after being introduced by one of the “founding fathers” several months before. Modeling the real railroads in miniature and enjoying them in person is a year-round hobby for me.

Learning about railroads became important in the years of the discussions of whether to restore the Greenbush commuter rail line. I was an officer of the group “Back on Track,” which was formed by several members of the communities of Cohasset, Hingham, and Scituate, a group that promoted the benefits of restoration and also challenged the many false statements made by the “NIMBY” folks.

At the club, I was secretary for 36 years. For over 40 years, I've been the Newsletter Editor and have also handled several smaller committee responsibilities. The club provides so many different opportunities of interest: designing, woodworking, scenery, electrical, mechanical, and model-building, as well as administrative duties. The social aspect is wonderful; many friendships come from the mutual interest we share. There are presently 65 members.

Riding trains, photographing, and reading about railroads and trains is an additional benefit of this fabulous, life-long hobby!



SSMRC members on a "railfan" outing. L to R: Barry Doland, Paul Cutler III, Andrew Reid, Dan Peterson, Jason Peterson, Jimmy Woodhouse and David Clinton.



David with his train at the SSMRC

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Hingham Happenings!



HINGHAM FARMERS MARKET
Saturdays through March
10 am - 1 pm
Wompatuck State Park Visitor Center
204 Union Street

HINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY
34 Main Street
Visit www.hinghamhistorical.org for information and tour tickets
Hingham Heritage Museum and Visitor Center
Wednesdays - Saturdays, 11 am - 3 pm
First-Floor Tours of the Benjamin Lincoln House
Wednesdays through Saturdays
Colonial Storytime
Fridays, 10 am



12 March 2024

SOUTH SHORE MODEL RAILWAY CLUB & MUSEUM
Model Railroad Show & Open House
March 9, 9 am - 4 pm & March 10, 10 am - 4 pm
52 Bare Cove Park Drive
Visit www.ssmrc.org or call 781-740-2000 for information

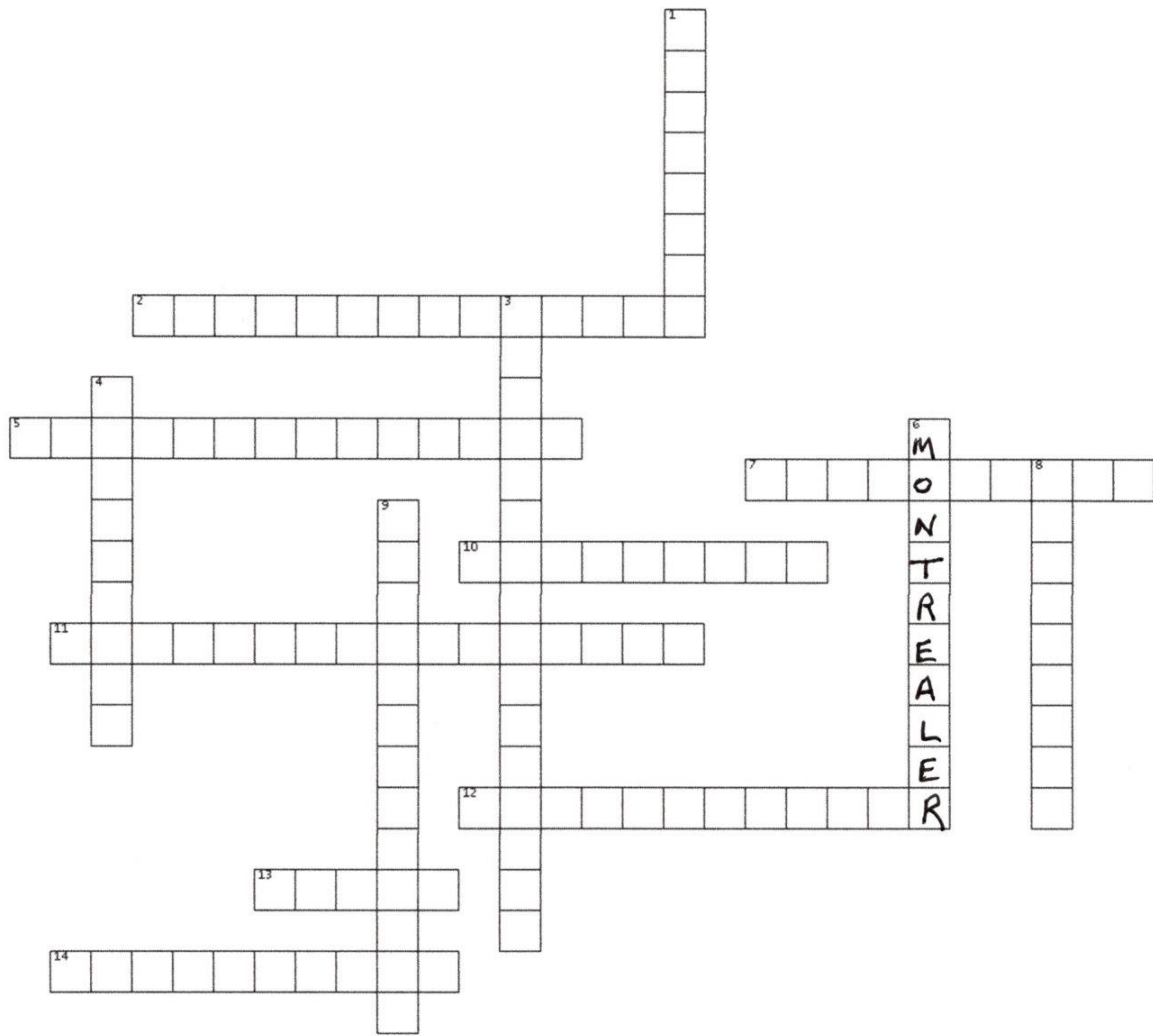


RAISING HARTS
Harts for Autism Gala
March 9, 6-10 pm
Granite Links
100 Quarry Hills Drive, Quincy
Visit www.raisingharts.org for information and tickets

HINGHAM NEWCOMERS CLUB
Ladies Night Out at The Beth
March 13, 7:30 pm
18 Shipyard Drive
RSVP at www.HinghamNewcomers.com

THE COMPANY THEATRE
A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder
March 15-30
Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays 7:30 pm, Sundays 3 pm
30 Accord Park Drive, Norwell
Visit www.companytheatre.com for information and tickets

AMTRAK'S NAMED TRAINS



ACROSS

2. See the California coast up close
5. Used to have "Warbonnets" for motive power
7. Visit Montreal today
10. A Motor City favorite
11. Through the Rockies not around them
12. For fun in the sun
13. Fastest train in North America
14. A fun way to visit Maine

DOWN

1. Was the "Southern _____" in its former life
3. To Chicago
4. Still trying to start this train again
6. Through Vermont to Canada
8. Take your car with you on the train
9. James J. Hill's railroad started

Name: _____