

The Bulletin



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The Bulletin

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ARTHUR LONTO, 1924-2009 by Bernard Linder

We regret to announce that Arthur Lonto passed away on March 9, 2009. Arthur served ERA faithfully for many years. He held a variety of offices, including President.

He was on the *Headlights* staff for several years before joining the *Bulletin* in 1959. After he was promoted to Editor in 1960, he assembled a competent staff and was able to print the latest transit news as well as interesting and detailed historical articles. Starting with a three-page mimeographed issue, it soon expanded to eight pages, reaching our members regularly. When I was appointed Editor in 1981, I continued publishing the *Bulletin* in the same format.

Until a new Editor was appointed, Arthur served again as the Editor of *Headlights* in the early 1990s.

He was also a member of the Branford Electric Railway Association, where he helped build three car barns. He was the manager of the souvenir stand from 1971 to 1979.

Arthur served his country during World War II. He was in the Army for nearly three years and overseas in Europe for 16 months. Unfortunately, he was wounded there. After he returned home, he worked in his father's real estate office until it was no longer profitable. Like many railfans, Arthur was hired by NYC Transit, where he eventually was promoted to Associate Transit Management Analyst. He retired in 2002.

Arthur and I had been friends since I started contributing to the *Bulletin* in 1963. I will certainly miss a dear friend.



Arthur at Branford, July 6, 1964.
Bernard Linder photograph

WORLD'S FAIR OPENED 70 YEARS AGO

The World's Fair was built on a large area south of the Willets Point Boulevard station. It was anticipated that most of the visitors would ride the Flushing Line, a three-track line with trains making all local stops. But additional passengers could not be accommodated without extensive reconstruction. To operate increased service, the middle track was signaled and the Willets Point Boulevard

station was rebuilt and enlarged. The BMT track layout east of Queensboro Plaza was rearranged and a track was added.

Details are as follows:

WILLETS POINT BOULEVARD STATION RECONSTRUCTION

The original station was a typical local sta-

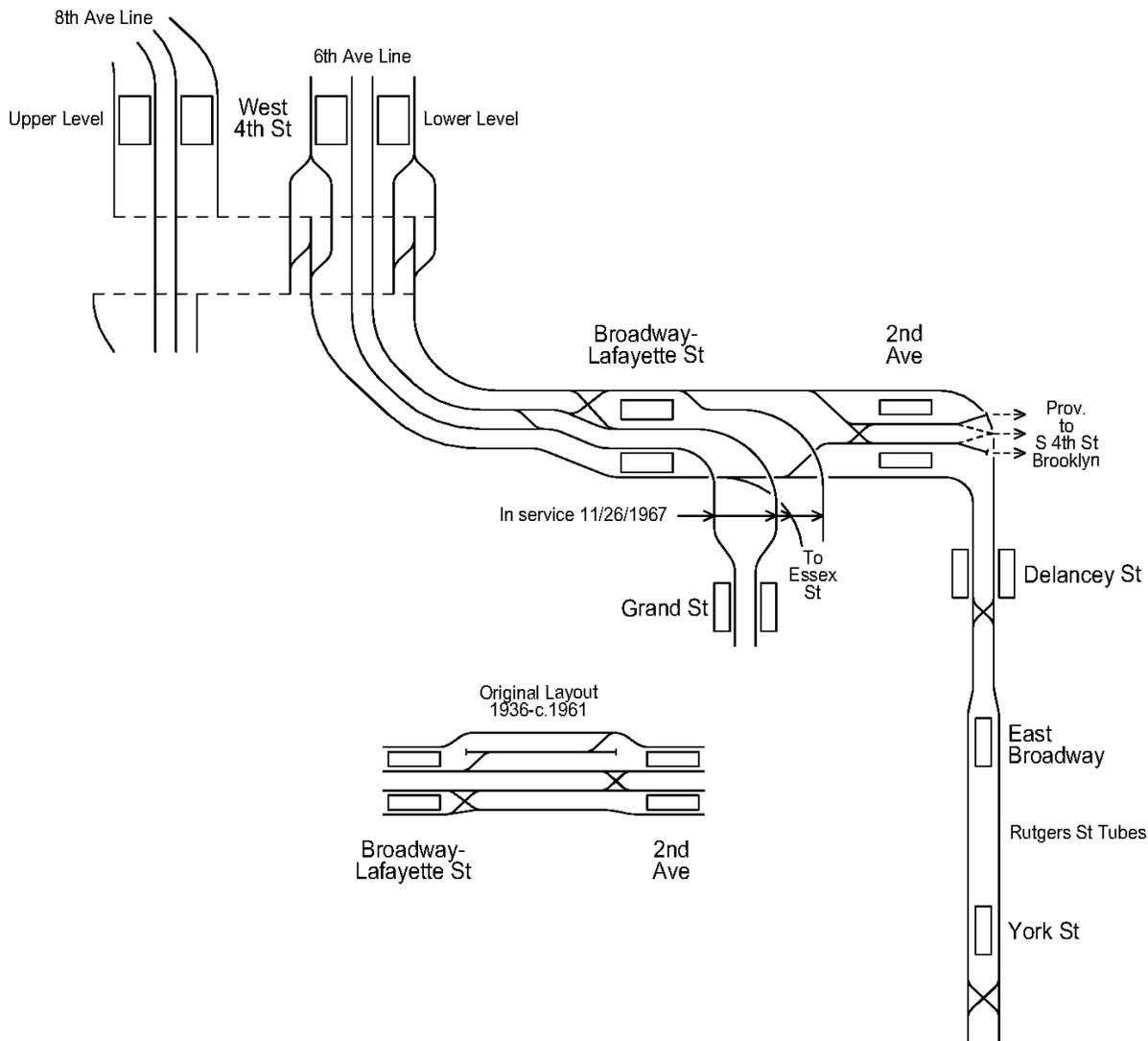
(Continued on page 4)

NEXT TRIP: STATEN ISLAND RAILWAY EXCURSION, APRIL 18

HOUSTON-ESSEX STREETS AND SMITH-STREET-PROSPECT PARK LINES

Houston-Essex Street Line

1936 - Present



Data: B. Linder
Drawing: J. Erlitz

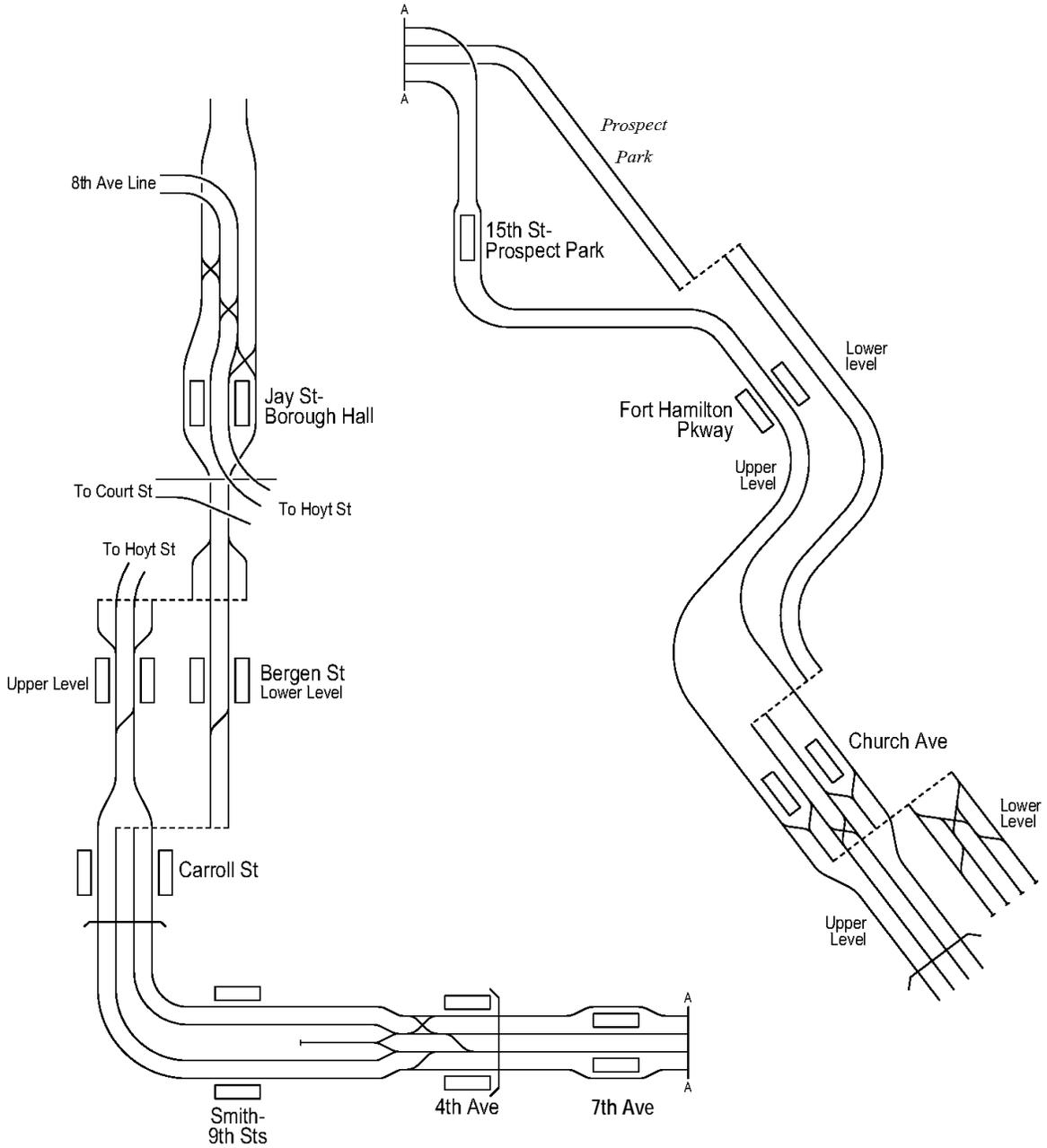
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Houston Street and Smith Street-Prospect Park Lines

(Continued from page 2)

Smith Street-Prospect Park Line

1936 - Present



Data: B. Linder
Drawing: J. Erlitz

World's Fair Opened 70 Years Ago

(Continued from page 1)

tion with two side platforms. To accommodate the crowds visiting the fair, the station was rebuilt and enlarged under a contract awarded November 26, 1937. It was converted to an express station with one 25-foot-wide middle platform and two 22-foot-wide side platforms. An overhead passageway adjacent to the Corona Yard bumping blocks connected the fair grounds with the enlarged mezzanine. The new station is a short distance west of the old station, portions of which were not removed and are out of service. Work was completed by February 28, 1939.

QUEENSBORO PLAZA TRACK CHANGES

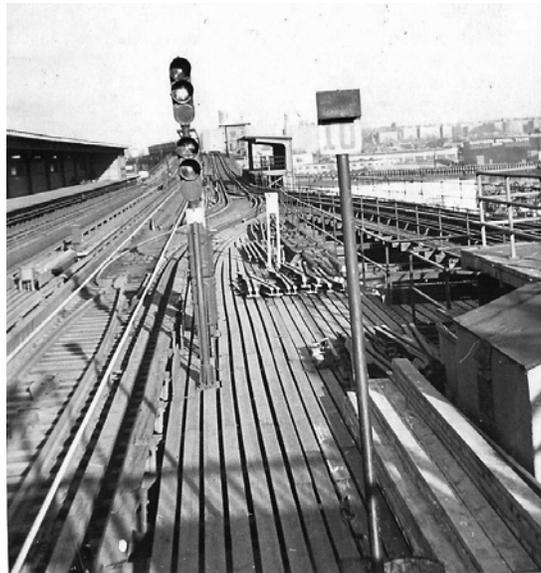
This station was designed to allow BMT to operate through service from Manhattan to Flushing and Astoria.

Meanwhile, BMT decided to order B-Types, which were wider than IRT cars. After studying several different schemes, BMT decided to operate its wooden cars, which were the same width as the IRT cars, as shuttles from Queensboro Plaza to Astoria and Corona. To turn the shuttles at Queensboro Plaza, the company found the cheapest and simplest solution. It installed a double crossover on the lower level Corona Line tracks at Jackson Avenue as shown on the track plan published in the January, 1992 *Bulletin*. Trains from Corona were wrong-railed from the double crossover to the north track of the upper level, where they picked up Astoria passengers. Trains from Astoria discharged passengers at the north track of the lower level, where they picked up Corona passengers and then wrong-railed to the double crossover. Because Corona ridership was heav-

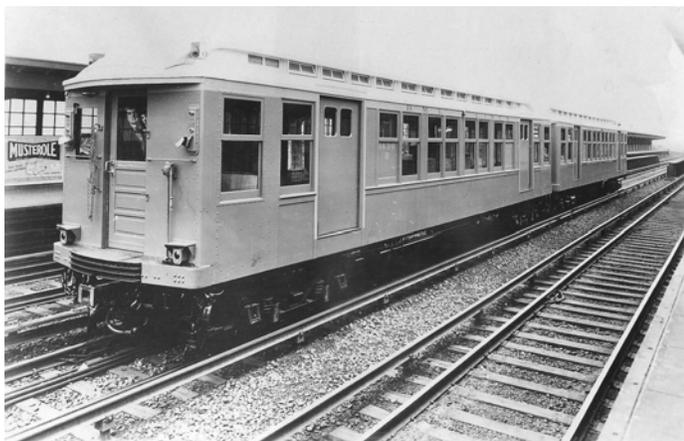
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Looking west (railroad south) towards Willets Point, 1928.
Bernard Linder collection



East end of Willets Point station on February 5, 1953, looking east (railroad north), showing out-of-service platforms.
Bernard Linder collection



BMT Q-Type unit 1630A-B on the Flushing Line.
Bernard Linder collection

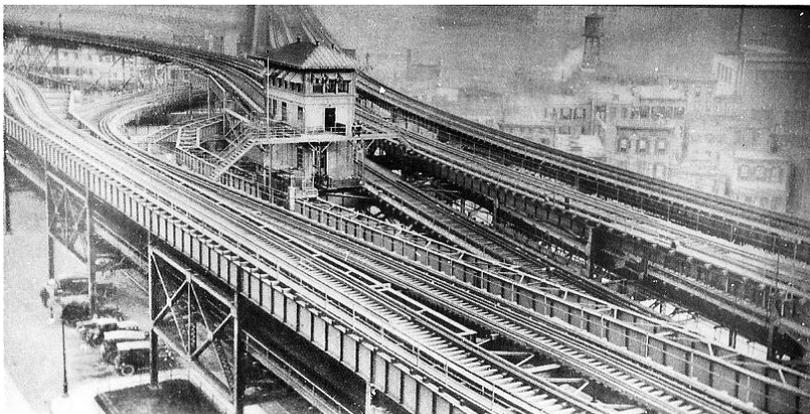


BMT Q-Type train at Queensboro Plaza on the Flushing Line.
Bernard Linder collection

(Continued on page 5)

World's Fair Opened 70 Years Ago

(Continued from page 4)



Queensboro Plaza, looking east (railroad north), circa 1935.
Bernard Linder collection



Queensboro Plaza, looking west (railroad south). The IRT platform is on the left and the BMT platform is on the right.
Bernard Linder collection



IRT elevated train on Flushing Line, August 17, 1935.
Bernard Linder collection



A postwar shot of the Flushing Line's Corona Yard.
Bernard Linder collection



IND World's Fair station.
Bernard Linder collection



World's Fair-bound IND train.
Bernard Linder collection

NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR UPDATE

by George Chiasson

Suddenly, springtime has arrived, and with it the convergence of several events on New York City's subway system which give it a wholly different flavor than one year ago—or even one month ago. As this is written, the new South Ferry terminal was about to open (see **Around New York's Transit System** in this issue), the last R-38s were collecting their final miles, and the first set of R-46s was waiting to begin its second career on **A**, where such equipment last appeared in the days of (cracked) Rockwell trucks back in 1981. Meanwhile, the arrivals of Alstom-built R-160A-2s continued at a torrid pace, while the widespread withdrawal of 60-foot Subdivision "B" SMEEs was unabated. There's a lot of ground to cover this time around in terms of current events, so without further delay let's roll!

Subdivision "A" Happenings

Of the 25 R-62s removed from **4** at the end of January, 15 have been observed in mixed consists with existing **3** equipment, most still sporting "**4**" strip maps within. Meanwhile, cars 1371-5 and 1536-40 were sighted inside the overhaul section of 207th Street Shop, with all destination signs also still showing "**4**" indications. Also seen was R-142 unit 6681-5, which was relocated from 239th Street (**2**) to E. 180th Street (**5**) and as proof was located at Unionport Yard, matched with unit 6756-60. Finally, after sticking together as a whole 10-car train for their first couple of weeks, the single unit R-62A's moved to **1** were gradually worked into daily passenger service, mostly as sets of 5 single cars joined to one 5-car set of unitized equipment. This was last seen on **3** back in October, 2003 before the final 5-car set of R-62As was sent to the Flushing Line to replace the very last of its Redbirds. In such practice, so-called "42nd Street Shuttle cab" cars 1920, 1921, 1925, and 1926 are used to bracket three conventional single units and both mated to the inside full-width cab of the 5-car unit for use by the Conductor, and at the outer end for use by the Train Operator. In addition, several of the single units on **1** (notably 1912, 1918, 1920, and 1925) have received red stripes beneath the number boards to denote their assignment to the facility at 240th Street, while others (1908 at least) still show the old blue stripes from their time at Livonia.

R-160 Progress

As of February 28, Option I R-160A-2s 9343-62 had been delivered, joined by 9363-82 through March 15. By the end of February, cars 9303-32 had been placed in service on **E**, with 9333-52 following suit by March 15, 2009 for a total of 120 cars, or 12 10-car trains. Through March 15, 2009, Kawasaki-built, Alstom-equipped Option I R-160Bs 9158-77 were delivered, while 9153-62 entered service on **N**, **O**, and **W** as of

the same date. There remain just 30 more R-160Bs to be delivered for assignment to Coney Island before these, too, begin running out of Jamaica. Sometime later this spring, the first arrivals from Kawasaki under its 140-car Option II are anticipated, which promise to be greatly different in both numbering and (possibly) assignment.

As of March 15, deliveries totaled 340 R-160A-1s, 210 R-160A-2s, and 465 R-160Bs for a combined quantity of 1,015. The arrival of Option R-160A-2s 9368-72 as of March 4, marked the 1,000-car milestone for the R-160 fleet. Of the overall total as of March 15, 340 R-160A-1s were in service at East New York on **J/Z**, **L**, and **M**; 60 R-160A-2s and 450 R-160Bs at Coney Island on **N**, **O**, and **W** (for 510 total); and 120 R-160A-2s at Jamaica on **E**.

60-Foot SMEE News (Almost The End Of The R-38s; Slant R-40s and R-40M All Back "Home")

When combined with its surviving, integrated fleet of R-40Ms and Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s, the acceptance of the 11th R-160A-2 train at Jamaica in early March was sufficient to all but eliminate the use of Phase I R-32s on **E** and **R** (but still not entirely). As a result their presence at Jamaica fell from 114 on February 14 to 64 (6 trains) as of March 15, 2009. Aside from another handful of retirements, this was accomplished by transferring 3394-7, 3436-41, 3476/7, and 3782/3 from Jamaica (**E**, **F**, **R**) to 207th Street (**A**, **C**) on February 20; 3384/5, 3424/5, 3471/3658, 3590/1, 3708/9, 3770/1, and 3774/5 on February 26; and 3354/5, 3426/7, 3621/3644, 3682/3, 3706/7, 3718/9, 3738/9, 3876/7, and 3912/3 on March 7. Conversely, the number of Phase I R-32s at 207th Street swelled from 162 to 206 (including the temporary misplacement of 3706/7 back at Jamaica and the withdrawal of one other pair). This was more than enough to complete replacement of the remaining R-38s by the middle of March, as each of the final 20 pairs was gradually shaken out of their mixed 8-car consists on **C** and 10-car train sets on **A**. By March 12, 2009 just two pairs of R-38s were in operation, 4098/9 on **C** and 4120/1 on **A**, each at one operating end of their respective trains. On Friday, March 13 cars 4140/1 were back on the road in the middle of a **C** train for a one-day reprieve. Over the weekend of March 14-15, as this is written, all **C** consists were laid up thanks to a General Order in effect that also split **A** between Jay Street-Borough Hall and Utica Avenue. The 10-car train with the lone pair of R-38s at one end (3878/9-3736/7-3731/0-3919/8-4120/1) was running on Saturday at the north end (207th Street to Jay Street-Borough Hall), but not on Sunday.

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New York City Subway Car Update*(Continued from page 6)*

Meanwhile, 4140/1 had been designated in that final week to join the NYC Transit Museum's fleet, in recognition of their pioneering status as one of the first factory-built, air-conditioned sets on the system (Summer, 1967), and they were secreted away. It seemed a certainty that the last surviving pair of R-38s would be 4098/9 on the C, their final run to be the following week. So, like the serials of old, we will have to wait until next month's Update to find out for sure.

By the week of February 16, with just 24 slant R-40s still assigned to Coney Island, their use on **B** was spotty to occasional—effectively they had become extra equipment. On the morning of Thursday, February 19 the sole surviving pair of trains made their final trips on **B**, with the last train, S-4240/1-4186/7-4152/3-4227/6-4216/7-N, arriving at Brighton Beach at 9:48 AM to be laid up in Coney Island Yard. The next day all 24 cars (4152-5, 4170/1, 4174-9, 4186/7, 4212/3, 4216-9, 4226/7, and 4240/1) made their way to Pitkin and most were introduced to service on **A** forthwith, both separately and mixed with the previously stationed 120 slants. As the week concluded, a small group of 14 slants was being withheld and remained at Pitkin, four of which (4170/1 and 4176/7) had not been placed on **A** after arriving from Coney Island. To date these 14 (plus 2 others) remain in storage and appear to mark commencement of the final retirement for this series, right on the heels of the R-38s' (pending) withdrawal. On the other hand, all of the remaining slant R-40s are together on the IND side of the system (where they were originally assigned) for the first time since October, 1980.

As an adjunct to the final relocation of all slant R-40s to **A**, R-40Ms 4468/9 and 4474-7 went from Pitkin to Jamaica on February 16, followed by the final 14 R-40Ms (4450-7 and 4462-7) on February 20. At this time all 92 cars in the R-40M group were reunited at Jamaica (also where they were originally used between March, 1969 and September, 1977) in what will likely be their final assignment. There they have continued to blend with the Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s in base service on **E** and weekday use on **R**. In addition, since the first day of multiple sightings on February 14, the R-40M/42's of Jamaica have assumed a full-time role on **F** as well, especially as the number of available Phase I R-32s dropped off dramatically. As part of the overall consolidation of the 60-foot B-Division SMEE fleet, both R-40Ms and Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s continue to be separated from service at Jamaica as circumstances warrant. In sum, about 55% of the overall 60-foot SMEE fleet has been retired since the first trains of R-160s were placed in service two years ago, with the complete removal of the first of these

classes (the R-38) looming. Remaining active as of March 15, 2009 were 270 R-32s, 6 R-38s, 128 slant R-40s, 82 R-40Ms, and 234 R-42s for a total of 722 cars.

60-Foot SMEE Retirements and Restorations

In January, 2009, we overlooked the following: Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42 4614/5 withdrawn from **E** (sometimes **R**). The following were taken out of service, or restored to operation through March 15, 2009:

February, 2009: R-32 (Phase I) 3662/3, 3742/3, and 3750/1 withdrawn from Jamaica (**E**, **F**, sometimes **R**); R-32 (Phase I) 3358/9 withdrawn from 207th Street (**A**, **C**); R-38 3958/9, 4028/9, 4058/9, 4062/3, 4096/7, 4100/1, 4102/3, 4106/7, and 4114/5 withdrawn from 207th Street (**A**, **C**); R-40 4170/1*, 4176/7*, 4212/3, 4226/7, 4240/1, 4404/5, and 4410/1 withdrawn from Pitkin (**A**). (*Note: 4170/1 and 4176/7 were not activated at Pitkin (**A**) after transfer from Coney Island (**B**)); R-40M 4450/1 and 4516/7 withdrawn from Jamaica (**E**, **F**, weekday **R**); Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42 4706/7 and 4732/3 withdrawn from Jamaica (**E**, **F**, weekday **R**)

March, 2009: R-38 4044/5, 4048/9, 4070/1, 4076/7, 4118/9, 4136/7, 4140/1, 4142/3, and 4146/7 withdrawn from 207th Street (**A**, **C**); R-38 4140/1 restored to service at 207th Street (**C**); R-38 4140/1 (second time) withdrawn from 207th Street (**C**); R-40 4400/1 withdrawn from Pitkin (**A**); R-40M 4480/1, 4492/3, and 4494/5 withdrawn from Jamaica (**E**, **F**, weekday **R**); Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42 4722/3 and 4750/1 withdrawn from Jamaica (**E**, **F**, weekday **R**).

The 75-Footers (R-44, R-46, R-68, R-68A)

To expedite the general retirement of the slant R-40s from **A** service, the first eight of 100+ R-46s (6146-9 and 6202-5) were reassigned from Jamaica (**F**, **G**, **R**, **V**, sometimes **E**) to Pitkin for **A** (and only **A**) on March 13. As of March 15 the first trip had yet to be made but was expected early in the following week. As additional R-160A-2s are accepted for **E** at Jamaica, one corresponding R-46 train in the 6100-series is slated to be relocated to Pitkin, resulting in the additional retirement of slant R-40s. This is the first time that any of the 752 R-46 cars have been based anywhere except Jamaica since their arrival in the 1975-1978 period, but for temporary relocations during the HPT-2 crisis of 1980-2. Specifically, according to our historic chronology of events, R-46s were operated on **A** in varying quantity (mostly rush hours only) between April 26, 1980 and January 17, 1981 as a temporary expedient to reduce mileage (ergo wear and tear) on the distressed truck frames.

The R-44s of MTA Staten Island Railway

Since our first review in February, the decision was made to retire damaged "A"-car 402 (Tottenville derailment of December 26, 2008) and strip its body at Coney

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World's Fair Opened 70 Years Ago

(Continued from page 4)

ier than Astoria traffic, IRT operated longer trains to Corona. But BMT was forced to operate the same level of service because of the unusual track layout at Queensboro Plaza.

To transport the heavy World's Fair traffic, IRT signaled the Flushing middle track, bought 50 World's Fair cars, and planned to operate express service. But BMT was unable to operate express service until the track layout east of Queensboro Plaza was rebuilt to allow trains to return to their respective terminals. The contract was awarded on February 10, 1938, the lines were separated on June 28, 1938, and work was completed on April 30, 1939.

Express service on the Flushing Line started on April 24, 1939 with IRT subway trains and BMT trains running alternate expresses and locals. When the World's Fair was closed, expresses ran towards Manhattan until about noon and towards Flushing during the afternoon and early evening on weekdays and Saturdays. When the fair was open, weekend expresses ran towards Flushing in the morning and afternoon and towards Manhattan in the evening.

The city attempted to compete with the private compa-

nies by building a temporary extension of the IND from Jamaica Yard to the fair's amusement area. Work proceeded rapidly.

TYPE OF WORK	CONTRACT AWARDED	WORK COMPLETED
Pile trestle	November 24, 1937	May 31, 1938
Station and track work	April 14, 1938	February 28, 1939
Signals and interlocking equipment	May 17, 1938	April 30, 1939

The new World's Fair station opened at 11 AM April 30, 1939 and closed at 6 AM November 1, 1939. It opened again on May 11, 1940 and closed permanently at 6 AM October 28, 1940. The station and tracks were subsequently dismantled. Passengers exiting paid an additional nickel and riders entering paid ten cents.

When the fair was open, GG service was extended form Continental Avenue to the World's Fair. During the evening S/Special trains operated between Chambers Street and the World's Fair.

Flushing Meadows-Corona Park is located on the site of the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs. The Willets Point Boulevard station, which is adjacent to CitiField, is as busy as ever.

MTA BOARD APPROVES "DOOMSDAY" PLAN

At its March 25 meeting, the MTA Board approved a menu of service reductions and fare increases that were the subject of public hearings in January and February (see **Commuter and Transit Notes** in the February and March **Bulletins** for details). For several weeks, the Board had been saying that a "bailout" by the state would be the only way to stave off the changes. How-

ever, the State Senate refused to take action, first claiming that MTA's March 25 deadline was arbitrary and then stating that the state's own April 1 budget deadline was more important.

Fare increases are to take effect May 31 (June 1 for commuter rail and mid-July for tolls). It was unknown at press time when the service cuts would happen.

New York City Subway Car Update

(Continued from page 7)

Island. This is the first of the 52 "native" Staten Island R-44s to be eliminated, and it is unknown as yet how disposition will occur. As of March 15, 2009 the overhaul of ex-NYCTA R-44s 390, 391, and 393 had been completed and they were back on Staten Island, while work on car 450 was beginning to wind down. Recently arrived at Coney Island for overhaul (i.e. long-term SMS) were ex-NYCTA cars 392, 394, and 399, along with SI Railway cousin 429, the first "B" car to be so treated.

Reefing Renewed

Barge Number 15 left for Delaware on February 28, containing 44 cars: Phase II R-32s 3474, 3475, 3503, 3516, 3517, 3600, 3812, and 3813 (8); Phase I R-32s 3374, 3375, 3868, and 3869 (4); and R-38s 3956, 3957, 3964, 3965, 3968, 3969, 3972, 3973, 3980, 3981, 3986, 3987, 3998, 3999, 4002, 4003, 4012, 4013, 4026, 4027,

4030, 4031, 4040, 4041, 4052, 4053, 4074, 4075, 4108, 4109, 4138, and 4139 (32). By March 14 the empty Weeks barge was back at 207th Street, but there was not yet a full complement of 44 bodies ready to create Barge 16.

The Conclusion

...though perhaps not quite so conclusive this month, nevertheless represents continued forward progress in the never-ending evolution of the state of the New York City subway system. We will keep watching, and expect to return in April with a whole new set of historical information pertinent to our roles as chroniclers, to be safeguarded for the enlightenment of future researchers.

For now, we must be content to tip our caps in tribute to those who have gone before us and those who continue to be with us. And so, let us offer a toast to the continued fortunes of the richest mass transportation organization in America, if not in dollars then certainly in terms of fame and name.

Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 245
by Randy Glucksman**METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

What was billed as an "emergency" meeting was held on Friday, March 13, so MTA Board members could put pressure on the State Legislature to approve a financial rescue package that would stave off the proposed service cuts and huge fare increases that could go into effect on June 1. It was hoped that all of the pieces would fall into place before the Board's March 25 meeting. Some of what has been proposed would increase payroll taxes in the 12-county MTA region, start tolling the presently free East River and Harlem River bridges, and raise all fares/tolls by 8%. Without these additional revenue sources, fares/tolls could rise by 23%.

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD (EAST)

Riding the Hudson Line on the day of the February Division meeting, as the train passed through the Yankee Stadium station, you could really believe that this is going to come on line next month. The platforms were almost completed as well as the staircases and the overhead ramps. Workers were just arriving to begin their day's activities.

Here are some equipment notes: Metro-North retained 30 of the 178 M-1s and schedules 24 of them for daily service. As of the mid-February, 44 Bombardier trailers had been overhauled by Bombardier, and 38 placed into service. Bombardier won a contract to do 104 end-door coaches (64 MNR and 40 CDOT). Twenty-four of Metro-North's 64 are the former west-of-Hudson cars. The cab cars are to begin arriving this year. Five Genesis (P-32-ACDM) locomotives were returned from overhaul last year, bringing to 11 the number that have been returned from General Electric. Eleven of the twelve Brookville-built diesel shuttle/switcher locomotives are in service.

With the proliferation of cell phones, pay telephones have been disappearing from public places, including rail stations. This has caused some groups to call for some to be left in place for emergencies, as not everyone has a cell phone. At one time there was cellular telephone service aboard trains. It began in the Fall of 1991 on Shore Line East, with Metro-North following on January 18, 1993 at a cost of \$1.75/minute, payable by credit card or regional Bell calling card only. The Rail-Call contract, which was to end on December 31, 2004, was not renewed, and all equipment was removed from more than 300 cars.

Metro-North's Group Sales Department is operating its annual *Bunny Express* on April 4. The trains depart from Grand Central Terminal at 11 AM and 2 PM. Adult tickets are \$10, and children under age 11 are \$7, which includes a goody bag, a visit with the Easter Bunny, and photo opportunities. The itinerary was not mentioned on the flyer, but when I called Group Sales, I was told that

it would be via the Hudson Line.

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD (WEST)

Newburgh-Beacon Ferry service, which had been suspended since January 14, resumed with the evening rush hour of February 26. Service on the Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry, 29 miles south, had resumed on February 10.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Member David W. Cohen sent an article from *The New Haven Register* reporting that Shore Line East saw a 12% increase in its ridership during 2008, for a total of 538,000. Last year's record gas prices, which topped \$4 a gallon, contributed to these numbers.

Legislation has been introduced in both houses of Connecticut's Legislature to begin the process of building a rail station in East Haven. Representative Michael Lawlor and Senator Leonard Fasano acknowledged the difficulty of financing such a project in this economy.

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

New timetables under General Order No. 104 went into effect at 12:01 AM March 2, and were issued to reflect track work in Valley Interlocking, affecting the West Hempstead, Hempstead, Babylon, Long Beach, and Far Rockaway Branches on weekends. These schedules were to be replaced on March 30, but the new ones were not available at publication time.

In order to replace ties between Speonk and Montauk on weekdays, buses are replacing trains from March 2 through May 15. 30,800 new track ties are being installed on 44.3 miles at a cost of \$9.3 million.

For 2009, Holiday Eve extra train service operates on March 17 (St. Patrick's Day), April 8 and 9 (Passover), April 10 (Good Friday), May 22 (Memorial Day), July 3 (Independence Day), September 4 (Labor Day), September 18 (Rosh Hashanah), November 25 (Thanksgiving), December 24 (Christmas Eve), and December 31 (New Year's Eve). These branches are affected: Port Washington (1), Port Jefferson (3), Far Rockaway (1), and Babylon (3). On the Montauk Branch, there is one Friday-only train, #2710, which would run on many of the aforementioned dates.

NJ TRANSIT

The first construction contract for the ARC Tunnel was put out for bids on March 13, and will be to build an underpass beneath Tonnelles Avenue in North Bergen. This underpass will be adjacent to where the presently \$8.7 billion project descends under the Palisades. Construction is expected to begin this spring.

Colonia was in the news on Tuesday morning, March 17. Perhaps many of our readers did not know that there was a station named Colonia (MP 22.9) on the

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Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 9)

Northeast Corridor Line that was situated between Rahway and Metropark. When I checked my timetable collection, Colonia was still listed in the (Penn-Central) April 27, 1975 edition; however, the next one that I own is January 2, 1976, and it is no longer shown.

With that out of the way, here is why I brought this up. Traffic reporters were reporting that the catenary over one of the four tracks was damaged and service was disrupted for a portion of the AM rush hour. NJ Transit, in a Customer Notice, reported that shortly after 9 PM the previous evening, Train #3855 became disabled near the Metropark station due to damaged overhead wires. The wire problem affected three of four tracks normally used for both eastbound and westbound service, resulting in significant delays to late-night Northeast Corridor and North Jersey Coast Line trains, and a temporary suspension of westbound Northeast Corridor service. The first email alert was sent at 4:50 AM. As a result, trains operated with delays of up to 60 minutes until approximately 7 AM, at which time delays began to ease as two of the affected tracks were returned to service. Residual delays of 15 to 30 minutes continued until about 10 AM. About 50 trains were delayed and nine were cancelled.

Digital images found on the Internet by member Bob Kingman show that AMT (Montreal) has received some Comet Is in addition to the Comet Ibs that were leased to it last July. I was able to obtain these car numbers: 5108 (cab) and 5715, 5721, and 5731 (trailers).

Bob reported these multi-level cars were observed in Kenwood Yard on February 21: 7003 (return visit), 7036, and 7624; March 2: 7288 and 7625-7627; March 9: 7628-7629; and March 16, 7037 and 7289. He and wife Alma rode in a train of Comet Is from Hoboken after they left the February Division meeting.

PORT AUTHORITY TRANS-HUDSON CORPORATION

Even though the Port Authority ended sales of *Quick-Cards* on December 31, member Harry Pinsker told me that he was able to purchase one from a newspaper vendor on February 20.

En route to the February Division meeting, because there was daylight around 7 AM, I was able to get a good look at Kawasaki's yard in Yonkers. Surrounded by more than a dozen R-160s was a train of PA-5s. It is likely the only time that these two varieties will ever be in the same place.

I received a forwarded email containing a page of digital images showing a train of PA-5s in passenger service that were taken on February 28. From a friend I learned that this train had been in test service since the middle of February. Member Sid Keyles told me that according to information obtained during the NYD-ERA trip in November, 2008, the 30-day test was supposed to have begun in December, with regular service start-

ing in January.

AMTRAK

The second annual National Train Day will be held on May 9. Details may be found by visiting <http://www.nationaltrainday.com/>.

METROPOLITAN AREA

A late winter snowstorm moved through the eastern United States on March 1-2, dropping 6-12 inches in the metropolitan area. LIRR, which reported 10-15-minute delays during the morning commute, added eight eastbound trains from Penn Station between 2:09 and 3:48 PM for riders who left work early. This extra service was in the form of three trains each on the Port Jefferson and Babylon Branches, and one each on the Port Washington and Far Rockaway Branches. Metro-North reported 20-30-minute delays on the New Haven Line and 10-15-minute delays on the Hudson and Harlem Lines. *The Journal News* reported that more than 100 Metro-North trains were either canceled or delayed. Meanwhile, NJ Transit initially reported delays of 10-15 minutes, later revised to 20-30 minutes. Cross-honoring of bus and rail tickets was in effect systemwide all day in New Jersey.

MUSEUMS

Member Frank Pfuhrer sent an article from the *Times Herald-Record* reporting that Senator Charles Schumer is supporting the idea of a battery-powered trolley operating in Kingston and has been in contact with Kawasaki to get the company to use that city as a test site. The Trolley Museum of New York would also be involved. "The City of Kingston is the perfect spot for Kawasaki to test a battery-powered light rail system," Schumer said. The 1.5 miles of tracks run from 89 E. Strand, where the trolley museum is located, to Kingston Point Park. I spoke with a friend, who is the administrator of this museum, and he directed me to its 2008 Annual Report (<http://www.tnny.org/>). On page 14, there is a photo of a battery-powered car known as the Kawasaki Swimo. Should this project come to fruition, solar panels would be installed atop the museum building to supply the power to regenerate the cars' batteries.

INDUSTRY

Last year's gains in ridership, which were caused by the higher costs for gasoline, are beginning to decline due to the recession. MTA (and I know that there are others) reported a decline in ridership for the last quarter of 2008, which will further exacerbate its financial problems.

Railway Age publishes an annual passenger car review and outlook for North American cities. Deliveries increased slightly, but the backlog of undelivered cars decreased for the second consecutive year, as can be seen in the table below.

COMMUTER/INTERCITY CARS:

New: ACE (4), Caltrain (8), Metra (2), NJ Transit (159),

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GO Transit (38), New Mexico RailRunner (12)

YEAR	DELIVERIES	BACKLOG
2003	1,286	3,973
2004	1,257	3,301
2005	1,212	2,749
2006	1,702	3,002
2007	1,044	3,726
2008	1,109	3,372
2009	N/A	3,140

Overhauled: Amtrak (329), MARC (13 ex-VRE), Montreal AMT (25), UTA (12)

RAPID TRANSIT CARS:

New: MBTA (44), NYCT (140), PATH (20), WMATA (56)

Overhauled: MARTA (96)

AUTOMATED RT:

New: Miami-Dade (12)

LRVs:

New: MBTA (10), DART, (22 "C" sections), Edmonton Transit (12), LACMTA (21), Monterrey, Mexico (14), Tri-Met (12), Sound Transit (24)

Overhauled: PAT (12)

STREETCARS:

Overhauled: New Orleans RTA (6)

DMU:

New: Austin – Capital Metro (4), West Side Express (WES) (4)

The backlog of work on new and overhauled cars continues for: MARTA, MBTA, Calgary, CTA, GRCTA, DART, Denver RTD, Edmonton Transit, GO Transit, LACMTA and SCRRA (Metrolink), MTA MD (MARC), Metro-North, Metro Transit Minneapolis, Montreal (AMT and STM), Nashville, NJ Transit, New Orleans RTA, NICTD, NYC Transit, PATH, Roads Transit (Norfolk), Tri-Met, SEPTA, Tri-Rail, Sound Transit, TTC, UTA, Vancouver (TransLink), and VRE.

This year, orders are expected to develop from: Amtrak, Austin, Calgary, Caltrans, Metra, CDOT (Shore Line East), Trinity Railway Express, Edmonton Transit, GO Transit, Houston Metro, LACMTA, Miami-Dade, Montreal, NJ Transit, PATCO, SF Muni, Tri-Rail, and TTC.

The front page of *The New York Times* for February 4 included an article entitled, "Rider Paradox: Surge in Mass, Drop in Transit." It started with the financial problems facing St. Louis Metro and the major service cuts that were to take place this month. This was reported in the February *Bulletin*. While ridership is up across the nation, as will be seen in the table below, fares only pay a portion of the costs, and the difference is made up by subsidies by local municipalities and miscellaneous sources.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Although March 17 is St. Patrick's Day, in some places

celebrations were held earlier. For this holiday, transit

CITY	% FARE BOX REVENUE	% SUBSIDY
New York	52	48
Washington, D.C.	41	59
Atlanta	27	73
St. Louis	24	76
Denver	23	77
Charlotte	16	84

agencies typically operate additional service and this year was no exception. It began on Sunday, March 1, when NJ Transit provided additional inter-branch service on the North Jersey Coast Line to accommodate riders attending the parade in Belmar. The three trains (#8328, #8344, and #8352) supplemented the regular schedules so that there was hourly service from Bay Head to Long Branch from 9:24-11:24 AM and from 1:24-7:24 PM. There was hourly service (Trains #8333, #8349, and #8357) from Long Branch to Bay Head from 10:41 AM-12:41 PM and from 2:41-8:41 PM.

On Saturday, March 7, there were St. Patrick's Day festivities in Hoboken and additional train service was provided from Summit (Morris & Essex). Trains #514, #518, and #522, which normally shuttle between Broad Street, Newark and Hoboken every two hours, were extended to Summit. They were supplemented by Trains #9716 and #9720 so that there was hourly service between 8:57 AM and 12:57 PM. Westbound trains also departed from Hoboken for Summit hourly between 4:05 and 9:07 PM. Again, it was the extension of Trains #531, #535, and #539 plus Trains #9733, #9737, and #9741.

The Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North operated additional service on Tuesday March 17. On LIRR, there were fifteen extra trains: seven westbound [Port Jefferson (2), Ronkonkoma (2), and Babylon (3)] in the morning and eight eastbound [Port Washington (1), Port Jefferson (3), Far Rockaway (1), and Babylon (3)] in the afternoon.

Metro-North added Hudson Line Train #7846 (8:41 AM Poughkeepsie) and Harlem Line Train #4644 (9:05 AM Southeast). Both trains made limited stops. Passengers were warned that alcoholic beverages would not be permitted on trains, platforms, and stations continuing through 4 AM, March 18. Any alcoholic beverages observed or found at LIRR and MNR facilities were to be confiscated by MTA Police. Both railroads also did not sell alcoholic beverages either that day.

FEDERAL ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE (CONTINUED)

From NE Transit: MBTA's draft 2010-2014 capital plan reveals that the agency plans to acquire 8 locomotives through another agency's bid using these funds. They would most likely be MPI MP-36PH-3C locomotives as a remaining option from the Utah Transit Authority's base order. These units would be in addition to re-bidding the planned 28-unit order at a later date, which

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Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 11)*

would eventually result in the acquisition of 36 locomotives from two separate orders.

The Journal News reported that New York State would compete for some of the \$8 billion allocated for high-speed rail to build a high-speed line between Buffalo and New York City. Initially, funding would be sought for repairs to the signaling in Poughkeepsie to enable additional tracks and faster service between Schenectady and western New York so freight trains would not interfere with passenger trains. There is also a plan that would increase speeds from 79 mph to 110 mph and then to 150 mph.

The New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers published this partial list of projects on NJ Transit's "wish list." Please note that all amounts are stated in \$millions: ARC Tunnel (\$600), 100 Bombardier multi-levels (\$250), Morris & Essex Lines reverse signaling between Summit and Denville (\$25), North Jersey Coast Line signal replacement (\$30), Atlantic City Line sidings (\$30), River Line cab signaling (\$20), HBLRT Danforth Interlocking (\$15), Bergen County Line Plauderville Station high platform (\$15), Newark Penn Station Platform E rehabilitation (\$22), and what is described as an "enhancing track replacement program" (\$22).

Philadelphia news from member Dave Safford: "SEPTA now expects \$190 million from the stimulus package to be spent on 28 bread-and-butter projects capable of being immediately implemented. Again, all amounts are stated in \$millions: Spring Garden and Girard stations/Broad Street Subway (\$36.7); 40 hybrid buses (\$18.686); Croydon Station/R7 (\$18); Malvern Station/R5 (\$12.4); 101/Media and 102/Sharon Hill grade crossings (\$12.3); 101/Media and 102/Sharon Hill signals (\$12.3); 101/Media and 102/Sharon Hill track bed: (\$9); stabilize tunnel R5/Lansdale (\$6.1); rehabilitate 5 bridges R5/Lansdale and Bridgeport 100/Norristown viaduct (\$6.1); 101/Media and 102/Sharon Hill fiber optic cables (\$6.1); Subway-Surface new train control (\$5.2); R5/Paoli-Thorndale new signage (\$4.9); R8/Fox Chase station (\$4.9); Darby Transit Center (\$3.3); R8/Chestnut Hill West station (\$3.120); R1/Airport Line fencing (\$2.9); 101/Media warning signals (\$2.7); Fern Rock station track work (Broad St) (\$2.3); R3/Langhorne station (\$2.025); 101/Media and 102/Sharon Hill (\$1.5); fiber optic cables (Broad St./Market Frankford) (\$1) and relatively minor renovations at North Wales, 69th Street, Philmont and Glenside stations and Lansdale substation (aggregating \$3.14). There's nothing flossy here, but all much needed. For example reference my earlier reporting on the traffic jams in the Subway-Surface tunnels due to ineffective signaling, and I can testify to the need for station signage on the R5/Paoli Line. The old PRR signs that graced the ends of the platform sheds were sold off or stolen when the

Pennsy melted into Penn Central, and most indifferently replaced. Now a stranger has to rely on the occasional well-hidden sign to know where he is (unless, of course, the train PA system happens to be working at the time. It does happen)."

In Chicago, CTA on March 11 approved a \$56.6 million contract for renewal of approximately 36,000 feet of track in the Dearborn Street Subway (Blue Line). The contract will remove the existing slow zones and help prevent the creation of new slow zones. In 2007 and 2008, CTA eliminated 6,336 feet of slow zones on the Blue Line between the Damen and Clark/Lake stations. "The allocation of stimulus funding comes at a critical time for CTA as the agency needs funding to maintain an aging infrastructure," said newly appointed CTA President Rich Rodriguez. "This project will create approximately 400 jobs locally over the course of the work and will allow the agency to continue its efforts to upgrade and modernize the system." Thanks to Bob Hansen for this news.

Member Joe Gagne sent an article from **The Sun-Sentinel** reporting that Tri-Rail would use stimulus funds to purchase five new locomotives and ten additional bi-levels.

Amtrak will receive \$1.3 billion, some of which will be allocated as follows: \$100 million for a new bridge across the Niantic River in Connecticut; \$63 million to replace power equipment in Chester, Pennsylvania; \$21 million for station renovations at Wilmington; and \$82 million for repairs to 68 presently out-of-service rail cars.

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

It is not only New England Patriots fans who are unhappy that their team was not involved in any postseason activity. According to a report in **The Boston Globe**, so is the "T" because last year, the operation of special trains to Foxboro netted it \$53,125. MBTA still sold more Patriots train tickets during the recently ended regular season than it did during the undefeated 2007 season, so it was down only about \$30,000 from last year's numbers. Fans pay \$12 for the round-trip tickets from South Station or Providence to Foxboro.

Commuters will soon be provided with real-time information about the status of their trains while waiting at station platforms. State and MBTA officials introduced "Next Train" technology, which will provide customers with on-board announcements and information on LED signs in stations at a ceremony at North Station on March 10. The fully automatic system utilizes GPS (Automatic Vehicle Location or AVL system) to locate each train. It can also calculate minute-accurate train arrival times to LED signs at all stations. Twenty-five new signs will be installed at 12 stations and 110 outdated existing LED signs will be replaced with new Adaptive PDS signs. Automatic announcements will be made via the train PA system on approach to and arrival

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at individual stations with "Next Train" enhancements to the existing system. There will also be visual displays for use by Train Dispatchers/Operations personnel showing real-time train locations on the entire MBTA Commuter rail system. Interface will be provided with new Solari and platform video displays at North and South Stations. Testing of the new equipment was already underway on the Haverhill Line as well as other lines on both the north and south sides. Completion is expected by the end of summer. Member Todd Glickman added: "I'll believe it when I see it....and it WORKS." When I asked him why he was so pessimistic, he replied, "it's their third attempt!"

On March 12, nearly a year after the March 26, 2008 collision between a runaway CSX freight and an MBTA commuter train, prosecutors have declined to file a criminal complaint against anyone involved in the Canton crash that injured 100 passengers. Joe Pesaturo, spokesman for MBTA, said, "Transit Police detectives gathered the facts and presented them to the District Attorney." He said the end of the criminal investigation might help the civil case move forward by allowing the crew to speak more freely.

MBTA approved a budget with a \$160 million deficit with the hopes that Governor Deval Patrick's proposed 19-cent gas tax increase with 6 cents dedicated to the "T" would be approved by the State Legislature, which had not come to an agreement. The Governor's plan would delay any fare hikes for at least two to three years. Without a bailout, commuters would have their fares increased by 25-30%. In addition, regular service would be eliminated on many routes outside of rush hour beginning as soon as July. That could translate to subway fares of \$2.60 for those paying cash or \$2.20 with a *CharlieCard*, depending on how MBTA structures its rates. Thanks to Todd for sending these reports, some of which came from ***The Boston Globe***.

LINDENWOLD, NEW JERSEY

Member Lee Winson found this news item on PATCO's website. "Presently PATCO has had little to no advertising in our cars. Advertising on trains and in stations and parking lots is the direction that the transit industry has taken to generate additional revenues to offset operating costs. PATCO, like the other transit systems in this region (SEPTA and NJ Transit), will participate in an advertising program to generate additional revenues. Passengers may see advertising posters, branded cars, and wrapped cars. In addition to the current advertising on two sheet posters in the stations, passengers may see floor stickers."

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

The Philadelphia Flower Show is always well-attended and held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, for-

merly Reading Terminal. SEPTA sold a Bouquet Pass which offered discounted show tickets as well as unlimited travel on all regular SEPTA services except for the R7 Line to/from Trenton, on a single day. What is new this year is that on March 1, 7, and 8 SEPTA operated an express train that met NJ Transit Train #7833 (10:14 AM New York Penn) arriving at Trenton at 11:43 AM to connect with Train #9750. The latter departed at 11:53 AM, with a scheduled arrival at Market East at 12:45 PM. A return trip express, Train #9751, departed from Market East at 7:03 PM, arriving at Trenton at 7:52 PM to connect with NJ Transit Train #7864, which departed at 8:02 PM. NJ Transit issued a press release that the express was a demonstration trip for the R7 line, and promoted the fact that these were coordinated schedules with new joint-ticketing options. From March 2-6, there was additional midday train service on the R-5/Doylestown Line from March 2-6. Thanks to Lee Winson for this report.

One email that I received opined that the next step should be to run the equipment through, eliminating the change of trains in Trenton. A crew change and train number change might be required so that Amtrak cannot claim a violation of the 75-mile rule.

As March 15 approached, SEPTA riders began to worry whether or not the Transport Workers Union Local 234 would strike. Member Dave Safford reported: "According to ***The Philadelphia Inquirer***, the union is asking for 6% raises, exactly twice what SEPTA has budgeted. It's a bad year for hanging tough in demands: the state, which provides half of SEPTA's budget, is broke, the pension fund has dropped 40% of its value in the last year, and the increase in ridership is threatened by the downward spiral in the economy (no jobs, no riders). The city is axing the library, parks, and recreation budgets, and of course for way too many people the question isn't a raise but a job at all. Complicating matters, the Regional Rail employees have a different union, so the trains will keep running through a strike, as happened in 2005. Current wages are \$14.54 to \$24.24 per hour for Operators and \$14.40 to \$27.59 for mechanics. 1% of pay is a mandatory contribution to health coverage. Still, TWU has gone on strike 11 times in the past 33 years, so all we can do is wait." On March 12, ***The Inquirer*** reported that TWU notified the press that it will not strike if the deadline passes without a settlement. The paper noted that contracts for two other segments of the fragmented union are up soon: two on April 1 and one on April 6, so this may be a tactical postponement. (The separate representation, all by TWU locals, appears to be based on historically separate operations.) An editorial in the same edition urged a "fair and realistic" contract (as, I'm sure, do all parties, albeit with varying definitions), while pointing out that, with the local unemployment rate hitting 8.9%, this is

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not the best of times for obtaining a large settlement. The contract expired at 12:01 AM March 15, but the workers remained on their jobs.

SEPTA announced a special pass, similar to those of the Auto and Flower Shows, for the 2009 NCAA Championships at the Wachovia Center (foot of the Broad Street Subway at Pattison Avenue), March 18 to March 22. The pass provided unlimited riding on all scheduled SEPTA lines for one day except morning Regional Rail trains or from New Jersey. Thanks again to Lee Winson for this report.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Member Steve Erlitz reported that MARC planned to close its own and the B&O ticket offices by the end of March, except for the Odenton and Camden stations. "They are installing the Amtrak ticketing machines at staffed stations and plan to remove all the agents as they do. Laurel and all the Brunswick line agents are being sent back to CSX (except for Frederick, who is a Greyhound Bus agent but will no longer sell MARC tickets). Dorsey and the Penn Line agents will go to the ops center. These machines will not take cash, or the subsidy benefits we get. DOT (who was running the program for all the feds in D.C.) has stopped issuing Metro checks, which were Metro Fare Cards that could be exchanged for face value transportation on anything (including the commuter vans) as of February 20. Money will now be deposited on our *SmartTrip* Fare cards. If people want, they can get *SmartChecks*, which can be used on services outside of Metro, but with the demise of the ticket agents, there is no sense for me to use them. MARC and VRE tickets can be bought at the Commuter Direct stores in Virginia or online and they will deduct the money from the Smart Card. They will also accept the *SmartChecks* as payment for riders that have an account set up for monthlies (and they charge a fee for mailing; not just 99 cents, but give them time). Amtrak offices at Union, New Carrollton, BWI, and Baltimore will also take the *SmartChecks* and cash."

WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Virginia Railway Express advised its riders via email that its trains operate on U.S. Naval Observatory time. However, not all watches, car radios, cell phones, or even VRE's validation machines are synchronized to this time, but the watches used by VRE Conductors and Engineers, GPS systems that are used to monitor trains, the TRIPS system (the on-line program that monitors trains), and the web server are.

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

It is a real trolley car, but although it is equipped with trolley poles, it does not operate on electric power, but on bio-diesel. Frank Pfuhrer sent a report from WSAV-TV which told of a new line that now is served by an ex-Melbourne streetcar, which is numbered "No. 756". It

makes seven stops along River Street Wednesday through Saturday between noon and 7 PM and it is free. The service actually debuted in December, 2008, but a few traffic and driver training details needed attention, so its official start was February 11.

SOUTH FLORIDA

Fourteen years after its last fare increase, Tri-Rail conducted a study last month to determine a new fare structure. A public hearing was to be held this month, with new fares going into effect on June 1. Tri-Rail has among the lowest fares in the country. Thanks to Joe Gagne for this report from *The Sun-Sentinel*.

CINCINNATI, OHIO

A couple has asked their wedding guests, instead of giving them a gift, to instead make donations to the local streetcar project. Kristen Myers, 29, and Chris Heckman, 30, put that request on their wedding website. They say reactions from friends and relatives have been positive. The bride- and groom-to-be say they hope the emphasis on Cincinnati's proposed streetcar system will make their guests want to come back downtown if the project succeeds. If it doesn't, guests' tax-deductible donations will be returned. The City Council recently set up an account to solicit private donations for a roughly 3-mile, \$185 million streetcar line from downtown to the area of the University of Cincinnati. Details were reported in the June, 2008 *Bulletin*. Thanks to member Phil Hom for this report from *The Cincinnati Inquirer*.

CHESTERTON, INDIANA

NICTD issued new timetables effective February 24, to reflect that one late-night daily and weekend/holiday train will no longer stop at Gary/Chicago Airport: They are Trains #101 and #601, which departed at 1:36 AM, and, under the previous schedules, were "flag" stops.

Riders are being asked to comment on proposed weekend schedules that have been posted on NICTD's web site. Any schedule changes would take place sometime this month.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

I knew that member Jim Beeler would come through because he did get the number of the Metra car, cab 8527, which was "wrapped" (March *Bulletin*). Jim saw it operating on the UP lines on February 27.

Metra was to begin a project last month to install flashing signs that would alert passengers when more than one train is passing at a station. In 2004, a 10-year-old student had just gotten off an eastbound Metra train in River Grove, and, when he started across the pedestrian walkway, was struck and killed by a westbound express. This project is part of a \$112 million upgrade of the UP West Line, which will also see the installation of inter-track barriers, escape areas to keep pedestrians from being caught between lowered gates and tracks, and more fencing.

Saturday service was initiated on March 21 on the

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Southwest Line, as was reported in the March **Bulletin**. Metra expects to carry 1,200 passengers on those six trains (three in each direction). This pilot project is costing \$640,000 and is being funded 50-50 between Metra and the Regional Transportation Authority. On March 23, one midday train was extended to Manhattan. An RTA spokesman said that, "the idea is to get innovative projects going that otherwise couldn't be funded in order to see if they work." This is the first project to be funded under a new \$10 million initiative, which became law in January, that will pay for "innovation." If successful, it will be continued and funded as are other Metra services. Thanks again to Jim Beeler for these reports from **The Chicago Tribune**.

On The Bi-Level is Metra's newsletter that provides information to riders and handles questions and complaints (mostly about other commuters' bad habits). In the February issue, one question that was answered was about why Metra trains run on the left side of the railway. Metra's answer: "Not all of them do – it's just what are now the Union Pacific lines. The most plausible theory is that all the lines originally had a single track, with the depots on the left side (as you head downtown). When a second track was added, it was easiest to put it to the right of the first track, since the depots were taking up space on the left side. But the first track remained the inbound track, because a) the depots were all on that side and you want the sheltered waiting areas for inbound riders since most people waiting at the station are heading downtown, and b) the railroad didn't want to pay for or couldn't afford to pay to move them or build overpasses or underpasses."

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Northstar Commuter Rail announced that a groundbreaking ceremony was held on March 3 for the Fridley Station. Construction was to begin within weeks and be paid for with a \$9.9 million grant from the Counties Transit Improvement Board. This station is expected in service for the beginning of Northstar service from Big Lake to downtown Minneapolis late this year. Station construction in Big Lake, Elk River, Anoka, Coon Rapids, and downtown Minneapolis, as well as other portions of the project, is on budget and on schedule. Construction of the project overall is about 75% complete.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

In order to stave off the major service cuts that were to take place at the end of March (February **Bulletin**), St. Louis transit officials were looking to obtain \$12 million in federal stimulus funds. **The St. Louis Post-Dispatch** reported that planners are investigating the swap of federal congestion dollars for transit capital dollars. The congestion money can be used for certain types of transit operations, including new and expanded service. But the transit capital money can only be used for buses

and other equipment.

AUSTIN, TEXAS

Member Steve Erlitz was in Austin during the end of February and wrote that two of the new Metrorail cars were on display at Convention Center, which is the last stop across from the Marriot Courtyard and Residence Inn. "It is only going to run rush hours with three reverse trips...I did not have time to go over to see the new cars."

In early March, Capitol Metrorail revealed that there were problems with shunting, similar to what Sprinter LRT (Oceanside-Escondido Line) experienced in December, 2007, which threatened to delay the full start-up of operations. Metrorail described shunting as the circuit detection system that activates as a train moves along the tracks. Shunting allows Dispatchers to properly dispatch trains and controls crossing signals. To resolve this, a nationally recognized expert was brought in to recommend remedies. Nonetheless, pre-opening day activities were scheduled for Saturday March 28, with ribbon cutting ceremonies at stations.

Then on March 20, President/CEO Fred Gilliam announced that service would not begin on March 30 because the agency had received notification from the FRA and Texas DOT of additional alleged violations against rail contractor Veolia Transportation. As he was not satisfied with the progress Veolia has made with safety and training, he cancelled the March 28 event. In addition, he called for Veolia to replace its safety director and brought in rail experts from MBTA to assist with startup operations and safety implementation. Capital MetroRail staff will continue testing enhancements to the signal system and he gave May 15, as the date that Capital Metro will report the status of the project.

DALLAS, TEXAS

DART announced on February 5 that 2.7 miles of its newest line, the Green Line, would open on September 14, and will connect the Pearl station on the east side of Downtown Dallas with the Deep Ellum station, Baylor University Medical Center station, Fair Park station (at the intersection of Parry and Exposition), and MLK station, adjacent to the J. B. Jackson, Jr. Transit Center on the east site of Fair Park. The last trolley service to Fair Park occurred on January 15, 1956. Daily service to the Victory station, which is presently used only part-time, will also begin in September. A 7.4-mile Green Line extension from MLK to Buckner, scheduled to open in December, 2010, will add four more stations. If you visit DART's website, you will find information on other extensions that are underway.

HOUSTON, TEXAS

On March 4, Metro's Board of Directors awarded a contract to Parsons Transportation Group to design, build, and maintain four new light-rail lines: North, East End, Southeast, and Uptown. The initial phase of the contract calls for spending \$632 million and is expected

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to create 25,000 jobs. This includes a combined \$90 million in utility work on the North and Southeast Corridors and \$390 million in total costs for the East End Corridor, including an overpass at Harrisburg for light rail, construction of a service and inspection facility, and rail cars. Low-floor cars are part of an initial contract for 29 from CAF USA, Inc. and, at \$118 million, are included in the \$632 million.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Valley Metro reported that its January ridership totals were 911,883, resulting in an average weekday ridership of 30,617. The average Saturday ridership was 31,331 and average Sunday and holiday ridership totaled 23,815. During the planning process METRO estimated that weekday ridership would average 26,000 for its first year of operation.

PORTLAND, OREGON

Westside Express Service, which began running February 2, suffered its first major service delay on February 20. Tri-Met reported that two WES trains were found to have electronic malfunctions during the overnight, and only two trains were available to run that morning. Shuttle buses were used to transport riders north from Wilsonville and southbound from Beaverton Transit Center for a pair of AM trips. Tri-Met personnel were dispatched to the Tigard and Tualatin stations to direct riders to and from shuttle buses. Riders on the shuttle buses were warned that they should expect some delays. That afternoon, four of the 16 WES trips were covered by shuttle buses. Crews worked through that weekend and into the next week to make repairs. Shuttle buses covered 4 of the 16 trips until February 27. It was determined that during the vehicle production, wires had been drilled through while the manufacturer was installing a baseboard heater. The WES trailer was also damaged since it was connected to that train. Repairs to the power were completed, but the trailer was awaiting additional parts. Beginning March 2, all trips were covered by the DMUS, albeit with single cars, no trailers.

Tri-Met's new Type 4 cars made a test run on February 28. *The Oregonian* reported that "cameras drawn, a mob of Tri-Met engineers, MAX operators and train buffs excitedly followed the new 'Type 4' train as it made the first official practice run on downtown Portland's transit mall." Even bystanders were impressed and some took photos with cell phones. Two years after construction began on the \$220 million transit mall, Roger Andreassen, the MAX Green Line's Project Manager, said it was a relief to see the train moving through downtown. "The purpose of the 7:30 AM-1:30 PM run, he said, was to test everything from the power lines and tracks to signals and platform alignment. "Everything looks good so far," Andreassen said. The

22 Type 4s will enter service this Spring. Thanks to member John Pappas, who noted that the car has the rounder Houston front end, for this report.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

BART announced on February 10 that it would be seeking proposals to build the Fremont Central Park Subway. Prospective bidders have a deadline of March 31, 2009. This construction project is the next phase to extend BART 5.4 miles south to a new station in Fremont's Warm Springs District. When it is complete, it would be the first step to extend BART into the South Bay. The cost has been put at more than \$200 million.

Member Phil Hom emailed a link to BART's website, <http://www.bart.gov/about/projects/index.aspx>, which provides details on several expansion projects that are under consideration. They include: the Dublin/Pleasanton station, which is scheduled to open later this year, an East Contra County extension, a Livermore extension, a Santa Clara County extension, and new crossovers in central Contra Costa County.

Here is the first of two California reports from member Pete Donner, who recently returned from a visit with friends. "It appears Muni is having difficulty meeting the schedule for the F/Market Line. During the three-day period I was in San Francisco, nearly 1/3 of the service was provided by buses (13 cars are needed for peak period service). An Operator mentioned that the PCC cars are breaking down frequently and the 'bustitution' occurs on a regular basis. Considering the PCC cars operating on the line were rebuilt 15 years ago, perhaps it's time for a mid-life overhaul. The San Francisco Railway Museum sells a 'Historic Streetcars in San Francisco' poster, which depicts the paint scheme of the various PCC cars along with the 'conventional' cars that provide service on the F/Market Line. An image of the poster can be viewed at their web site, streetcar.org."

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

On Tuesday, January 27, Metro operated a test train over the 6-mile Gold Line. LRV 722 was towed by a high-rail truck at approximately 5 mph to test clearances, including the 1.8-mile-long twin tunnels under Boyle Heights. When Phase I opens later this year, there will be eight stations, two of which are underground. The Gold Line connects Los Angeles Union Station via the Arts District/Little Tokyo and Boyle Heights to Atlantic/Pomona Boulevards in East Los Angeles. The last streetcar to operate on First Street took place just after 5 AM on March 31, 1963. Thanks to John Pappas, who forwarded this report and an accompanying video.

On March 3, the National Transportation Safety Board released a transcript of text messages to and from Metrolink Engineer Robert Sanchez, who along with 24 passengers was killed as his train ran a red signal and collided with a Union Pacific freight train on September 12, 2008. NTSB also said that Mr. Sanchez had previ-

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Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 16)*

ously permitted a teenaged railfan to operate his train and had planned to do so again that day.

Here is part II of Pete's report. "New 700-series LRVs are operating on the Gold Line. The new cars, built by Breda, share the service with the existing fleet of LRVs. The new stainless steel cars have a unique design. When viewed from the side, the large picture windows, sliding doors, fluting below the belt rail, and panels which extend above the roof line give one the impression they're looking at a subway car. The cars are not painted (except for the cabs, which are painted silver) and 'Metro Rail' decals were applied above the side windows. The current Gold Line schedule (dated December 14, 2008) has a notation for the Eastside Extension on the cover and the route maps inside the schedule shows the new service, which is scheduled to open in mid-2009."

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

On February 10, GO Transit exercised the option it had with Motor Power Industries for 20 additional MPX diesel-electric locomotives. The base order was for 27 units, which were numbered 600-626 are still being delivered, and with the option, deliveries will continue into next year.

EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA

On March 5, LRT trains began running intermittently between the Health Sciences and South Campus stations to test signal systems on the South LRT Line. The extension adds two stations, McKernan/Belgravia and South Campus, plus 4.6 miles to the system. Opening day is set for April 25. Next April, the line will again be extended by two stations to Southgate and Century Park, with another 2.6 miles.

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Bombardier Transportation and the City of Vancouver signed a sponsorship agreement in which two FLEXITY Outlook trolleys will operate for 60 days on the city's Downtown Streetcar Demonstration Project next year. This will take place before, during, and following the Winter Olympics, which are scheduled for January 21 to March 21. The two cars will come from the order for an additional 87 cars that will at that time be in delivery to Brussels. The new trolley line connects Granville Island with the Canada Line Olympic Village Station at Cambie St/West 2nd Avenue (1.86 miles) at a cost of C\$8.5 million using the alignment of the Downtown Historic Railway. Thanks to Phil Hom and John Pappas for sending this report from SFMuniHistory@yahoogroups.com.

SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Member Raymond Berger forwarded a report about a new standard gauge metro in Santo Domingo. Checking the Internet, I learned that although the official opening date was February 27, 2008, service did not begin until January 30, 2009. Line 1 (plans call for 5 more plus 5 additional stations for Line 1) is 9 miles and has 16 sta-

tions. Alstom is building 19 3-car trainsets (57 cars total). The cars are being numbered in the 9000-series. Raymond wrote, "the fact is that the SD operation is real, true rapid transit, not a light rail or trolley operation."

BANGKOK, THAILAND

Todd Glickman reported that the Airport Link from the Phaya Thai and Makkasan areas of downtown Bangkok to Suvarnabhumi Airport is set to open for passengers on August 12, the birthday of Her Majesty the Queen. Some amenities, including the baggage carousel system, would not be ready on the opening day. The luggage-loading service at the Makkasan station would not be operational, so there might be some inconvenience for passengers with heavy bags. As of late February, the construction of the 28-km (17.4-mile) route is 96% complete. There have been delays to work at some stations and route sections due to hold-ups in land acquisition. SRT plans to collect a fare of 150 baht from passengers taking non-stop trains while those traveling on trains that stop at every station will pay between 15 and 45 baht. The service will include express and local trains (sharing tracks but alternating schedules) into the city center. The service is separate from the BTS Skytrain and MRT subway, and so there is no compatibility with rolling stock or fare media among the three. There are transfer points between the services, but no through-fares nor free transfers between the lines. The exchange rate is US\$1 = 33 baht, so it's quite a bargain!

Todd was in Bangkok on business during early March, and reported a few updates on the city's mass transit expansion plans. "The BTS Skytrain's two current extensions continue under construction. The Silom Line's two-station extension over and south of the Chao Phraya River is expected to open on May 15, 2009. The Sukhumvit Line's eastern five-station extension is still a work-in-progress, with an expected opening in late 2010."

FROM THE HISTORY FILES

60 Years ago: On April 3, April 10, April 24, and April 30, 1949, trolleys were abandoned in Manchester, Missouri; Atlanta, Georgia; San Diego, California; and Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Of these four cities, only San Diego currently operates trolleys. The first of its lines began running on July 26, 1981. Atlanta is proposing to start a new line on Peachtree Street, while Manchester is home to the Museum of Transport and its trolleys do not venture out on to public streets.

10 Years ago: On April 14, 1999, NJ Transit awarded the first construction contract for the Montclair Connection. Opening Day was on September 30, 2002. Also on April 14, 1999, a contract was awarded to construct a new station, Branch Brook Park, which would replace Franklin Avenue on October 30, 2000.

News items and comments concerning this column may be emailed to NYDnewseditor@aol.com.

Around New York's Transit System

Automatic Train Operation Begins on Canarsie Line

Member Ben Schaeffer reports that ATO (Automatic Train Operation) has begun on the Canarsie Line (L). The first interval operated by ATO was the 11:59 PM from Rockaway Parkway to Eighth Avenue on February 23-24, 2009. The train left Rockaway Parkway under manual operation and was switched to ATO at New Lots Avenue. Because of a reconstruction project underway in the midnight hours, the train was put back under manual control at or near Lorimer Street. The consist was (R-143) N-8249-50-51-52/8124-3-2-1-S. ATO is not yet in effect during rush hours.

New South Ferry Terminal Opens



MTA Executive Director Sander speaks as U.S. Senator Schumer, Governor Paterson, MTA Chairman Hemmerdinger (behind Paterson), U.S. Senator Gillibrand, and others look on.

Andrew Grahl photograph

Governor Paterson and other public officials presided over a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the morning of Monday, March 16 to commemorate the opening of the new stub-end South Ferry 1 terminal. This \$530 million project's opening was delayed several times, most recently by a problem with the train-to-platform gap that required the platform to be shaved back and, when that proved excessive, the rubbing boards to be replaced. The station, which is directly below the old one, features seven escalators, two elevators, climate control, a free transfer to the Whitehall Street R W station, and an island platform capable of berthing a ten-car train on each track. Unfortunately, there are persistent water leaks through the walls. Crews are grouting the walls, but they are unable to eliminate the leaks completely.

The single-track loop terminal it replaced opened on July 10, 1905. Located on a sharp curve, it has a single platform capable of berthing only the first five cars of one train, a source of delay and customer dissatisfaction as the Conductor implored passengers headed there to move from one of the last five cars to one of the first five cars whenever a train stopped at one of the stations approaching South Ferry. The loop remains available for emergency use by 1 trains, and 5 trains discharging passengers at Bowling Green will still operate light around the loop.

The first train to leave the new station was the 12:03 PM 1 to 242nd Street.

Increased Subway Riding

The Lexington Avenue-63rd Street station recorded the largest increase in weekday riding in recent years—777% from 1,500 ten years ago to 13,500 at the present time.

Until December 16, 2001, trains serving this station terminated at 21st Street-Queensbridge and only a few passengers entered this station. When F trains from Queens were rerouted via the 63rd Street Tunnel, the station became very busy.

Last year's subway and bus ridership was the highest since the mid-1950s.

Of the 50 stations with the biggest ridership increases, nearly half are in Brooklyn, including 13 on the Canarsie Line (L).

Willets Point-Shea Stadium Station's New Name

The Willets Point-Shea Stadium station on 7 has been renamed. It is now called Mets/Willets Point. MTA had tried to persuade Citigroup to sponsor the use of the name "CitiField" on the signage, but was unsuccessful, so the name of the stadium will not be displayed in the station.



A 1 train (not the first revenue train) in the new station.

Andrew Grahl photograph