

The Bulletin



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The Bulletin

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A Train
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THIRD AVENUE'S POOR FINANCIAL CONDITION LED TO ITS CAR BUILDING PROGRAM 75 YEARS AGO **(Continued from March, 2012 issue)**

THE HUFFLINERS

Cars 551-625, the only center-exit cars ever operated by the company, were nicknamed "Huffliners" in honor of Slaughter W. Huff, who had been Third Avenue's President since 1918 and who was in favor of trolley cars. Huffliners were lighter in weight, faster, and more modern than the 100- or 300-series cars.

When the engineers were designing the Huffliners, they tried to produce a car that was lighter than the 300-series cars, which weighed 38,100 pounds. The company consulted the Aluminum Company of America's engineers and agreed to build an aluminum alloy car. At the same time, in late 1936, it was also building a car made of high tensile alloy steel. The aluminum 551 weighed only 34,000 pounds, but the steel car, 601, was 1,200 pounds heavier. The two car bodies were compared carefully on a cost-weight basis, and Third Avenue felt that the additional cost could not be justified by the weight saving. It ordered 24 alloy steel cars, 602-625, which included many aluminum parts, such as roof sheets, headlining, and bulkheads, in addition to stanchions, grab handles, seat handles, and sash. There were about 1,000 pounds of aluminum in the alloy steel cars.

ALCOA's engineers revised the design to reduce the weight and fabricating cost to the minimum consistent with safety. Company officials were satisfied with the plans and ordered 49 aluminum cars, 552-600. The new car bodies were considerably lighter in con-

struction than the alloy steel or original aluminum body. But the bodies were stiffer than the original aluminum car.

Steel car 601 was placed in revenue service immediately. We saw it operating on Broadway on November 13, 1936. Car 551 was equipped with a trolley pole, PCM control, and track brakes. It was tested in Mount Vernon and New Rochelle, and finally appeared in revenue service several years later. Center doors were opposite each other on 551 and offset on all other cars.

Unfortunately, we have no record of the date the Huffliners were placed in service. However, we observed the Broadway Line at least once a week and we recorded the dates we saw each car, as follows: Steel cars 602-625, September 23, 1937-January 31, 1938; Aluminum cars 552-600, December 3, 1937-March 1, 1939. Company records reveal that 24 center-exit cars were running on November 29, 1937.

Third Avenue's management tried to save money by using second-hand parts in its new cars. Its engineers selected a lighter motor with sufficient power, 25 HP Westinghouse #508A, which was readily available on the used market. By rewinding the armatures with two-turn windings instead of the original three-turn windings, reducing the turns in the field coils, and converting the motors to 300 volts, current was increased and speed was increased from 25 to 40 miles per hour. The rewound motors were rated at 38 HP.

Because automatic acceleration was too

(Continued on page 4)

NEXT TRIP: NJ TRANSIT MEADOWS SHOP, SATURDAY, APRIL 14

HISTORY OF THE A TRAIN—ERRATA AND ADDENDA

as submitted to and edited by George Chiasson

Subsequent to publication of "A History of the A Train" starting in the May, 2011 edition of the *Bulletin*, much newly-found historical information was provided to the author by elevated railway historian Joe Brennan, who has separately published historical articles related to New York City's early rapid transit development. Joe was able to mine first-hand editions of various New York City newspapers of the day, which have been digitized and are preserved through the archives at Columbia University. Other corrections, clarifications and additions were made at the behest of contributor Andrus Kristopans, Mr. Thomas Appell, and senior ERA member Henry Raudenbush. Space does not permit publishing entire paragraphs. Instead we will list the date published and paragraph, column, and line numbers.

MAY, 2011 ISSUE

THE FOLLOWING TWO PARAGRAPHS REPLACE

THE FIRST TWO PARAGRAPHS ON PAGE 2:

The Ninth Avenue Elevated, as originally opened under the auspices of the West Side & Yonkers Patent Railway Company, has the distinction of being the very first rapid transit installation on the North American continent, following initial establishment of the world's first subway in London, England in 1863 by just seven years. Even so, it had been a long financial road for the inventor, Charles T. Harvey, from incorporation in July 1866 to construction, which began in July 1867, to the first practical demonstration on December 7, 1867 which consisted of Mr. Harvey riding a single truck on a short stretch of track above the sidewalk of Greenwich St., being pulled along by a cable. By mid-1868 the single-track elevated structure was completed along Greenwich Street, from Battery Place (Bowling Green) to Cortlandt Street in lower Manhattan (a location now occupied by the World Trade Center site) and over the next two years the line was extended up Greenwich Street to Ninth Avenue, then Ninth Avenue all the way to W. 29th Street. On February 5, 1868 an "experimental car" was placed on the structure which may have been scratch-built by Harvey, described as being iron and wood, with a row of reversible chairs "in the middle of and running down the car," with a capacity of about 40 persons. Its presence was noted again on May 1 and it made a short inspection trip on June 6, 1868 but was then never heard of again. In the following interim, the infant structure's cable propulsion system was redesigned, which forced extensive changes to the work already performed. Whereas the original lines were run down from the elevated and returned through conduit beneath the sidewalk, a newer (and perhaps more reliable) design provided for return

pulleys to string the spinning cable immediately beneath track level and be threaded among the tops of the steel support columns. This in turn required that the columns thus far installed be modified and strengthened with "pass-through" and pulley retention bracketing. The first of the company's real carriages arrived in August, 1869, though it is unclear exactly how copious this acquisition was to be. Trial trips were made on the length of the route April 9 and 12, 1870, but (contrary to earlier, long-held information) the line was obviously not yet open at that time. A second car had been delivered by the latter date and regular inspection and qualification had by then commenced. A(n engineering) load test of the structure then collapsed one span on May 16, which required assessment, repairs, and even further inspection before service could begin.

According to *The New York Times*, regular service (finally) started on Saturday, June 11, 1870 between Dey and W. 29th Streets, using three cars running separately and just minutes apart, with the elevated's cables being drawn by stationary steam engines at four wayside locations. From a practical standpoint, its purpose was mainly to haul suburban commuters between the Financial District and the terminal of the Hudson River Railroad (later known as the Hudson Division of the New York Central Railroad) which was then on W. 30th Street just west of Ninth Avenue. As opened, the railroad had been required to use teams of horses, and not steam engines, to draw its trains north from the original terminal at Chambers Street to 30th Street, which made for a long, slow trip through the West Side of Manhattan to start or end a journey that was potentially much longer. To put things further in perspective, the Hudson River terminal at 30th Street was located at what at the time could be considered an edge of the city, and bore absolutely no relationship to the area presently in the shadow of Penn Station (a plot that wasn't even surveyed for such purpose until 1903), but rather was associated with a predecessor right-of-way of the former West Side freight line that is being redeveloped into the "High Line" pedestrian walkway in 2012.

On many succeeding dates, mechanical problems shut down operations, with the line reported to be "closed indefinitely" as of August 25. It then was evaluated and repaired once again, reopening to attendant media fanfare on November 14, 1870 with just one car in service, but the whole installation evidently broke down yet again that same day and the cable-powered line was then shut permanently.

(Continued on page 3)

History of the A Train

(Continued from page 2)

Subsequently it entered bankruptcy and was sold off to bondholders, thereby reorganizing as the West Side Patented Elevated Railway Company. Again contradicting conventional wisdom, the revitalized concern acquired a diminutive steam-powered "dummy" engine named *Pioneer* (that is, a steam engine with a passenger car shell) and used it to haul two new cars beginning on April 6 (not April 20), 1871, discarding the original cable-powered propulsion entirely. The original cable cars, with a wooden passenger body suspended on springs between the iron end platforms, may not have been strong enough to take the stresses of being pulled by a locomotive and would therefore have needed immediate replacement for steam-powered operation to commence. According to media reports of the time there were nine trips a day each way, of two cars each, which connected with Hudson River Railroad trains. A follow-up piece from July 20, 1871 stated that there were by then ten trips each way and "the train" had been extended to three cars. Though a step in the right direction, the multiple financial entanglements of the original franchise proved fatal and the company was again reorganized as the New York Elevated Railroad in December, 1871. After this time its fortunes briefly stabilized, and additional station stops were established which helped to attract more riders, as well as expand the "culture" of the burgeoning Manhattan elevated railway. Each consisted of simple wooden platforms reached by perfunctory stairways and were opened at Watts Street, about midway up the route, on May 6 and Little West 12th Street, where the el turned from Greenwich Street onto Ninth Avenue, on June 17, 1872. In addition a second steam dummy was delivered in late July, allowing more than one train to be operated simultaneously. As a result sidings were installed on each end of the single-track line at Dey and 29th Streets to enable them to pass each other. That same year, those few original (and mysterious) cars of the West Side Patented Elevated Railway Company were replaced by the first four "shadbelly" coaches, which had a low center of gravity to allay fears they might wobble onto the paving blocks below. As more dummies and new cars were delivered over the next few years, train lengths were eventually extended from two to three cars each.

SECTION 5, PARAGRAPHS 3 AND 4 AS REVISED

Page 3, column 2, paragraph 2, line 6—add the following:

Interestingly, it was recently revealed that the short new piece of structure that wound through Battery Park was originally built with three tightly-spaced tracks.

Page 3, column 2, paragraph 3, last line — add:
21st Street.

SECTION 6, PARAGRAPH 1

Page 4, column 1, last paragraph, line 3 — Add: from Rector Street to 59th Street after Ninth Avenue.

Page 4, column 1, last paragraph, line 7 — Add the following:

The original three-track piece of structure above Battery Park (between Battery Place and South Ferry Terminal) was not replaced but rather reinforced and re-laid with two widely-spaced tracks instead of the three original narrowly-spaced irons.

Page 4, column 2, line 8 — Change "same date" to "September 3."

JUNE, 2011 ISSUE

SECTION 7, PARAGRAPHS 5 AND 6 AS REVISED

Page 3, column 2 — The following replaces the last sentence, lines 5-8:

To overcome one potential bottleneck these various rush hour services created, every other morning Ninth Avenue Express train skipped from 170th Street to Jerome-Anderson Avenues stations starting in 1928, thereby avoiding the busy stop at 167th Street.

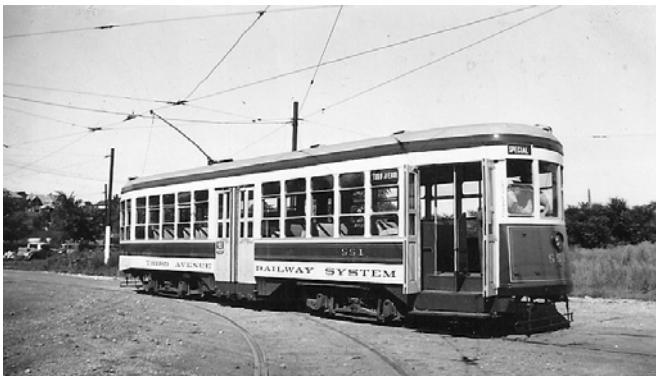
SECTION 8, PARAGRAPHS 1 AND 2 AS REVISED

On August 30, 1869 the very first piece of West Side & Yonkers rolling stock was delivered, as described by the following *New York Times* report of the event: "(Yesterday) the first car was raised to its place on the track of the Elevated Railway in Greenwich Street. This car is the first of ten which are in process of construction for the company, and it is a fair sample of the whole. In appearance it is not unlike those in use on our street roads, except that it is longer and more handsomely furnished. It is 27 feet long by 7 feet 9 inches wide, and is calculated to seat from forty to forty-five persons. It is elegantly finished in black walnut and maple, the contrast between the two woods having a very fine effect. The seats are plainly but neatly upholstered with carpeting. The bodies of the cars are being built by Isaac Keith, of West Sandwich, Mass., and the iron work is made and fitted at the Bethune (Street) yards, near Ninth (Avenue), and the Harrison (Street) foundry." This information refutes the long-standing assertion that there were only three cable-powered cars originally acquired from the John Stephenson Company and is probably correct. The Isaac Keith carbuilder was better known in the industry as the Keith Car & Manufacturing Company, and had plants at various locations around Cape Cod from about 1865 until it was finally acquired by the Standard Steel Car Company in 1930 (and ultimately disappeared by 1935). The last we hear of this company's product was the "Keith Tank (car) Line," which had "KTX" reporting marks and

(Continued on page 6)

Third Avenue's Poor Financial Condition Led to its Car Rebuilding Program 75 Years Ago

(Continued from page 1)



Odd car 551 with a trolley pole (trial run at Garden Avenue, Mount Vernon).



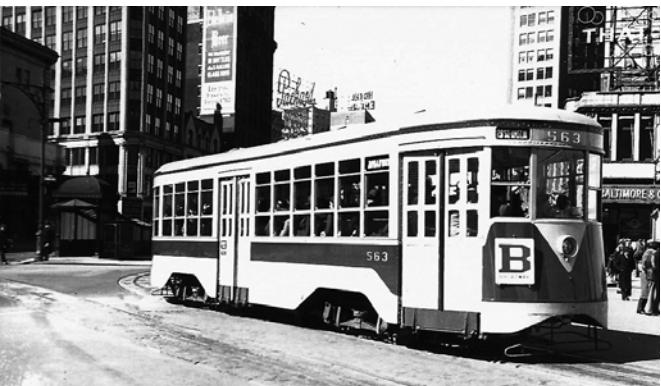
Car 554 on 42nd Street near Fifth Avenue in February, 1938.

Bernard Linder collection



Unpainted aluminum car 555 the day after its initial run, December 21, 1937, at 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue.

Bernard Linder collection



Car 563 in a red and buff paint scheme, May, 1938.

Bernard Linder collection



Steel Huffliner 601 at Broadway and 104th Street, April 21, 1946.
Bernard Linder photograph



Car 618 pulling unpainted car 584 into 130th Street Barn (129th Street and Third Avenue) for painting on June 19, 1938.

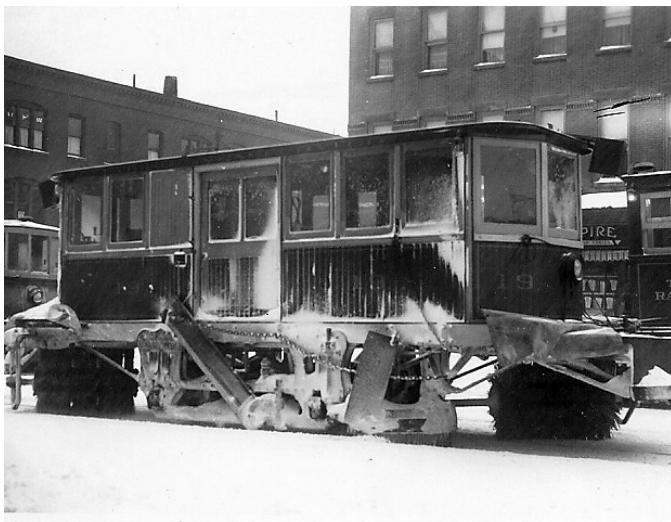
Bernard Linder collection

expensive, the company installed a 22-point straight parallel controller, which gave smooth acceleration up to 4 miles per hour per second, almost as fast as a PCC. The deadman's feature was mechanically interlocked with a foot-operated brake valve. If the Motorman left

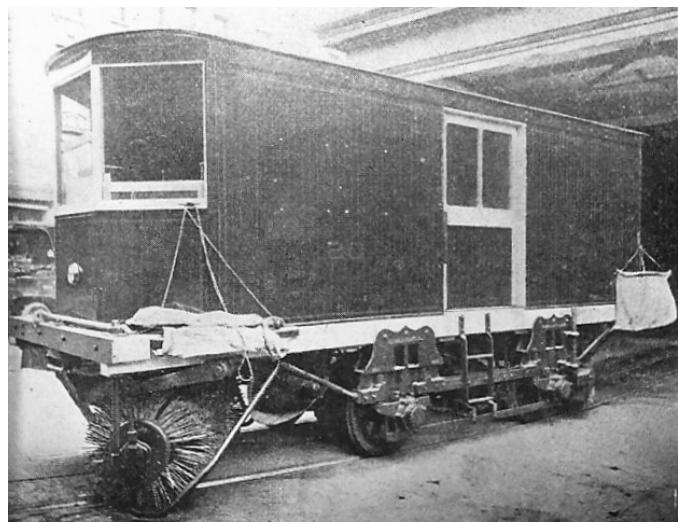
his post, power was cut off and brakes were applied. Door engines were interlocked with power so that the car could not start with open doors. Treadle-operated doors were interlocked with air brakes so that the car

(Continued on page 8)

THIRD AVENUE RAILWAY SWEEPERS



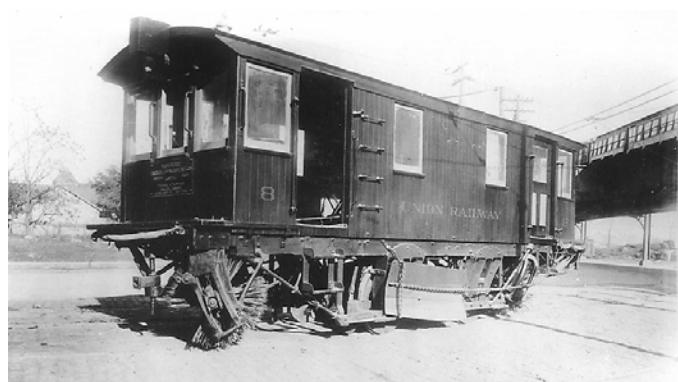
Sweeper 19, 161st Street and Amsterdam Avenue.
Bernard Linder collection



Storage battery snow sweeper 20.
Bernard Linder collection



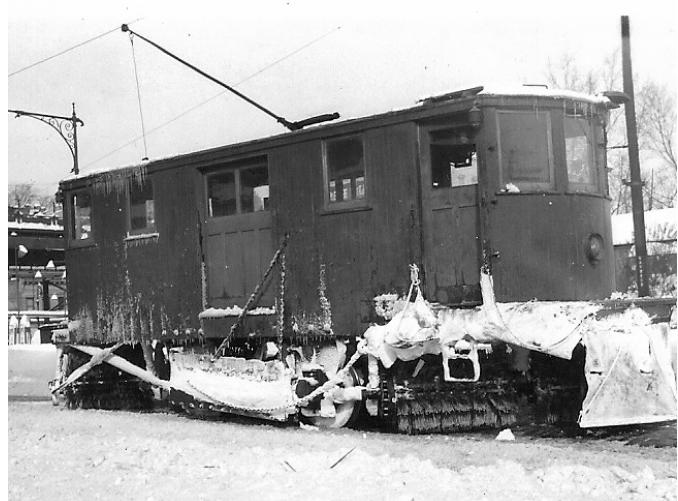
Sweeper 24, 153rd Street and Amsterdam Avenue, February 8, 1936.
Bernard Linder collection



Union Railway sweeper 8.
Bernard Linder collection



Union Railway sweeper 14.
Bernard Linder collection



Union Railway sweeper 57.
Bernard Linder collection

History of the A Train

(Continued from page 3)

was leased for wine cargo through the 1930s and into the World War II era. At any rate, native New Englander Isaac Keith (born in Tamworth, New Hampshire 1807, died on Cape Cod 1870) was the firm's proprietor whom, it might be noted, passed away just as the West Side & Yonkers venture was coming to fruition. The media report of 1869 postulates that the company had ten such units on order but later recantations point to the actual delivery of only three, for whatever reason. The three original, low-slung cable-powered cars of the West Side & Yonkers Patented Railway Company are most definitely shown in drawings to be 30 feet in overall length—though about one-quarter of this was consumed by open-end vestibules at each end. **The most recently-obtained data shows them to have been 7 feet 9½ inches wide at the thresholds but (probably) 8 feet 6 inches high inside the cabin.** In addition the original gauge was set at 4 feet 10½ inches or the equivalent of one "chain" that was a prior standard on most wheeled carriages, and the wheel flanges a stout 1½ inches in depth. Each car had "grip" and brake levers at each end on the open vestibules, with passengers entering and exiting the cabin through quarter-point sliding doors. Interior appointments were perfunctory, with what look like (**and as scantly described above**) small transverse seats, with lighting provided by oil-burning lamps. All three were used as originally designed from the start of passenger service on June 11, 1870 until cable-powered operation ended that November 14. The cars then probably sat unused during the company's initial reorganization and were subsequently disposed of. When operations resumed on April 6, 1871 as the West Side Patent Elevated Railway, the company's sole train was powered by a diminutive, double-end steam "dummy" named *Pioneer* that was built by the Handren & Ripley (Albany Street) iron works of Manhattan, had an upright boiler, an 0-4-0 wheel arrangement, and was enshrouded in an iron plate shell that was designed to imitate the body of a coach (a trick then often employed to avoid scaring animals at the wayside). Under load, the *Pioneer* and its later sisters were able to reach a speed of about 15 mph at their fastest, hauling just one coach at first, then later as many as three. Information regarding the original coaches used by the West Side Patent Elevated Railway is sparse, but as inferred above they were apparently not the three original cable-powered vehicles being hauled under steam. *The New York Tribune* of April 7 says the coaches weighed only 3,500 pounds, which if accurate would have made them an extremely light-

weight car. By comparison the succeeding shadbelly cars weighed over 2½ tons, while a double-truck horsecar of that era measured around 5,000 pounds and a bobtail horsecar was under 3,000. A surviving photograph shows one of these mysterious double-truck cars, looking like a horsecar, on the el structure at the Battery Place end of track. It has curved sides below the belt rail, nine side windows, and a platform at one end with no steps. For want of a better explanation, it is possible that this previously undefined (and now at best indeterminate) group of coaches were the ones procured from the John Stephenson Company, if only because their body styling was quite typical of that local builder, and they would have had to be designed and delivered expeditiously (just over three months past reorganization) to meet the renewed service date in April, 1871.

After its second reorganization under the New York Elevated Railroad in late 1871, the Ninth Avenue El received a second steam dummy, named *Manhattan* from the Washington Iron Works in July 1872, enabling more than one train to be operated simultaneously by the late summer. This was the first of five additional 0-4-0 steam dummies that arrived from various builders through the line's first closing for reconstruction in March of 1875. Three more were then delivered during the shutdown, including two built by its own shop forces. Each bore a name of local geographic significance (as was customary at the time) in addition to its fleet number of 2-9. **The first four "shadbelly" steam-drawn coaches (numbered 1-4) were delivered to the New York Elevated Railroad Company in July, 1872 and replaced the original, mysterious steam-drawn cars at the earliest opportunity, which were presumably disposed of.** As stated above, the "shadbellies" had a low center of gravity to dispel concern that they might sway off the elevated trackway. Their design was inspired by traditional passenger railway rolling stock as it had evolved to that time, being 35 feet in length overall but accessed only via swing-gated, open-ended vestibules of approximately 3 feet each that bracketed an enclosed cabin roughly 29 feet long. The floor level of the middle 23 feet of the cabin was depressed between the trucks, with a small set of stairs contained within as a transition. **The carbodies were actually narrower at the thresholds than the cable cars had been (about 6 feet 9½ inches wide), and with the lowered center floor offered an almost garishly high ceiling within the enclosed cabin.** They also had what appear to be transverse seats and used oil lamps for illumination. As also inferred above, these appeared in sets of up to three cars, with consists being lengthened over time as passenger traffic and the rolling stock fleet grew.

(Continued on page 7)

History of the A Train

(Continued from page 6)

SECTION 8, PARAGRAPH 8 AS REVISED

Page 6, column 1, paragraph 1 — after “more years,” add: while another six wound up on the Denver, South Park & Pacific narrow gauge line in Colorado during 1880.

SEPTEMBER, 2011 ISSUE

SECTION 11, PARAGRAPHS 4 AND 5 AS REVISED

Page 5, column 2, end of paragraph 2 — add: For BOT, the diversion of off-peak Fulton Street shuttles to Eastern Parkway meant a manpower saving in the form of station attendants dealing with the paper transfer at Rockaway Avenue and elimination of a tower.

Page 6, column 1 — delete portion of line 4 and lines 5-8. Replace with the following:

Demolition of the Fulton Street Elevated structure from the new subway ramp (a point just short of 76th Street) to Rockaway Avenue began in January, 1958 and was quickly completed, but according to one account the piece between Atlantic Avenue and Rockaway Avenue lasted until sometime in 1960. A couple of segments of the Broadway Junction complex survived until about 1965, though they were not in use; specifically, the structure from Pitkin Avenue to Snediker Avenue (once plied by Manhattan-bound Fulton Street El trains) and the inclined, curving three-track el that had so intricately joined the original Fulton Street alignment to the “new” Atlantic Avenue station.

OCTOBER, 2011 ISSUE

SECTION 12, PARAGRAPH 2 AS REVISED

Page 2, column 1 — delete portion of line 26 and last two lines. Replace with the following:

In addition, center doors and cable grips or cable depressors were installed on at least part of the original steam coach fleet (100-244) to enable them to be hauled by either the new bridge motors to and from Manhattan or the usual Forney locomotives on the Kings County line, during the time this service actually operated between November, 1898 and July, 1899.

SECTION 12, PARAGRAPHS 5 AND 6 AS REVISED

Page 3, column 1 (“THE ‘C’ CARS”) — delete paragraph 3 and column 2, first five lines. Replace with the following:

THE C CARS

In 1921, as the bankrupt BRT was fading from the scene, a means was sought to begin the installation of Multiple-Unit Door Control on elevated rolling stock. MUDC was a system which allowed the doors of several cars to be controlled from one or two central positions along the length of any given train. This would significantly save on labor cost as all trains in their original form had required that one man be present on each set of vestibules, or at one central position

on each set of the “Standard” BRT subway cars, to open and close the doors. MUDC was developed in New York, but it is unclear if in concept it was a product of the Interborough or Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company. MUDC was most definitely a follow-on to a different multiple door-opening system for individual cars that was applied to other American rapid transit properties before World War I. This earlier “button” (or “semi-automatic”) door control group was electrical as opposed to mechanical in nature, and first seen on the Hudson & Manhattan as early as 1909 before being adopted for use by Boston’s new “Cambridge Subway” in 1911. It then appeared on new cars for the Chicago “L” in 1914 (but was not employed on Philadelphia’s Market Street El), and was initially tested on the IRT Subway lines as early as 1920. In order to apply MUDC to rolling stock assigned to BRT’s aging elevated system, the prototype conversion of six standard el cars into two permanently-joined 3-car sets was undertaken at the 39th Street Shops. By early 1922 this yielded the first two sets of so-called “C” cars, which were composed of two former 1400-series “BU” motors sandwiched around a lone former trailer.

SECTION 12, PARAGRAPH 12 AS REVISED

Page 4, column 2, paragraph 2, line 11 — add the following:

THE “GREEN HORNET” AND THE “ZEPHYR”

In this vein both units did not even have automatic couplers but rather a mechanical “tow bar” at each end for emergencies; one compatible with Van Dorn-type couplers used on el cars and the other with the WABCO H-2 to interface with BMT’s steel subway cars.

DECEMBER, 2011 ISSUE

SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH 1 AS REVISED

Page 2, column 1, end of paragraph 1 — add the following:

One first-hand observer distantly recalled that it was usually on the southbound side (A1 track) when seen late in its life, by which time the stature of Downtown Brooklyn as an important shopping and entertainment center had significantly declined, thanks in large part to the convenience and expansion of subway travel to and from Manhattan.

FEBRUARY, 2012 ISSUE

SECTION 2, PARAGRAPHS 6 AND 7 AS REVISED

Page 10, column 1, paragraph 1, line 9 — after “Franklin Avenue,” add the following:

...with a fairly long siding inserted between the express tracks from just east of Lafayette Avenue to just west of Clinton-Washington Avenue.

Page 10, column 1, end of paragraph 2 — add the following:

(Continued on page 8)

History of the A Train

(Continued from page 7)

It was recently discovered that the “box” beam centers above the express tracks under Pitkin Avenue (from Pennsylvania to Euclid Avenues) are more widely spaced than the otherwise-typical 5 feet in deference to the Fulton Street El’s footings, and had to be underpinned during the subway’s

original construction in the 1930s.

MARCH, 2012 ISSUE

SECTION 13, PARAGRAPH 2 AS REVISED

Page 2, column 1, paragraph 2, line 13 — after “trucks,” add the following:

...which would result in a complete (and very expensive) frame replacement.

ERA MEMORIES by Frank Miklos

Editor's Note: The following article originated in an email that discussed riding the final trolleys in Washington, D.C.

I did make the last day of Baltimore PCC cars, November 2, 1963. I took an early train from Trenton, where I had arranged to meet another railfan from New Jersey who had boarded in Newark. In Baltimore there were railfans all over the place with cameras. I remember boarding one car and taking a seat behind two railfans. We started a conversation and learned that they both also came from New Jersey. One was Al Holtz and the other was Walter Zullig. That evening I rode a fantrip that was operated by ERA. It ran all night, covering the entire system, and it was dawn when the car pulled into the Irvington carhouse. During the course of the trip we passed regular cars making their last trips, and before our trip ended we started passing buses making their first runs. That was when the reality really struck. There was one fantrip car still on the line, and as a gag our Motorman waited out of sight on the loop track in the back of the barn until he heard the wheels squealing on that car turning into the building. He then pulled through the barn and back onto the street for the short trip to the nearby Irvington loop. When the people on the other car got wind of what we had done, they followed suit. They were a local group from Baltimore who were not about to allow an out-of-town group have the

honor of making the last run. The ERA trip, however, did make the last run from Catonsville. On that trip I sat in front of a railfan from Brooklyn named Arthur Lonto. It was the first time I met him. Years later, just before I retired from NJ Transit, I was having lunch with one of our supervisors from the Port Authority Bus Terminal. Somehow the subject of the Baltimore light rail system came up, and he mentioned that he was there on the last day of PCC operation and that he was on a car that was chartered by ERA. He remembered the incident with the two cars jockeying for the honor of the last run at the Irvington carhouse.

After riding all night on the Baltimore PCC fantrip, we realized that this may be the last opportunity to ride four different trolley systems in one day without flying between cities, so we stopped off in Philadelphia on the train back from Baltimore. We rode on the Philadelphia Transportation Company system before going out to 69th Street for a ride on one of the Red Arrow trolley lines. After that we took a train from Philadelphia to Newark for a ride on the City Subway. Four systems in one day! I didn't get home until after 10 PM, meaning that I had gone for over 36 hours without any sleep, but I had a great time doing all that I did. I seriously doubt that I would have the energy to do that today.

Third Avenue's Poor Financial Condition Led to its Car Rebuilding Program 75 Years Ago

(Continued from page 4)

could not start until the doors were closed.

Doors were operated from a push-button through a selector switch, allowing the Motorman to open the front half of the front door, or both halves of the front door, with or without energizing the treadle door.

Car 555 was operated in polished aluminum finish and 554 was painted tan with red striping below the windows.

Although Third Avenue's older cars ran for 30 or 40 years, the Huffliners, which were replaced by buses, were taken out of service when they were only ten years old. Aluminum cars 551-600 were apparently scrapped and steel cars 601-625 were sold to Brazil, where they continued operating for several years.

Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 281

by Randy Glucksman

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Although the law banning smoking at Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North rail stations went into effect on November 13, 2011, enforcement did not begin until February 15, 2012. Violators can be ejected from the property and face fines of up to \$50 or imprisonment of not more than 30 days, or both. This law does not cover Metro-North stations in Connecticut.

In response to a question raised at the March meeting of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA concerning the future routing of Metro-North trains into New York Penn Station, Chairman Joe Lhota said trains of both railroads could operate there. (This topic was reported in last month's *Bulletin*.) Mr. Lhota also said that he disagrees with some Long Island lawmakers who say that there is no room. He also said: "I can't accept something never happening. We're examining it...You just can't close doors. There might not be enough room in the LIRR section, but he would negotiate with the other railroads (Amtrak and NJ Transit)" to see if Metro-North could be accommodated.

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD (EAST)

The rebuilt and expanded Cortlandt station (Hudson Line) was dedicated at a February 15 ceremony. The new facility includes an overpass extension that ties the original station east of the tracks with a new entrance on the west side off Route 9A, with new parking and a landscaped, canopy-covered, intermodal drop-off plaza. The new overpass has a heated waiting area with numerous benches and a coffee concession. Both east and west parking lots and the center island platform are served by elevators and enclosed staircases.

Ridership for the month of January, at 6,588,015, was 4.1% higher than January, 2011. Last January, 6,273,893 passengers were carried.

New timetables were issued effective April 1. However, details were not available at publication time.

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD (WEST)

Effective January 9, Quiet Cars came to the New Haven Line. Eighteen AM and PM peak hour trains are in the program. Trains with Quiet Cars have a "Q" in the column below the train number.

New timetables were to be issued effective April 1. However, details were not available at publication time.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Since his report in last month's *Bulletin*, member Bill Zucker observed M-8s 9106-7, 9114-5, 9136-7, 9168-9, 9174-7, and 9180-1. With these additions, the following cars have been accounted for: 9100-23, 9126-39, 9142-57, 9162-9, 9172-7, and 9180-1.

The latest update on Metro-North's website is February 6, and shows 78 M-8s are in service.

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

New timetables for the period February 26 through May 13 were issued. The only cover with any indication of a service change is the Montauk Branch, where over the weekends of April 10-12, 17-19, and 24-25 the bridge over the Shinnecock Canal will undergo rehabilitation. Bus shuttles will operate between Speonk and Montauk. West of Speonk, rail service operates. A special timetable titled ***East of Speonk Shinnecock Canal Bridge*** will be issued.

This timetable edition also accommodates construction work on these branches:

RONKONKOMA: Due to renewal of the Wicks Road railroad crossing in Brentwood overnight on weekends, three westbound trains had their schedules adjusted between 13 and 27 minutes.

OYSTER BAY: Off-peak on weekdays, grade crossings are being renewed at Sea Cliff Avenue in Sea Cliff, IU Willets Road in Albertson, and Duck Pond Road in Glen Cove. One eastbound off-peak train and one westbound off-peak train are canceled, resulting in trains running every two hours instead of hourly until peak service resumes.

LONG BEACH: Also weekdays, off-peak, ties are being installed between Jamaica and Valley Stream. Eastbound trains depart three minutes later and westbound trains three minutes earlier.

BABYLON: Weekend track work between Freeport and Wantagh will result in adjusted train times of up to nine minutes.

CITY TERMINAL ZONE: Following completion of weekend Atlantic Viaduct work between Atlantic Terminal and East New York, Hempstead and Far Rockaway weekend schedules to and from Brooklyn were adjusted between 1 and 5 minutes to accommodate the Freeport-Wantagh track work.

In order for Sperry Rail Testing to take place, a special timetable was issued for the Montauk Branch for March 12-15. Depending on the day, riders had to switch to/from trains/buses at Speonk, Patchogue, or Babylon.

The Long Island Rail Road also reported higher ridership for the month of January, exceeding last January's total by 3.7%. The actual numbers are 6,431,658 vs. 6,042,091.

NJ TRANSIT

On February 28, while my train was en route to Secaucus, the train's Conductor announced that due to a track condition, passengers bound for New York Penn Station should ride to Hoboken and use PATH, which was cross-honoring rail tickets. The email alert was sent out at 6:34 AM, and within minutes additional notifications

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tions went out regarding *Midtown Direct* service being rerouted to Hoboken, and the usual cross-honorings being put into place. I went to Hoboken, as did the majority of my fellow passengers. *Midtown Direct* service resumed at 7:39 AM, and following another incident at 9:51 AM where a disabled train was in one of the tunnels, service was reported on or close to schedule before 10:30 AM.

On two consecutive days, March 5 and 6, problems in one of the North (Hudson) River Tunnels caused single-tracking between Secaucus and New York Penn Station. The usual procedures were put in place: *Midtown Direct* service to Hoboken, cross-honoring with NJ Transit and private bus carriers and PATH. Having used the PATH option the previous week, I decided to take my chances on any delays caused by the single-track operation, and the difference was less than ten minutes. The PATH option the previous week took over 20 minutes. For the March 6 delay, NJ Transit issued the following explanation: Train #3806 (3:47 AM Trenton), incidentally the first eastbound AM train, encountered damaged overhead wires in the south tube. Before a rescue engine could be dispatched, the wires had to be removed. This process took until 8 AM. Delays, which were initially 10-15 minutes, soon became 20-30, then 30-45, and then 45-60 minutes. Service in and out of Hoboken was subject to 10-15-minute delays. The final alert, which was sent at 11:45 AM, reported service as operating normally in and out of New York Penn Station. I was unable to learn the cause of the previous day's delay, but everything was cleared up by 8 AM.

Had the other the aforementioned incidents not occurred, I would not have reported that on March 8, between 7:30 and 9:40 AM, Northeast Corridor riders experienced 10-15 minute delays due to an opening of the Portal Drawbridge. I included this delay so that our members who are not commuters would have some sense of what commuting several hours a day sometimes entails.

Ticket vending machines (TVMs) are in the process of being upgraded. Some of the enhancements include the ability to accept multi-payment options: cash, credit, or debit cards, and Transit Benefit cards. Testing has been conducted at New York Penn Station to permit use of contactless bank cards and smart phones that have the Google Wallet App. Whenever I am in the proximity of a TVM where the purchaser is using, for example, a \$20 bill for a fare costing a few dollars, the sound of the dollar coins being returned as change makes me feel like I am in a casino and the person has won a jackpot. Well, that may soon come to an end, because a pilot program has been launched at New York Penn Station and at the HBLR Exchange Station that offers \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills as change rather than the one-dollar coins.

(One of my former bosses preferred the dollar coins.)

Signs indicating the Quiet Car have been appearing in Hoboken Division trains. The first time I saw one of these signs, the train crew placed it on the ceiling of the "B" end, where passengers board. Several days later, another crew taped the sign to the storm door. When I asked if there was a policy as to where the sign should be placed, the Conductor told me no. He just put it where thought the passengers would see it.

Each year, additional North Jersey Coast Line service operates between Bay Head and Long Branch in support of the St. Patrick's Day Parade that takes place in Belmar. This year, the event was held on Sunday, March 4. Hourly service ran between the aforementioned stations, eastbound (9:21 AM-9:21 PM) and westbound (8:46 AM-10:46 PM).

At least five Comet Vs, 6505, 6210, 6576, 6579, and 6036, have been partially "wrapped" to advertise Ameri Health of New Jersey. Four (not 6505) were on a Pas- cack Valley Line train that I rode several times during March.

New timetables were to be issued effective April 1. Details will be reported in next month's **Bulletin**.

Member Bob Wright wrote that on a trip to New York during February he noticed an Arrow III with a painted gray roof. He asked a colleague in New York about this and was advised a number of the cars have received this treatment. "Not sure if anyone else has noticed (or why the roofs are getting painted)."

As was anticipated by most of the railfan community last fall, ACES service will not return. According to report on March 9, the service lost money during its three-year run (Surprise! Surprise!).

In mid-February, NJ Transit released the results of its latest customer satisfaction survey, which was the third since the program began last year. Overall satisfaction was 5.1 on a scale of 0 to 10, down from 5.3 in the previous period. Rail service scored 4.1. The survey polls bus, rail, light rail, and AccessLink riders, asking about facilities, scheduling, vehicle conditions, communications, on-time performance, and fares. The survey was taken in early November, 2011, right after the October Nor'easter. During this period, 95% of service operated on time.

Member Bob Vogel sent photos showing that construction is now underway to build the Atlantic City Line platforms of the Pennsauken Transit Center. Last year, work was complete for the companion *RiverLine* station.

RiverLine trains continued operating on a modified Sunday schedule due to ongoing repairs from Hurricane Irene. A PDF of this schedule, which is dated November 7, 2011, is posted on NJ Transit's website. In addition, under Transit Advisories were details that an embankment between Roebling and Bordentown had been extensively damaged by the hurricane. A March update reported that work had been completed on the second

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retaining wall and work was now underway on a third wall.

The mayors of Englewood and Leonia submitted letters to NJ Transit for the Northern Branch DEIS. However, Englewood Mayor Frank Huttle said a primary concern is a proposal to eliminate 128 on-street parking spaces in the business district, something that would have to be changed for him to support the plan. "Loss of on-street parking spaces in the Central Business District is completely and utterly unacceptable to Englewood, as it would decimate our CBD," he wrote. In his letter, Tenafly Mayor Peter Ruskin also raised concerns about the effect the light-rail line would have on his borough's business district, saying it would cause traffic at already stressed intersections and eliminate 90 parking spaces, 85 jobs in six businesses, and five residential units."

METROPOLITAN AREA

Replacement of the 1955-built Tappan Zee Bridge has been in the news for many years, actually since then-Governor George Pataki suggested it in 1998. There have been studies, which determined that the existing bridge cannot be rehabilitated, and must be replaced. Until late last year, a new bridge was to be constructed with a commuter rail and bus rapid transit capability, although neither would have been available on Day One of the new bridge's operation. The bridge was a significant part of the I-287 Corridor Project. That all changed when a decision was made in Washington, D.C. that a highway-only bridge would be built, and as quickly as possible, using a design-build approach. There were public meetings in Westchester and Rockland Counties last October (November **Bulletin**), where the officials heard from many residents, including your News Editor, that the new bridge must have a mass transportation component.

On February 23, a contractor drilled core samples of the soil below where the new bridge would stand. Public hearings which are required as part of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) process were held in Rockland County on February 28 and two days later in Westchester County. Again I spoke at the meeting in Rockland with my remarks supporting the construction of a bridge that included commuter rail and bus rapid transit.

AMTRAK

The New York Times (March 10) reported that Queens City Councilmember Peter F. Vallone, Jr., who represents the area where the Hell Gate Bridge stands, is making an issue that the bridge needs a paint job. Amtrak owns the 3½-mile-long steel span, which is a vital link in its Northeast Corridor Line. When opened in 1916, the original lead-based paint lasted 60 years. Use of that type of paint is no longer permitted due to health risks. In 1991, Mr. Vallone's father (then Speaker of the

City Council) managed to get Congress to appropriate \$55 million to paint the bridge. Instead of using a conventional color such as gray, Amtrak wanted red – so the bridge was painted in a blended color called Hell Gate Red. Four coats (two coats of epoxy primer, a red urethane finish and then a clear finish, all designed to protect the surface from corrosion, ultraviolet rays, and salt from the river water below) were required in a process developed by Valspar, a large paint company. Even before the job was completed, the paint began to fade. There were lawsuits, which were finally settled after a few years.

The Spring/Summer timetables were issued effective April 1.

The fifth annual National Train Day will be on May 12. Celebrations will take place in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, and other cities.

MUSEUMS

During a recent trip to Maryland, my son Marc came across a former Baltimore & Ohio RDC-2, which had been placed at the Gaithersburg, Maryland rail station. Marc found a posting on the Internet, reporting that the car arrived on the overnight of January 12-13, 2012. Originally purchased by the B&O Railroad in September 1953, in later years this car was re-numbered and sold to Maryland DOT, for which it operated in MARC service as #3. After a rebuilding to restore some of its original features, for unknown reasons It now carries the number "1951." I emailed the B&O Museum, which did the restoration work, asking how this car came to have this number, but did not get a response. MARC's Brunswick Line trains serve Gaithersburg. CSX freights pass this station daily. Amtrak's Capitol Limited (Trains #29/30) passes through, but does not stop at Gaithersburg.

MISCELLANEOUS

When Congress failed to extend the \$230 monthly transit benefit last year that transit riders could use from pre-tax income, the amount dropped to \$120. Locally, the New York State Senate passed legislation to make this a state benefit at \$240. The next step was up to the New York State Assembly, which, after approval, would send the bill to the Governor for his signature.

On March 11, New York U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer held a press conference in New York Penn Station to announce that the U.S. Senate Transportation bill would restore this benefit retroactively to January 1. The House of Representatives must also approve the bill.

In response to the proposed House Transportation Funding Bill, H.R. 7, President Obama promised to veto the bill if it came to his desk (March **Bulletin**). **Mass Transit** Magazine reported that the President's proposal to spend nearly half a trillion dollars over a six-year period would not get Congressional support. House Republicans have proposed spending about \$260 billion over nearly five years, but the bill is drawing fire from so many quarters that the ability of Speaker

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John Boehner (R-Ohio), to get it passed was in doubt. In fact, a vote was postponed until February 27 at the earliest, but it has not taken place at this writing.

The Congressional Quarterly (March 5) reported that Speaker John Boehner "sidelined" Rep. John Mica after the aforementioned proposed bill was attacked by all sides. The task for coming up with a multi-year transportation bill has been given to Representative Bill Shuster (R-Pennsylvania). A short-term bill expired on March 31. Rep. Shuster's father was Bud Shuster, who headed the House Transportation Committee from 1995-2000. According to news reports, it is likely that the House of Representatives would approve a version of the Senate bill.

INDUSTRY

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Norfolk & Western/Southern Railway merger, which took place in 1982, up to 18 diesels will carry the paint schemes of predecessor railroads. They include Central of Georgia, Conrail, Erie, Erie Lackawanna, Lehigh Valley (red), New Haven (not definite yet), New York Central, Nickel Plate Road, Norfolk & Western (blue), Penn Central, Pennsylvania (Tuscan Red), Pittsburgh & West Virginia, Reading, Savannah & Atlanta, Southern, Tennessee, Alabama & Georgia, Virginian, and Wabash. A poster was circulating on the Internet depicting these schemes, and when one of our members requested information on how one could be obtained, another member replied, "There's chatter elsewhere that although NS's intentions are real, the poster is faked by a railfan."

During 2011, transit ridership in the United States grew as Americans took 10.4 billion rides. This is a billion more than they took in 2000, and the second most since 1957, according to the American Public Transportation Association. The higher numbers can be attributed to employment gains and the increasing cost of gas – over \$4 per gallon in many areas.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

In the New York metropolitan area, both MTA railroads operated additional service to and from the St. Patrick's Day Parade, which took place on a Saturday. On both railroads, alcohol was not allowed on station platforms or aboard trains.

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD: Three extras were operated in each direction on the Port Washington, Ronkonkoma, and Babylon Branches. The Babylon extra service operated from/to Wantagh due to the track work project (please see above). There was one extra westbound PM train on the Montauk branch following the St. Patrick's Day Parade, which was held in Montauk.

METRO-NORTH (WEST): One extra train in each direction between Port Jervis/Secaucus/Hoboken

METRO-NORTH (EAST): Fifteen extra inbound trains were operated. There were seven on the Hudson and four each on the Harlem and New Haven. At Poughkeepsie, Beacon, and New Haven, tickets were collected prior to boarding trains. Outbound, there were two Hudson, one Harlem and three New Haven Line trains

NJ TRANSIT: One extra train between Dover, Long Branch, and Trenton and New York, in each direction.

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

MBTA fare increases would be limited to 25% and other state agencies as well as major nonprofits, universities, and public attractions would be asked to aid the "T" under a proposal presented on February 16 by the MBTA Advisory Board. The Board, which represents cities and towns served by the transit agency, offered the plan as an alternative to steep fare hikes and deep service cuts that were proposed in January. MBTA is not obligated to accept this recommendation. That would erase nearly \$70 million of MBTA's \$161 million deficit for the coming year, while a 25% fare increase could generate \$75 million, even with an expected loss in ridership. The remainder would come through a host of new payments, including a proposed 50-cent surcharge on tickets to major sporting events and concerts, as well as a wage freeze for MBTA employees.

On Presidents Day, MBTA operated a Saturday schedule on its commuter rail, subway, trolley, trackless trolley, and bus lines.

One of Todd's sources at Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad (MBCR) told him that during the week of February 13, a test train was operated from T.F. Green Airport to the still-under construction Wickford Junction station to gauge running times, with crew qualification to follow. Opening is anticipated for April or May. Several days later, Todd emailed: "I just passed Wickford Junction, heading south on (Amtrak) #2165 - looking good! Rumors still of a mid-April opening."

Repairs to the Red Line, which shut down subway service on weekends between Harvard and Alewife, were completed on time and within budget. Service resumed March 10 (December, 2011 *Bulletin*).

The warmer winter weather in the Northeast has been welcomed by many, especially MBCR, as it has seen fewer service delays. **The Globe** also reported that the better performance is also due also to greater investment by the "T" and MBCR, and better deployment of resources.

On March 9, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and MBTA announced a new real-time travel information collaborative initiative designed to provide I-93 southbound commuters information about the Lowell Line rail option. A variable message sign (VMS) positioned just after the I-93 Concord Street

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exit (exit 39) will display the time of the next scheduled train departing from the Anderson-Woburn Regional Transportation Center during weekday morning commutes. The message will be displayed until several minutes before the next departure to allow customers enough time to exit I-93 and drive safely to the station. This initiative will be in use for the 5:55-11:35 AM departures. Thanks to member Todd Glickman for these reports.

The New Hampshire Watchdog reported that the state of New Hampshire dropped plans that would have spent \$250 million on a rail study to connect Lowell, Massachusetts and Nashua, New Hampshire. The plan had drawn the ire of Republicans in the State Legislature, who dubbed it "senseless" and a waste of money. Transportation Commissioner Chris Clement said that the state does not have the funding to maintain the existing roads. Former Transportation Commissioner George Campbell made the Capital Corridor project a top priority, and repeatedly sought federal funds to pay for its construction, but this is not so for the new guy.

LINDENWOLD, NEW JERSEY

PATCO began a three-month pilot of Quiet Cars on March 1. What is different about this program is that it will be in effect 24 hours a day, Mondays through Fridays, in the last car of each train. In the lead-up to this initiative an on line survey was conducted, which showed that riders favored quiet cars. Another survey will be taken at the end of the pilot.

In answer to a question posed in an email, member Bill Vigrass reported: "PATCO no longer operates one-car trains and has not done so for a number of years. Operations has always disliked the singles because they had two extra air reservoirs for single car emergency braking, provided in case a single car lost its regular air brake and was coming down the bridge. Intelligent design, but it meant that it took longer to pump up a train containing singles after an emergency brake application. More importantly, PATCO has always experienced unexpected crowds in off-peak times in downtown Philadelphia as when a theatre or concert or sporting event lets out. A single was simply overwhelmed. While PATCO operations planning tries to keep up with events, there were always some that were not well publicized that would generate 100 or 200 passengers during an evening weekend or other time. A double could handle it, but not a single. Operations is much happier with two-car trains. All remaining 24 singles will be converted to 12 doubles in the rebuild program. The first two are at Hornell now. Single car 116, which was damaged beyond repair by internal fire from floor heaters, will be a mockup prototype."

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Member Dave Safford puts his own take on these

news reports from **The Philadelphia Inquirer**. "It's never where you want it. SEPTA is in the position of trying to flog off a surplus Center City railroad tunnel. This branches off from the former Reading Main Line, a few hundred yards north of the Art Museum, and travels 2.1 miles, over half underground, in a 52' wide tunnel, with the rest largely in a deep cut, to the location of the former Reading Terminal. It formerly brought newsprint to the **Inquirer**, grain to an on-line elevator, and passengers from the Reading to the terminal, but the **Inquirer** has moved to Manayunk, the granary is an architect's office, and the terminal is part of the Convention Center, and the line sits, track removed, empty and decaying. Somehow it, and the viaduct that brought the electric lines to the terminal, have been gifted to SEPTA, but SEPTA has no use for it or money to adapt it if they did. Meanwhile it sits badly in need of maintenance, and an "attractive nuisance", tempting the young to break their necks inside so that their parents can sue. So now they are trying to promote a deal to turn the entire system — tunnel, cut, and viaduct — into a "linear park." Clearly the scenic value of an abandoned tunnel cannot be overestimated. Cost is estimated at \$80 million, which is in nobody's budget, but various civic associations are trying to scare up enough cash to at least get things started.

"On February 23, SEPTA, rather grumpily, awarded Ansaldo STS USA Incorporated a \$98.7 million contract for a positive train control system, and a related \$1.7 million contract to Independence Constructors Corporation for necessary right-of-way work. This work is required to be complete by December 31, 2015 for compliance with federal law. SEPTA noted, however, that this work will, over the next three years, displace other urgently needed capital projects. The impetus for the federal requirement was a crash in Los Angeles that killed 25 people and injured over 130 others.

"Employment is up in a specialized industry: stealing copper wire and cable from railroad lines. The loss of power and communications cables to thieves attracted by the near-record prices of scrap copper (\$3.50/lb.) has increasingly delayed trains and endangered passengers. Amtrak lost 300 feet of wire in January, delaying NJT trains. This was the reason for one of three related delays on NJ Transit since the first of the year. SEPTA averages three delays a month, and spends \$500,000 annually to repair or replace damages from copper scavengers. Installations are being armored or other materials substituted for copper (PVC for copper pipe, for example), but this, too, has a cost and is not always practical. The unkindest cut is that thieves caught are given minimum fines or time because the cash value of the stolen material is relatively low."

Lee Winson added: "Cut wires can send rogue electric currents running through station hand rails, water pipes, or even the ground. The SEPTA thefts are part of a

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much broader scavenging epidemic ravaging transit agencies, power utilities, residential properties, sculpture grounds, and abandoned buildings." Lee sent an update that on February 24, a 40-year old man from Robeson Township was arrested for cutting signal wires. He told police that he thought that the wires were out of service and that he was allowed to cut them. He was arraigned before a district judge and sent to Chester County Prison in lieu of \$75,000 bail.

Related to the news item above, member Frank Pfuhler sent a report about the Connecticut Trolley Museum (Warehouse Point) in East Windsor. According to the report from nbcconnecticut.com, the thieves broke into a storage barn shortly after 12 noon on February 18, destroying woodwork and stripping copper and brass from 4 trolleys. The damage was said to be in the thousands of dollars. Another report added that the damaged cars included Connecticut Company 1326 and 840 and Centerville, Albia & Southern freight motor 101.

The Delaware Valley Rail Passenger, published by the Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers, Incorporated, in its December, 2011 edition, reported the financial performance of SEPTA's commuter rail lines. These figures in the table below were based on the number of peak cars.

ROUTE	WEEKDAY RIDERS	PEAK CARS	OPERATING RATIO
Media/Elwyn	10,599	22	70%
Norristown	10,632	22	60%
Warminster	9,130	20	59%
Paoli/Thorndale	22,852	64	54%
West Trenton	12,826	36	50%
Wilmington	9,322	30	46%
Doylestown	14,980	40	46%
Airport	5,560	9	45%
Fox Chase	5,141	14	43%
Cynwyd	601	2	43%
Chestnut Hill East	5,188	11	42%
Trenton	11,782	34	39%
Chestnut Hill West	5,282	14	38%
System Total	123,865	318	49%

In the table below is the data for SEPTA's other rail lines:

ROUTE	WEEKDAY RIDERS	OPERATING RATIO
Market-Frankford Line	189,610	49%
Broad Street Subway	127,470	44%
Subway/Surface:		
10	16,501	49%
11	18,617	50%
13	18,220	43%
34	18,889	48%
36	18,543	40%
15	10,570	28%
Norristown High-Speed Line	9,275	28%
101	3,500	24%
102	2,900	28%

Although there were no tables for the trolley bus lines, DVARP reported that they rated well.

Lee Winson wrote: "SEPTA website reported there would be numerous runs of Silverliner Vs over the weekend of February 17-18, so I went out to get some photographs. Because of the schedules, I was able to plan a "circle trip" as you'll see below. The weather was moderate. My first stop was St. Martin's (Chestnut Hill West Line) to catch an outbound SL V for a photo similar to that in the Don Ball PRR book. I then planned to go to Chestnut Hill West and get more photos while the train was on layover. However, it was announced on the PA that the train had mechanical problems and was canceled. There wasn't even a substitute train. Also, the subsequent scheduled inbound run from Chestnut Hill West was canceled, too. I killed some time walking along Germantown Avenue. Although it was cool outside there were a lot of people out walking. There are some empty stores on the avenue but I think there are some newcomers. The Borders bookstore at the top of the hill is closed and empty. My next stop was Fox Chase. The train from Chestnut Hill West was to go to Fox Chase via Center City and I thought I could get more pictures at Fox Chase. I also wanted to see the new station building that was built last year. While the inbound run from Chestnut Hill West was canceled, a Silverliner IV set from Center City to Fox Chase was substituted. My first photo was at the grade crossing of Oxford Avenue and the railroad track, a few blocks south of the station, an interesting location. I can't believe that in all the years I lived in the northeast I never went to that location for a photo. After that, I took a few pictures of the station.

"I then drove to Torresdale, where Silverliner Vs were scheduled close together in both directions. The outbound train had them, but the inbound train had SL IVs. There was a new inbound station building. It ap-

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peared that more parking spaces were created at Torresdale. At both Fox Chase and Torresdale stations, the Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA), not SEPTA, operates parking lots. The price was the same (\$1/day), but SEPTA does not charge on weekends while PPA does. There are electronic kiosks instead of plain parking meters. Most SEPTA lots still use coin-slot-panel boxes. (One day at Yardley the panel box was open and coins were all over the ground.) So I ended up with only one SL V picture. It was still an interesting day as I haven't been to Fox Chase or Torresdale in many years. On Verree Road there are new developments on what I thought was parkland. Holy Family College has expanded, eliminating some wooded sections of their campus. On Grant Avenue there were a number of new shopping centers, though there were also a number of boarded-up buildings. The buildings were jammed tightly together; now that I've lived in the suburbs I'm used to more buffer space between developments. Later in the evening I took a walk to the Yardley station at 9 PM. The inbound train was made of up Budd Silverliner IIs. So, even in February, 2012, they are still being used on weekends. (I was lucky to get pictures of them at Trenton in January (both interior and exterior), see <http://world.nycsubway.org/perl/imgdate?20120215>, where they're posted.)"

Bob Wright added: "As of late in the week of February 13, this schedule was no longer being shown, so as of the week of February 20, trains slated to run with Vs were no longer called out separately. The implication is that there are enough Vs on the property that they are merely going to get dispatched just like other equipment and could show up on any train. The website update starting for the week beginning February 27 is similar, with no specific schedule in the Silverliner V portion of the website, just information on the cars and order. I noticed 711 on an AM inbound Cynwyd run on Tuesday, February 21 (they served this line earlier last year, but with 2-car trains instead of the normal single car used on this line)."

Finally, Lee wrote that SEPTA has posted a booklet about its Silverliner Vs, which can be found at <http://www.septa.org/service/rail/silverliner-brochure.pdf>.

Member Alfred Gaus, Jr. was kind enough to send me a "hard" copy of the Silverliner V brochure, which he wrote was distributed at the Philadelphia Auto and Flower Shows. In other news, SEPTA crews worked fast to remove the old low-level platform at the Ryers station (Fox Chase Line). "On March 5, it was cut up and lying on the ground along with several signs. The next day the very long concrete steps were all chopped up. I remember when the very old 'L'-shaped wooden steps were removed 17-20 years ago. They dated to the Reading days. SEPTA was already working to remove

the tarmac from the low-level platform. It is hard to believe that SEPTA still had not gotten around to tarring over the platforms at Ryers. Until 15-17 years ago it still consisted of loose cinders, etc." He closed with: "My father was a regular commuter at Ryers when we moved to Burholme around 1951-2. He worked for the Reading, then we moved to Fox Chase in September, 1961."

From **Cinders**: As of the end of February, these 77 cars were on the property: 701, 704-736, and 801-852. 702 is still undelivered and undergoing major retrofit. This car had been in Canada undergoing cold weather testing. The following Silverliner IIs and IIIs are now out of service: 213, 258, 269 (had "PENNSYLVANIA" on its letter boards), 9004, 9005 (Budds), and 221 and 222 (St. Louis). As of February 23, 35 of these cars remained in service, and they are: 203, 212, 215, 216, 218, 219, 252-256, 259-261, 266-268, 9001, 9006-10, 9012-6 (Budds), and 223, 225-227, 229, 230, and 235 (St. Louis). So many had been retired that a track was set aside to hold these them. By early March, the first of the scrap trains was ready to move to a point in New Jersey where the scrapping would occur. At the same time, a used equipment dealer, Sterling Rail, was advertising these cars for sale at \$65,000 each."

The remaining Hurricane Irene-damaged push/pull cars (2401, 2503, 2506, 2508, 2509, and 2512) and 380-381 (Silverliner IV) from the overflow of the Assunpink Creek in Trenton, are still out of service.

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

On March 25, PAT opened the 1.2-mile North Shore Connector from the Gateway station to the North Side station and the Allegheny station. North Side, like Gateway is underground, but Allegheny is elevated. Additional details next month.

WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

The Brunswick schedule changes that were to take place in January have been delayed due to "push back" from riders, according to member Steve Erlitz. The latest news is that there is no news. However, on April 2, Camden schedules were changed.

On February 15, VRE awarded a \$21 million contract for 8 bi-level gallery cars to Nippon Sharyo and Sumitomo Corporation of America (SCOA). The contract includes an option to purchase an additional 42, and if the options were exercised, would raise the total contract to \$119 million. The first eight cars (no breakdown was reported, cabs vs. trailers) are scheduled for delivery in 2014 and will allow retirement of the ex-Metra cars (built 1955-6) that have been in service for VRE since the late 1990s. VRE already has 71 similar cars also constructed by these firms. SCOA reports it has delivered 643 gallery cars to transit agencies in the United States.

With the experience of having heavier passenger loads on the early afternoon trains before the eve of a holiday weekend, such as Presidents Day, Virginia Rail-

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way Express (VRE) operated its longer train consists on Fredericksburg Line Train #303 and Manassas Line Trains #327 and 329 on February 17.

Seven public hearings were held between March 13 and 29 to discuss the proposed 3% fare increase. If approved, fares would rise during the first week of July.

During March, videos showing the first production model of WMATA's new cars, 7000, were posted on the Internet.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

Member Joe Canfield sent an article from **The North Carolina Journal**, which reported that Iredell County Commissioners voted not to help fund the \$452 million Red Line commuter rail project. The Commissioners said that they were worried that the project would end up costing more money and would not create the economic development that was anticipated. In addition, just one mile of the 30-mile line is within the county limits. Financing this project are the state of North Carolina (25%), Charlotte Area Transit System (25%); the seven local governments that the line would serve (Mecklenburg County, Iredell County, Charlotte, Huntersville, Cornelius, Davidson, and Mooresville) would pick up the remaining 50%.

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Construction of the Altamonte Springs station, one of 12 stations to be built in the first phase of SunRail, began on January 27. Phase I (31 miles) is scheduled to open in 2014.

CINCINNATI, OHIO

Railway Age reported that a groundbreaking ceremony was held on February 17 for the initial 3.1-mile loop (January **Bulletin**). Joining city officials were Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Federal Transit Administration Administrator Peter Rogoff. In response to those city officials who still oppose the project, Mayor Mark Mallory said: "The streetcar project has been approved by the City Council, it is a priority of the city administration, and it has been (supported) by voters twice at the ballot. This project will move forward." An order for streetcars is expected to be placed later this year.

DAYTON, OHIO

Proposals are due on April 10, for two "Dual Mode Heavy Duty Diesel Electric Trolley Buses" and an option for up to 200 coaches. This would occur following a one-year test period. At the present time, the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority operates 54 Electric Transit, Incorporated trolley buses, which are based on a design built by the Czech firm Skoda and delivered between 1995 and 1998. Thanks to Bill Vigrass for this news.

CHESTERTON, INDIANA

Thanks to member Jim Beeler, who sent copies of

NICTD's February 15 timetable, which replaced the June 1, 2011 edition and includes the new, higher fares.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Timetables were issued effective January 29 for the Milwaukee North (Fox Lake) and North Central (Antioch) Lines. Like the timetables issued last October (December **Bulletin**), the dates are prominently displayed at the top and also near the bottom in smaller type. Thanks to Jim Beeler for sending copies.

On February 17, Metra approved a \$1.8 million contract to study a 6-mile extension of the BNSF Aurora Line to Owego, which is located in Kendall County. This westward extension would include one intermediate station – Montgomery, which is in Kane County. Although Kendall County is not part of the six-county RTA, it would have to pay for this extension and may have to consider joining the transit agency. At the current time commuters have a park-and-ride lot in Oswego and use PACE Bus Route 907 (a 22-minute ride) to reach Aurora. There are three AM and PM trips. No funding for this project has been identified. Thanks to Jim for sending these articles from **The Chicago Tribune**.

Seven CTA Red Line stations are to receive a facelift under a federally funded \$57.4 million project. They are: Jarvis, Morse, Granville, Thorndale, Berwyn, Argyle, and Lawrence.

DENVER, COLORADO

For its proposed Northwest Rail Line, RTD is considering replacing commuter rail with Bus Rapid Transit due to significant cost increases. The cost of the Northwest Rail Line project has increased from \$894.6 million to \$1.7 billion following receipt of recent information from BNSF Railway.

DALLAS, TEXAS

Member Steve Siegerist had a correction about the article in the March **Bulletin** that states that the Dallas McKinney Avenue trolley turntable "is a former Texas Electric interurban bridge. Actually, the bridge carried the Cotton Belt Railroad over the Texas Electric in what is now North Dallas. When the DART LRT Red Line was built, in the early 1990s, on the former Cotton Belt right-of-way, the bridge was removed by McKinney troops for use as the turntable. DART constructed a new bridge for the Red Line trains, which is located between the Park Lane and Walnut Hill stations. A photo of this location is on page 184 of the Texas Electric Railway book by Johnnie Myers, issued as CERA Bulletin 121. The book refers to the railroad as the Southern Pacific, which was the parent company of the Cotton Belt (St. Louis Southwestern)."

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

The 3.1-mile extension to downtown Mesa has been recommended to receive an additional \$20 million in this fiscal year. Receipt of those funds, coupled to the \$35.5 million already received, will allow utility relocation to begin this spring. The \$200 million Central Mesa

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light rail extension will travel through downtown Mesa to Mesa Drive by late 2015/early 2016. More than half of the project's total funding has already been programmed using Proposition 400 and federal air quality funds.

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Effective April 7, additional Saturday service is being operated by *RailRunner*, with two extra trips in each direction.

PORTLAND, OREGON

After fare evasion had become a problem, transit officials decided to crack down. Last July, TriMet shifted to fare enforcement over education when checking fares. Six new supervisors were hired, bringing the fare inspection team to an equivalent of 18 full-time fare enforcers. The dedicated fare inspection team is augmented by all other supervisors spending an hour a day checking fares. As a result, in January, TriMet reported that 1,795 citations were issued to riders without a valid fare, a 48% increase in citations compared to January, 2011. Riders caught without a fare had an 82% chance of receiving a citation or exclusion; in January, 2011, they had a 35% chance. Riders without a valid fare face a \$175 citation or face exclusion for up to 90 days.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Member John Pappas observed Expo Line trains in testing and sent this report. "On February 17, I was at the rail junction at Washington & Flower, Expo trains were one or two cars and used both types of equipment (Nippon Sharyo cars from the Blue Line and Duewag P2000s assigned to the Expo Line). The problems of controlling the trains at the junction have apparently been solved. The Blue Line schedule now features a six-minute peak headway and is timed so that trains pass at the junction. That allows three minutes between it and the Expo trains. Expo will start with a 12-minute peak, which means there will be a missing cycle every 12 minutes. It takes almost three minutes to turn equipment from the inbound to the outbound platform at 7th-Metro Center, so that missing trip will help them get back in sync if they fall behind. The following day, I ventured to the Expo Park/USC station, which is on the ramp leading out of the underpass that avoids the Exposition-Figueroa intersection and takes the line onto Flower Street. It was interesting to see that everything running was three-car trains. For those of you who follow problems with picture-taking, ...I was accosted by one of the Expo construction supervisors, who advised me that I had been reported and it was illegal to take pictures of the trains. He wouldn't identify himself. I was standing on a public sidewalk at Exposition & Vermont when he walked up. He threatened that I would not want to be reported again. I followed up with MTA people I know, including the head of rail, and was told there

was no restriction against taking pictures, so who knows what authority this guy thought he had. I finally got my ride in on the Gold Line East L.A. branch, which also includes a tunnel section and two stations. The Breda cars on this line ride well and are comfortable, despite whatever shortcomings they had which canceled much of the order. Of course it is beyond a dream to once again ride across the First Street Bridge on a rail vehicle 49 years after the P Line was converted."

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

Member Pete Donner recently had the opportunity to visit Toronto and sent this report: "One of my objectives was to ride the new Toronto Rocket (TR) subway cars, which are being built by Bombardier. On the day I set aside to ride a trainset, I didn't have to wait long as I estimate at least 10 new trains were in service on the Yonge-University-Spadina Line. What first caught my eye was the sloped ends of the trains (similar to the first generation of BART cars) which serve as the Train Operator's cab and for the Guard (Conductor) on the opposite end who controls the opening and closing of the doors. The cabs are painted black, which surprised me, as a previous subway car order was delivered with black ends, which were subsequently painted silver as the black color was deemed to be a safety hazard for maintenance of way workers. The cabs are equipped with four doors (one on each side) enabling operating crews to enter/exit the cabs without having to traverse through the passenger area and providing for emergency exits if required. The sides of the trains are smooth, no external ribbing or fluting. Train sets are made up of six 75-foot compartmentalized cars with the overall length being just over 462 feet. The cab cars are numbered 5xx1 and 5xx6 with the middle cars numbered 5xx2 through 5xx5, with the numbers xx7 through xx0 not used. One such set is numbered: 5381-6. The cars are connected by an articulated section, which enables one to walk through the train without having to open any doors (similar to the BMT D-Types), thus creating an impression that the cars are larger than they actually are. Internally, the walls of the new cars are painted bright white and seats are finished in a burgundy colored fabric. Vertical and horizontal stanchions are placed throughout the car adjacent to the seating areas. Additionally, a horizontal grab rail is attached to the ceiling in the center of the car and individual metal handholds are attached to this rail. To prevent passengers from accidentally bumping into the handholds, they are spring-loaded into a horizontal position but can be swiveled to a vertical position and when released, automatically return to the horizontal position. Two display signs are included in each car showing the train destination, the next stop and which side the doors will open. TTC subway cars have maps of the heavy rail and Scarborough Rapid Transit lines posted throughout the car. On the new TR cars, future en-route stops are

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Around New York's Transit System

Excavation Completed for 7 Extension

MTA has finished digging the tunnels for the 7 extension from Times Square to 34th Street and Eleventh Avenue. Boring machines dug two deep tunnels under existing transit lines. The new tunnels pass through the abandoned lower level platform of the Eighth Avenue Line's 42nd Street station. Although parts of the platform remain, 7 riders will not be able to see them. The next obstacles are the Port Authority Bus Terminal and the roadways leading to the Lincoln Tunnel. The tracks then curve under Eleventh Avenue and pass under Amtrak and NJ Transit tracks. A soaring curved roof covers a 1,200-foot mezzanine located above a very deep terminal station at 34th Street.

The March, 2007 **Bulletin** reveals that except for the stations, the tunnels go downhill from Times Square to 34th Street. Grades are -3.75% for 1,141 feet from Times Square to Tenth Avenue and -3.0% for 1,650 feet from Tenth Avenue to W. 37th Street. The new terminal is more than 100 feet below the sidewalk, 52 feet lower than the Tenth Avenue station shell, and 97 feet lower than the Times Square station.

The February, 2012 **Bulletin** reports that NYC Transit is ordering additional cars to provide adequate service. Because the entire line will be equipped with a new CBTC signal system, R-142As will be rebuilt to R-188 specifications, CBTC-equipped, and transferred to 7.

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identified by a red light and previously served stops are shown in green. Transfer stations are shown in white or yellow (couldn't determine the exact color). The light for the next stop flashes as the train approaches the station. In addition to the visual displays, station names are automatically announced. At transfer stations, the audio announcement identifies the station as an "interchange station", not as a transfer station, and the lights for the stations on the other line are illuminated. Personally, I would switch the usage of the colors as green is usually associated with 'go or forward' while red can be associated with 'stop or past.'"

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

On February 5, the Israeli Cabinet approved the construction of Red-Med Rail Link that would connect Eilat and Tel Aviv and create an Asian-European cargo link as an alternative to the Suez Canal. This would reduce travel time to 2 hours, compared to the present 5 hours. Estimated to cost NIS 8.6 million (US\$2.3 million), the line will be 350 km (217 miles) long. According to **The Jerusalem Post**, following a trip to China last September, Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz said that the

The R-62As operating on 7 will be shifted to 6.

The city is paying \$2.1 billion for the new extension and it is confident that the subway will encourage building skyscrapers and stores, reviving this desolate area. It estimates that 35,000 passengers a day will use the new station by 2030.

Trains should start running by 2013, but construction delays could postpone the opening until 2014.

Assemblymembers Submit Plans to Rebuild Abandoned LIRR Branch

At a press conference on Liberty Avenue, two New York State Assemblymembers from Queens who have been working with transit experts for a year, unveiled a preliminary plan to rebuild the abandoned LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch. Service was discontinued on June 8, 1962. The Assemblymembers would like to open new or modernized stations at Aqueduct, Ozone Park, Woodhaven Junction, Brooklyn Manor, Parkside, and Rego Park. Fast service could be provided from Manhattan to Kennedy Airport, the new Convention Center, Rockaway, and Ozone Park. The sponsors have no estimate of the cost or the source of the funds to rehabilitate the line.

Because several people living near the right-of-way were opposed to a park, the Community Board rejected the proposal in 2007. Will they object to trains in their backyards?

Chinese had expressed an interest in the project.

FROM THE HISTORY FILES

60 YEARS AGO: On April 6, 1952, after conducting demonstration runs since 1948, trolley buses began operating in Mexico City. Mexico's capital city would ultimately purchase 813 no-longer-needed Brill, Marmon-Herrington, and St. Louis-built trolley buses from cities in the United States and Canada, including Birmingham, Cleveland, Dallas, Johnstown, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Montreal, San Francisco, St. Joseph, and Shreveport. According to a posting on the Internet, there are but ten lines remaining. Newer equipment was purchased in later years.

60 YEARS AGO: On April 27, 1952, the Cleveland Transit System ended trolley service on the Euclid Avenue Line. At the time there were still four remaining lines (**Headlights** June, 1952). Those too would be abandoned by January 24, 1954. Bill Vigrass told me that over the years studies were conducted on whether or not to restore trolley service to this route. The alternatives included light rail and trolley bus. At one time the latter was preferred, but in the end what residents got was a double-sided articulated hybrid bus.

News items and comments concerning this column may be emailed to ERAnewseditor@gmail.com.