

The Bulletin



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The Bulletin

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THIRD AVENUE BUILT ITS LAST TROLLEY CAR 75 YEARS AGO

In the previous issue, we explained how Third Avenue Railway started to modernize its fleet in 1930. In this issue, we will list the changes in assignments that took place when the rebuilt 1200s were placed in service on the following lines:

LINE	FIRST 1200s	ALL 1200s
Webster and White Plains Avenue	January 6, 1934	March 7, 1934
University Avenue	June 17, 1934	August 13, 1934
163 rd Street Crosstown	September 8, 1934	October 22, 1934
Ogden Avenue	N/A	December 20, 1934

In 1935, we observed the following assignment:

LINE	CARS
Webster and White Plains Avenue	1201-27
163 rd Street Crosstown	1228-49
University Avenue	1228-62
Ogden Avenue	1250-8; convertibles returned February, 1936

The 1200s were usually operated on lines listed above, but were occasionally operated on the other three lines. A few convertibles were operated in the rush hours. Because 1201-27 did not have tapered ends, they were usually operated on the long, straight Webster and White Plains Avenue Line with only two right-angle turns. An old-timer informed us that there was no clearance for cars operating in the opposite direction on the Gun Hill Road and Webster Avenue

curve.

As soon as the 1200s were placed in service, the following cars were transferred or taken out of service and scrapped:

DATE	CAR NUMBERS	CAR HOUSE	
		FROM	TO
May 5-17, 1934	234-241	Kingsbridge	West Farms
May 9, 1934	188, 192-196, 198, 199 (A)	West Farms	out of service
June-September, 1934	451-475	Kingsbridge	West Farms
July, 1934	1629-41, 1650	West Farms	out of service
August, 1934	235-246	West Farms	Kingsbridge
About August, 1934	1-15	Kingsbridge	Steinway
About August, 1934	176-187, 189, 190, 200 (A)	Steinway	out of service
August, 1934	71-75	Kingsbridge	Harlem
September, 1934	1601-5	Harlem	out of service
November, 1934	277-300	West Farms	Garden Avenue
November, 1934	768-780, 839-850	Garden Avenue	out of service
February, 1935	681-690	Kingsbridge	Harlem
About February, 1935	1606-27	Harlem	out of service

(A) Semi-convertibles

(Continued on page 4)

NEXT TRIP: NEW HAVEN SHOP TOUR, SUNDAY, MARCH 15

THE GENESIS OF “DASHING DAN,” PART THREE — Penn Station Opens and a Suburban Colossus Emerges by George Chiasson

AN END TO THE BEGINNING: THE LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD MAKES READY FOR THE OPENING OF PENNSYLVANIA STATION

Even as the officialdom from both railroads was playing up the start of operations into Pennsylvania Station during the spring of 1910, related construction and other improvements were continuing to engulf the Long Island Rail Road. Some were projects directly related to the New York Terminal that were delayed in completion; some were late-stage add-ons and just getting started; and others were natural upgrades that had no relation to the project at all. Whatever the case, each of these elements would eventually combine to create the classic suburban rapid transit railroad which came to personify LIRR, and still does a century later. Starting on June 16, 1910 electric trains from the Rockaway Beach Division began following the “Glendale cut-off” (that is, from both Rockaway Park and Far Rockaway to Long Island City, but excluding the “Loop” route through Valley Stream and Hammels) as an alternative to the Atlantic Division. These used newly-installed third rail past Woodhaven Junction and on the Main Line, including the newer trackage from Glendale to White Pot Junction, and from White Pot Interlocking at Remsen Lane to the area of Sunnyside Yard, as far as the Hunters Point Avenue overpass. Until being rerouted to Penn Station when it opened three months hence, they were stopped before entering the large mass of grade-level switch work that preceded the Long Island City terminal near Borden Avenue, all associated with Tower “A” Interlocking, which was then so complicated as to defy any attempt at third rail installation. Electrification of the terminal and its special work was omitted as a result, lest its use result in uninterrupted “gapping” and hazardous arcing that could confound operations and damage equipment. This situation was very much like that at Penn Station’s Tower “A” that led to the Pennsy’s use of overhead third rail at the west end of the terminal in Manhattan, but in this more traditional setting there was no such option so LIRR simply curtailed electric train operation short of the interlocking and conveyed the otherwise self-propelled coaches into its terminal with steam switchers. At Glendale Junction itself, an interesting new station called “Matawok” (for the nearby Matawok Land Company) was built between Trotting Course Lane and Myrtle Avenue on the grounds of the Weike Ribbon Factory. Informal use appears to have begun just after the nearby station at “Brooklyn Hills” was shut in May, with a more formal and very slim schedule of trains stopping there when service to Penn Station was started on the Rockaway Beach Division.

As spring progressed into the summer of 1910 and the Penn Station opening pulled ever closer into view, other measures were being taken to meet its expected chal-

lenges to existing capacity constraints, if not in terms of ridership then certainly in terms of operational integrity. As previously mentioned, third rail was finally added to the middle track of the Far Rockaway Branch in Queens, years after its 1904 triple-tracking, in an effort to create a better operational fit with the Ocean Electric. As part of overall electrification of the LIRR Main Line, the fourth track provided for in the 1909 “Maple Grove Relocation” (and now extended to “AC” Tower) was also finally laid between Metropolitan Avenue and a point just shy of Van Wyck, which in turn obviated the presence of the “Brighton Junction” lead to the Atlantic Division and direct access to Brooklyn. This process also foreshadowed a third reconfiguration of LIRR through Jamaica, for which the first related street work commenced on the northerly perimeter July 26 to form a new alignment for Archer Avenue (previously short, narrow Archer Street) and provide a temporary right-of-way through the future work zone, while construction was also begun to reposition Beaver Street on the southerly side. Both tasks were intended to allow a massive elevation of the right-of-way through the site of the new station, whose large building foundation lines were first surveyed the following day across what was then Carlton Street, a side road that was later to become Sutphin Boulevard. A newer and enlarged elevation then took shape through the area of the new Jamaica Station over the following couple of years, built from sandy spoils garnered at another of LIRR’s track relocation projects in distant Cold Spring Harbor on the branch to Wading River. To provide additional capacity for the projected needs of forthcoming “Rockaway Loop” and Long Beach MU service to Pennsylvania Station, a “fourth” electrified track was also added on the “Old Southern” alignment through Springfield Junction, from “SM” Cabin just east of the Laurelton station as far as “VN” Cabin just west of Valley Stream. Included was a second high platform at the Rosedale station for eastbound trains, located on the south side of the new track, which made the older (1906) installation in the middle a dedicated westbound stop. An entirely new gantry-style “SP” Tower was also built across all four tracks, replacing both the original wooden version from 1880 and the interim “cabins” created during the 1906 electrification, which were abolished soon after its completion.

Though still relatively new to its role as a suburban branch (as opposed to the original purpose of being a seaside excursion railroad) the former New York & Long Beach was also remade into a recognizable form of the Long Island Rail Road’s “Long Beach Branch” ahead of its start of service from Pennsylvania Station. Past “VN” Cabin at Valley Stream, where the branch to Far Rockaway diverged, two additional electrified main tracks

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The Genesis of “Dashing Dan”

(Continued from page 2)

were laid starting that spring along the southerly edge of the original South Side survey as far as the Lynbrook station. “PT” Tower, which had overseen divergence of the branch to Long Beach since its beginning, was closed and removed, with the junction from then on being remotely controlled from “VA” Tower at Valley Stream. The existing Lynbrook station layout with separate platforms for main line and branch to Long Beach remained, but from there a new track was added to the original New York & Long Beach right-of-way, which combined with the original single iron to create an electrified 2-track branch through South Lynbrook as far as Ocean Avenue. There the line reverted to a modified (and now electrified) version of its original single-track state, crossed the Mill River and continued into East Rockaway, proceeding from there to Long Beach as previous. Like Penn Station itself, each of these new tracks and their associated electrical facilities were (in general) completed as of August 27, 1910 and all was in apparent readiness for the service extension to Manhattan. LIRR employee familiarization “drills” on each of the electrified lines that were to receive trains from Penn Station began by the middle of that month, simulating most facets of the new operation. Personnel acclimation on non-electrified routes was deferred to a later date when the rolling stock for their inclusion at the new terminal became available.

With the addition of two new local stations between Penny Bridge and Bushwick Junction, lower profile changes were also accomplished in September, 1910 on the existing Montauk Division (former Southern) main line that were not directly related to the opening of Penn Station but rather a response to its own ongoing operations. One was Habermans, located at Berlin (50th) Street off Laurel Hill Boulevard (56th Road) and carried the name of a historic tin mill on the banks of Newtown Creek. The original company, later succeeded by Continental Can, produced cups, plates, and cutlery, among many items, for over a century and a half, its latter-day plant on 55th Avenue being served by LIRR local freight trains into the early 1980s. The other was the third LIRR station to be called “Maspeth,” this time located near the Grand Avenue underpass (which survives in 2014, albeit rebuilt) at approximately Hebbard Avenue (58th Drive). It was also at about this time that the second track was removed from the branch to Bushwick Terminal, while yet another attempt was made to institute a station stop in the industrial area that had consumed the Bushwick Branch, this time somewhat more successfully on the south side of the grade crossing at “Metropolitan Avenue.” A pilot “battery car” was placed on a year-round shuttle between Bushwick and Bushwick Junction (Fresh Pond) beginning on April 1, 1911, being succeeded by a two-car set after June of 1913. The first unit was delivered by Federal Storage Battery and carried the description “Beach-Edison” Car, while the second was built by the Railway Storage Bat-

tery Company (which may have been another name for the same concern), but whatever the case they looked like miniaturized trolleys or express motors, supported on a widely-spaced pair of single axles. As configured by 1914, car 1 was a combine and 3 a “coach,” with each having plugs that recharged the batteries for every trip at either end of the line. This couplet provided all Bushwick Branch service until it was discontinued on May 13, 1924.

A NEW ERA BEGINS-NUMBER 1: ELECTRIC COMMUTER TRAINS FROM PENN STATION

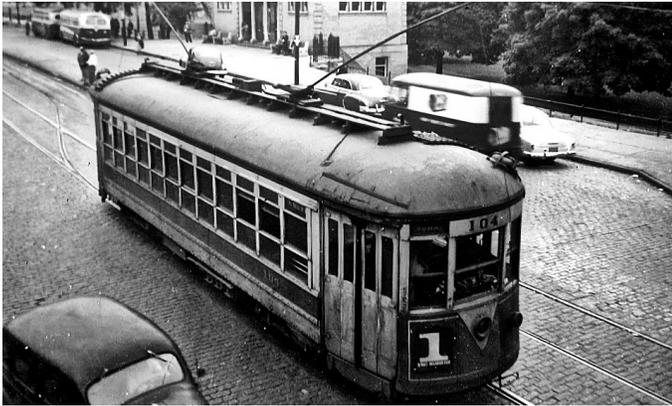
Starting on August 30, 1910 two daily inspection trains were officially sponsored by the Long Island Rail Road for each of the next four days. Guests were boarded by special invitation at the “commuter” side of Penn Station (Tracks 14-21), though each day a complementary PRR Special was separately dispatched from Philadelphia to accommodate that company’s participating officers. The well-polished LIRR charters (consisting of brand new MP-54 MUs) proceeded out of Penn Station via the as-yet-idle but complete Tower “A” Interlocking and through the North River Tubes to the westerly portals beneath Bergen Hill. From there they reversed course through Penn Station and traveled all the way to Valley Stream on the new, fully-electrified route via the Beaver Street station in Jamaica, then returned to Manhattan via Far Rockaway, the Glendale cut-off, White Pot Junction, and Sunnyside. Dry runs on both sides of Pennsylvania Station were going all-out by September 3, for not only were fully-crewed Long Island Rail Road trains meandering to and fro, but the Pennsylvania Railroad was by then making deadhead trips with regular consists from New Jersey to Sunnyside and back, including carefully-supervised and hand-timed changes of motive power at Manhattan Transfer. So were such skills collectively honed across the Labor Day Weekend that year, and after a final round of executive meetings, reflections, evaluations and minute adjustments, all that a full decade of enterprise had accomplished was, at long last, deemed ready for conveyance to (some of) the riding public.

Almost as soon as public notice of Pennsylvania Station’s “Grand” opening hit the New York newspapers on Sunday, September 4, groups of people began to assemble on the sidewalks outside its locked doors. The property even then was still in its last throes of construction and secured by officers of both the Pennsylvania Railroad and City of New York, who made occasional rounds and tried valiantly to keep order among the growing legions whose curiosity could hardly be contained through so many years of anticipation. As those with true insight were aware, the terminal’s first duties would be centered on its Long Island Rail Road component and therefore lack the totality of function that was expected to overwhelm the site when its true owners finally began to use it, as well as continue to conceal the magnificence held within. This is not to imply that LIRR would simply supply passenger service out of

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Third Avenue Built Its Last Trolley Car 75 Years Ago

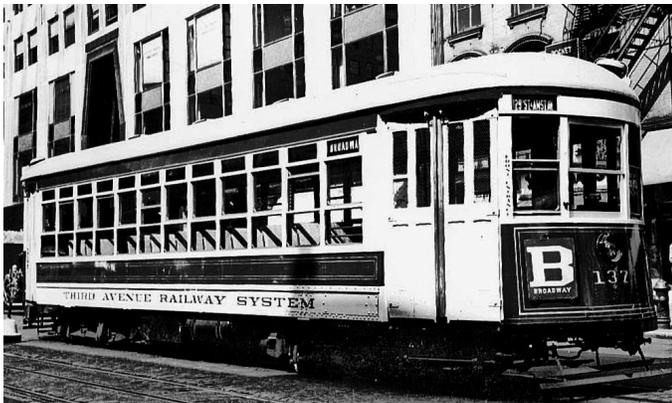
(Continued from page 1)



Car 104 at W. 242nd Street and Broadway, June 21, 1952.
Bernard Linder photograph



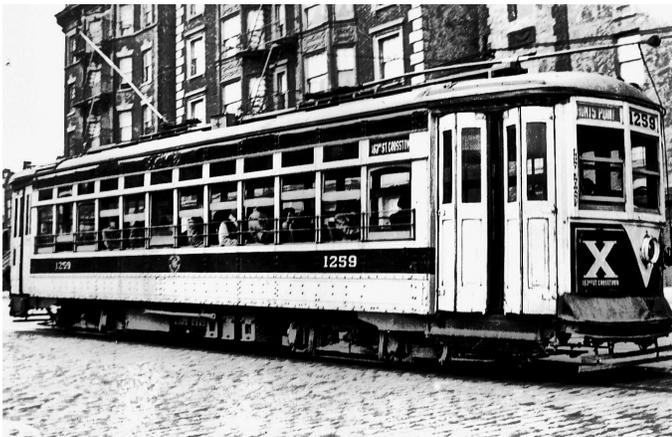
Car 125 on Bailey Avenue, December 27, 1947.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 137 in original paint scheme.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 180.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 1259 at E. 161st Street and Park Avenue, May, 1942.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 111 on Nepperhan Avenue in Yonkers.
Bernard Linder collection

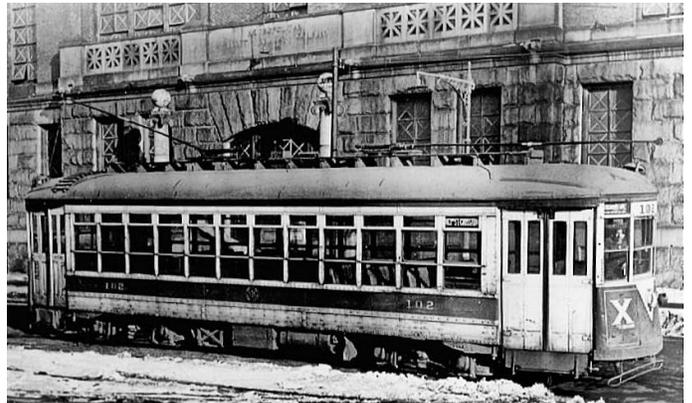
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Third Avenue Built Its Last Trolley Car 75 Years Ago

(Continued from page 4)



Car 101 at Columbus Circle in 1938 with original paint scheme.
Bernard Linder collection



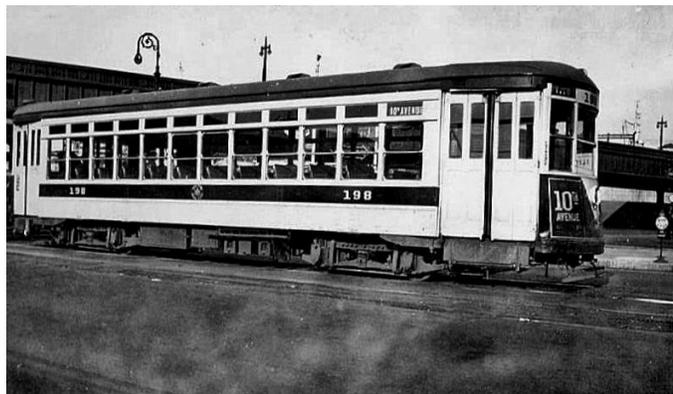
Car 102 at Kingsbridge Car House.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 126 at Harlem Car House, Third Avenue north of E. 129th Street.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 162 on Broadway at W. 46th Street, 1937.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 198 at W. 42nd Street Ferry, 1936.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 111 at New Haven Station, W. 1st Street, Mount Vernon, May 4, 1952.
Bernard Linder collection

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Third Avenue Built Its Last Trolley Car 75 Years Ago

(Continued from page 1)

In the early 1940s, the following large letters and small route names were printed on the dash of the cars listed below. The cars were usually operated on the lines painted on the dash. If they ran on another line, a large metal sign with the correct designation was hung on the dash where it covered the painted line.

CAR NUMBERS	LARGE LETTER	LINE
1201-30	W	WEBSTER & WHITE PLAINS AVE
1231-47	X	163 RD ST. CROSSTOWN
1248-62	U	UNIVERSITY AVE

The company spent \$200,000 purchasing and reconditioning the 1200s, which furnished comfortable, fast, and reliable service until buses replaced them in 1947 and 1948.

The company rebuilt its single-truck, 20-year-old 100s and 10-year-old 1600s, and was able to turn out fairly modern double-truck cars at a cost of \$6,000 a car.

Each car was cut in half, a center section was added, and new platforms were built at each end. Car 1605 was the prototype. After checking the car's performance, the company decided to rebuild the remaining single-truck convertibles.

Maximum traction single-motor trucks removed from scrapped cars or bought second-hand were rebuilt to two-motor trucks. Each car was equipped with four second-hand 35 HP, 600-volt d.c. reconditioned motors, providing higher acceleration and maximum speed than the older two-motor cars. Cost was reduced by salvaging trolley poles and bases, seats, air compressors, line switches, door engines, and brake cylinders.

Cars 101 and 156 were new cars. Rebuilt cars 102-150 were single-truck 100-series cars and rebuilt cars 151-155 and 157-200 were rebuilt single-truck 1600-series cars.

Cars operated in Manhattan until buses replaced them in 1946 and 1947. Several cars were sold to Lima, Peru, Vienna, Austria, and Bombay, India, while most of the remaining cars were equipped with trolley poles and were transferred to the Bronx until buses replaced them in 1948. A few cars spent their last days in Yonkers and Mount Vernon.

The Genesis of "Dashing Dan"

(Continued from page 3)

Penn Station; as time went on there would be baggage, express, and even mail to outward points, but for the interim, and certainly from the Pennsylvania Railroad, connecting passengers would remain captive to the Hudson River ferries and vagaries of Manhattan's local transportation network to even reach either Penn Station or LIRR at Long Island City. This body represented a healthy percentage of the new terminal's future potential ridership, which for the time being was denied its immediate benefit.

Setting a trend for what could be eternity, the first of the terminal's doors were opened to the public at 3:01 AM, in the pre-dawn hours of Thursday, September 8, and throngs of relieved Americans poured in after growing crowds had been milling about on Eighth Avenue and W. 33rd Street for almost two full days. As intimated above, the entire gathering was shepherded through the Eighth Avenue end and "minor" entries on W. 31st and W. 33rd Streets into the lower "Exit" Concourse, glimpsing but being diverted away from the more grandiose Main Concourse, Main Waiting Room, and Arcade portions, which would not be available until the Pennsylvania Railroad's operations were begun. The terminal's very first revenue move took place even as the body-bunched excitement above was still novel: schedules were distributed; questions answered (or not); and in some cases tickets to ride the new trains sold through the cramped, subterranean LIRR Ticket Office for true purpose or as a lark to the holder. At 3:36 one of LIRR's motor-baggage combinations (the actual unit lost in time, but an MP-54 coupled to one of the new MPB-54s) escaped for the Woodside station, where its cargo

of New York "bulldog edition" newspapers would be forwarded, cars and all, to Port Washington by steam engine. The first outbound passenger train of still-new MP-54 MUs (schedule number 1702) was loaded after the manned control gates in the lower concourse were opened at 3:30, then departed from the oversized platform at Track 19 with the first passengers amid news photographers and a celebratory fever at 3:41 AM. It followed the newspaper train to Woodside, where those bound for either Port Washington or Whitestone Landing were discharged onto the cramped low platform (a stubborn reminder of how archaic some aspects of LIRR remained) and retrieved by a steam-powered consist that was sent from Long Island City to follow the MUs. The electric train then continued on to (old) Jamaica, where separate connections were made available for other outward points whose steam-powered trains also originated at Long Island City and followed either the Main Line or Montauk Division across Queens. After Penn Station's first inbound set of MP-54s arrived (also from Jamaica) at 4:34 AM, its second outbound train was the following MU interval to Jamaica seven minutes later, at 4:41 AM, and so was set in motion a momentum of operation that has continued for more than a century. At the more conventional hour of 9:32 AM another official train of MP-54s left Penn Station for Jamaica carrying railroad, city and suburban officials, who then hustled about Queens and Nassau Counties attending a variety of bunting-festooned "Tunnel Day" public celebrations. One of the most famous of these was held in Lynbrook to commemorate ascension of the humble New York & Long Beach to suburban rapid transit status; another late in the day at Garden City included an extended banquet in honor of

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NYC SUBWAY CAR UPDATE

Subdivision "A" News

To start 2015, we are in receipt of a more official designation for the three types of New Technology equipment being delivered, or in many cases re-delivered, for service on 7. Henceforth, they shall be appointed as follows: 1) The former "CBTC R-142A" group (cars 7211-7590, from 6) will be known as "R-188 (C)" for "Conversion" upon their return from Kawasaki Rail Car in Yonkers; 2) the newly-built R-188 "C-cars" (7899-7936), those built for insertion in trains of R-188 (C)s to create CBTC-capable 11-car trains, will be known as "R-188 (C-1)"; and 3) the newly-built R-188 cars already delivered and in 7 service (7811-98) will be known as "R-188 (N)" for "New." Existing rosters should also be modified to reflect this change.

From mid-September to late December, 2014, these 50 R-142As were transferred from 6 to Kawasaki Rail Car-Yonkers for CBTC/R-188 compatibility conversion: 7321-5 in September, 7326-45 in October, 7346-60 in November, and 7361-70 through January 1. Cars 7371-5 were observed in 6 service as recently as December 19. 4½ more trains of R-188 (C) cars ("converted" R-142As) were also returned from Kawasaki, joined by their respective R-188 (C1)s (single-unit "C" cars): 7291-5 in September; 7296-7300 with 7907 and 7301-10 with 7908 in October; 7311-20 with 7909 and 7321-5 in November; and 7326-30 with 7910 and 7331-5 by January 1. There now remain 25½ more 10-car sets of R-188 (C)s to come, along with 26 single R-188 (C1) companions. Entering 7 service in this interim were R-188 (C)s 7271-80 with R-188 (C1) 7905 on October 13; 7281-90 with 7906 on October 23; 7291-7300 with 7907 on November 13; and 7301-10 with 7908 on December 8. (At the last minute prior to deadline, R-188 (C) train 7311-7320, along with R-188 (C1) 7909 were observed in 7 service on January 2, 2015.)

The pilot set of R-188 (C)s, 7211-20 plus 7899, was restored to revenue service on 7 in mid-November, 2014, with 7221-30 plus 7900 and 7231-40 plus 7901 being temporarily removed for CBTC wiring by the end of December. All R-188s remained in their original sequence through late December, 2014, including the two trains that were "mismatched" upon acceptance: 7855-9 with 7871-6 and 7860-5 with 7866-70. Since our last Update in the November, 2014 issue, United States "flag" decals have also been applied to R-188 (C1)s 7899-7908 after they entered service. Finally, by the last weekend in September (27-28), 2014, R-188s of all types have been running at all hours on 7, including weekends and midnights.

By comparison, the appearance of R-62As on weekend 6 trains continued to be a halting affair through much of the autumn of 2014, but like on 7 this all ended rather abruptly the weekend prior to Thanksgiving, with both equipment types (R-62As and R-142As) sharing roughly equal prominence thereafter. As for the R-

62As moving to 6, 1806-10 were discovered back on 7 in late September, 2014 after spending only a month on the Pelham Local. Whereas each 10-car train of R-62As is transferred to 6 as newer cars join 7 to replace them, they have yet to be "matched" for a re-transfer and as of January 1, 2015 remain the last 5-car set in the once-steadfast 1651-1840 group (less 1826-30) to still roam the Flushing Line. Other moves from 7 to 6 through the fall included cars 1771-80 on October 1; 1786-90 and 1796-1800 on October 23; 1801-5 and 1811-5 on November 13; and finally 1821-5 with 1966-70 on December 10. Of the 234 R-62As remaining on 7, these 53 were known to be equipped with full-width cabs as of January 1: linked sets 1806-10, 1971-5, 1976-80, 1981-5, 2001-5, 2026-30, 2036-40, 2056-60, 2061-5, 2126-30, 2136-40, 2146-50, and 2151-5; "single-end" units 1990, 1995, 2000, 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025, 2035, 2045, 2050, 2055, 2070, 2075, 2080, 2085, 2090, 2095, 2100, 2105, 2110, 2115, 2120, 2125, 2131 and 2145; and "single-unit" cars 1961 and 1965, which remain coupled together with 1962, 1963, and 1964 in numerical order (though they were briefly split asunder during October and November). That same train of R-62s that has been farmed out to 1, consisting of 1351-5 joined to 1456-60, was still there as of January 1, 2015, and there were no changes to distribution of the R-142s and R-142As (other than those turned over to Kawasaki Rail Car for CBTC conversion) since September, 2014.

Subdivision "B" News

Starting December 7, 2014, that R-68 or 68A train from B that is used on A late in the PM rush from its midday lay-up was rerouted from Lefferts Boulevard to Far Rockaway. As for the Phase I R-32 train imported from C, it remains a bit more flexible regarding its assigned interval, but continues to travel to Lefferts Boulevard in part because its Conductors must stand for the entire trip (R-32 cabs as configured for Conductors do not have seats). The annual "Summer Swap" of Phase I R-32s and R-160As between C and J/Z was finally discontinued for the season on September 28, 2014, at which time that equipment was restored to its normal assignment. True to form, 20 Phase I R-32s were left at East New York for continued use on J/Z (3414-5, 3426-7, 3578-9, 3628/3669, 3660-1, 3698-9, 3714-5, 3770-1, 3778-9, and 3932-3).

R-46s 5634-7 were returned to service on F and R as of October 23, 2014 after repairs following their involvement in the Queens Boulevard Line derailment of May 2; mates 5742-5 were still having remedial body work done at Coney Island Shops in December. A breakdown combined with a switching mishap at Stillwell Avenue brought about the loss of 12 more R-46s on October 27. Of the cars involved only 5666-9 were put back in service by December 8, while the others

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Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 315

by Ronald Yee and Alexander Ivanoff

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

In a change from past reporting practices, new LIRR president Patrick Nowakowski ordered that the on-time performance (OTP) of the railroad will be itemized by line, rather than an overall number for the entire system. The new reporting system took effect in January, 2015 and will be more reflective of the challenges or relative ease of operations on each individual line. For example, the Montauk and the Huntington Branches have significant challenges to their operations and record OTPs of 90.8 and 92.5 percent, while the Far Rockaway and Hempstead Branches, both terminating at Brooklyn's Atlantic Terminal, have relatively few impediments to achieving on-time performances exceeding 96%. The other lines serve Penn Station where they must compete with Amtrak and NJ Transit train traffic through the four East River tunnels. (*Newsday*, December 15, 2014)

Over 150 firefighters were needed to battle an early morning fire on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at a construction site at the west end of Penn Station where a new exit is being built. The West End LIRR Concourse was damaged in the blaze and water sat on the track bed of Tracks 19, 20, and 21. Eighth Avenue Subway service bypassed 34th Street-Penn Station for around three hours while some LIRR trains were diverted to terminals in Queens and Brooklyn or outright cancelled during the morning rush hour. This fire was initially considered suspicious in nature by the Fire Marshalls but later ruled accidental, caused by faulty temporary wiring at the construction site. (*New York Daily News*, ABC News, January 13, 2015)

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

A switcher locomotive operating alone in the Grand Central Terminal complex passed a red signal and collided with Metro-North Hudson Line Train #725, the 11:20 AM departure from Grand Central Terminal, on Wednesday, December 17, 2014. It occurred at very low speeds and the impact on the corner of the rear M-7 car was relatively light. No injuries were reported among the 20 passengers who were aboard that car. With five major accidents during an 11-month span from May, 2013 to March, 2014, this collision is a setback to the effort of the beleaguered railroad, which has been making tremendous efforts to win back the confidence of its customers. In its efforts to restore its reputation of being a safe operation, Metro-North installed a new President, made changes to its training and maintenance practices, adjusted its signal system to insure that speed restrictions at sharp curves and bridges are automatically enforced by the cab signal and automatic speed control system, and re-establishing the culture of safety that had seemingly lapsed in recent years. (*New York Daily News*, December 17, 2014)

Metro-North Railroad was levied with a \$250,000 penalty by the U.S. Labor Department for violating the Fed-

eral Railway Safety Act when it retaliated against a Coach Cleaner who had hurt his leg in November, 2011. In an attempt to meet numerical safety goals, his supervisor, while driving him to the hospital, mentioned that disciplinary charges would be filed against him if the injury were reported. The railroad has since changed its safety culture and implemented a confidential "close call" reporting system where employees can raise safety issues without fear of retaliatory actions from management. (*New York Daily News*, December 16, 2014)

The addition of two new late-night trains on the Waterbury Branch (10:10 pm out of Waterbury and the 11:41 PM out of Bridgeport) on November 9, 2014 has attracted 160 more passengers on an average weekend, far exceeding the ridership forecast of around 30. (*Stamford Advocate*, January 6, 2015)

Member Randy Glucksman reported the latest status of the M-8 railcars being delivered and placed into service on the New Haven Line. As of December 17, 2014, 391 of the 405 M-8 cars ordered have been delivered. 376 M-8 cars have been accepted for passenger service with 15 cars (including 11 single non-powered cars) under inspection and acceptance testing by Kawasaki Rail Car, Incorporated. 91 of the older M-2/M-4/M-6 class cars remain in service until the availability of M-8s reaches full strength. (*Editor's Note by Ron Yee: The single M-8s are non-powered cars identical to the powered pairs of M-8s in appearance but with its pantograph only to power the lighting, communications, and heating/ventilation/air-conditioning systems. There are no jumper cables for it to connect to at the "A" end of the M-8 married pairs as seen at the ends of the Shoreliner Bombardier-built push-pull coaches. The couplers on both ends of the M-8 "singles" are automatic couplers that are seen at the "A" end of all M-8 powered pairs and provide pneumatic and mechanical connection with the adjacent car with an electrical connection located below it that transmits communications and door control signals. I have also heard from internal sources at Metro-North that the acceptance testing of each of the non-powered M-8 single cars requires up to 8 M-8 powered cars to propel them around during testing. As many as 16 M-8 powered cars may be required to expedite the testing and acceptance process. Hence, 91 of the older M-2/M-4/M-6 class cars remain in service until the availability of M-8s reaches full strength. One also needs to remember that 8 M-8 cars are still out of service (three of the cars have apparently been written off and three replacement cars ordered) from the May, 2013 derailment and wreck at east of Fairfield.)*) (MTA Metro-North website, December 17, 2014)

NJ TRANSIT

NJ Transit's "Quiet Car" program was expanded to the Atlantic City Line linking Philadelphia and Atlantic City to cover the period between 6 AM and 8 PM on weekdays. The passenger car closest to Philadelphia on trains in

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both directions will be the Quiet Commute car (first car on trains heading for Philadelphia and the last car of trains coming from Philadelphia), with seating on a first-come, first-served basis. Use of cellular phones as well as sound from electronic games and media are prohibited as are loud conversations amongst passengers in that car. (pressofAtlanticCity.com, January 7, 2015)

ALP-45DP dual-powered locomotives are enabling four additional Raritan Line trains to offer a one-seat ride from New York's Penn Station between 9 PM and midnight starting January 12, 2015. This follows the pilot program initiated in March, 2014 when through service on the Raritan Line began on select midday off-peak trains. NJ Transit budgetary constraints had forced the postponement of through service until now. As of press time, the trains offering through service have not been specified. (*The Star Ledger*, December 18, 2014)

A bipartisan effort by New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez (Democrat) and Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (Republican) is being brought to a Republican-controlled Congress considered hostile to transit spending to project a united political front to garner support for funding the Gateway Tunnel project. This project has taken on a new sense of urgency after Amtrak engineering studies determined that the existing 104-year-old ex-Pennsylvania Railroad Hudson River Tunnels have around 10 (at best, 20) more years of useful life in them before they must be closed long-term for repair from damages stemming from flooding by Hurricane Sandy. Interestingly, aspiring Presidential hopeful New Jersey Governor Chris Christie has also jumped onto the bandwagon and endorsed the Gateway Tunnel Project. While NJ Transit commuter trains account for around 75% of the current levels of train traffic through the Hudson River Tunnels, the argument will be made that the viability of the entire Northeast Corridor is at stake should one or both tunnels fail before the proposed Gateway Tunnels are opened, cutting New York City off from all points south, with tremendous financial impacts on the economy of the nation. (northjersey.com/news, January 4, 2015)

Transportation Commissioner and NJ Transit (NJT) Board Chairman Jamie Fox and NJT Executive Director Ronnie Hakim announced a \$55 million project to upgrade and rehabilitate the Elizabeth train station on the Northeast Corridor Line. The platforms will be rebuilt and extended to 12 car lengths and will have covered, climate-controlled waiting areas as well as new elevators and stairways to supplement the existing ones. A new two-story station building will have a street-level ticket office, waiting room, and vendor space. The City of Elizabeth will work closely with NJ Transit in the design of the new station building as well as a new west-bound plaza entrance to insure that it reflects the character of the historic downtown business district of Elizabeth. 113 daily trains serve an average of 7,526 passengers at this station, which offers connections with

nine NJ Transit bus lines. (njtransit.com press release, January 12, 2015)

PORT AUTHORITY TRANS-HUDSON CORPORATION

Local politicians from Hoboken, Jersey City, Harrison, and Newark formed a contingent of local leaders opposed to the proposal by the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey to eliminate PATH service between 1 AM and 5 AM, saving a potential \$10 million per year vs. the \$7.8 billion budget of the Port Authority. New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez and New Jersey Transportation Commissioner Jamie Fox also spoke out against the potential closure of the line during the overnight hours, stating that this plan would literally prevent people from getting to and from jobs that start or finish between 1 AM and 5 AM. Just a few days after the plan attracted the wrath of local political leaders as well as PATH riders, John Degnan, Chairman of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, made a press statement that this proposal was no longer being considered. (nj.com, January 6 and 14, 2015)

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS**MASSACHUSETTS**

The Surface Transportation Board on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 gave preliminary approval to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to acquire "certain physical railroad assets" from Canaan, Connecticut-based short line Housatonic Railroad Company. Massachusetts seeks ownership of Housatonic's current right-of-way between Sheffield, Massachusetts, on the Massachusetts-Connecticut border, and Pittsfield, Massachusetts, the short line's northern terminus, where it interfaces with CSX. Freight operations would be maintained under the agreement.

"MassDOT states that the acquisition of the Railroad Assets is intended to facilitate the Commonwealth's long-term plans to restore regional passenger service linking the New York City metropolitan area, and the Northeast Corridor megalopolis generally, with the Berkshire region of western Massachusetts," STB noted. (*Editor's Note by Sasha Ivanoff: The Grand Central to Pittsfield service under the New Haven and Penn Central was very much treated like the services across state lines from Grand Central to Chatham, New York service to some regard. While the Pittsfield service declined under the New Haven (from daily service via loco-motive-hauled trains in the 1950s to weekday RDCs, which were eliminated in the mid-1960s, only leaving Friday and weekend trains) and died a quiet death the same week Amtrak started, the tracks stayed. The ex-NYC service on the old Harlem held out until a court order killed the service in March, 1972, with the tracks removed in the early 1980s. While service has been restored north of Dover Plains to Wassauc, restoring service to Chatham, while not technically impossible, is in theory impossible thanks to the NIMBY attitudes of Dutchess and Columbia County residents and other factors. It awaits to be seen if all the parties involved can make this happen and whether or not restoring service to Pittsfield could also extend to commuter service to New Milford, a community 14 miles north of Danbury, the major city on the Pittsfield-New York City route. The*

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Danbury Branch has seen several studies over the years.)
(*Railway Age*, December 24, 2014)

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

A Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter train carrying football fans to the New England Patriots playoff game was stopped by protestors blocking the tracks as it made it a scheduled station stop at Dedham. It was reported that the ten trespassers claimed to be highlighting police brutality issues stemming from the ongoing dispute between police forces and the African-American community. The train was blocked for a symbolic four and one-half minutes before they got off the tracks and the train proceeded onward to Gillette Stadium in Foxborough. No arrests were made. (*Providence Journal*, January 10, 2015)

MBTA secured \$996 million from the USDOT Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grant Program to extend the Green Line light rail 4.7 miles from its current terminus at Lechmere northward to Somerville and Medford. The \$2.3 billion line extension will have six new stations, a new light rail vehicle (LRV) maintenance facility, and 24 new LRVs to serve it when it opens in 2021. It is expected to attract 37,900 daily trips in an area where up to 26% of the residents will not have a personal automobile. (*Metro*, January 6, 2015)

MBTA began soliciting bids for 30 Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) rail cars for use on the Fairmont Line between downtown Boston and Readville. There is hope that the DMUs could be the centerpiece of a new rail line referred to as the "Indigo" Line between Boston and Allston. The estimated cost of the 30 DMUs would be around \$240 million and delivery would be expected in 2020-1. Bidders can submit proposals until April, 2015. (*The Boston Globe*, January 11, 2015)

The Kraft Group and MBTA signed a memorandum of agreement on Tuesday, January 6, 2015 for the construction of a full-time commuter rail station at Foxborough. It will officially be named "Foxborough – Patriot Place at Gillette Stadium." Currently, MBTA only operates trains to that station for New England Patriots football games and select special events. (*Foxborough Patch*, January 9, 2015)

Member Todd Glickman reports that MBTA is looking over a gamut of transit projects for the Boston area that could be on the fast track for funding and completion, should Boston be selected to host the 2024 Olympics. Cost and future revenue stream are the primary factors in determining which of the ambitious projects get approval to proceed. A \$866 million expansion of South Station would add five to seven new train platforms by moving the U.S. Postal Service facility to Fort Point Channel, freeing up the space this project would require. South Station is expected to be a mere ten-minute walk to Olympic Stadium. Other projects include a rebuilt and upgraded JFK/UMass station in Dorches-

ter that would be more pedestrian-friendly and serve a nearby 16,000-resident Olympic Village and a new commuter station to be named West Station near the Allston tollbooths of the Massachusetts Turnpike, whose roadway alignment would be straightened to make room for the station. A 15,000-seat aquatic center would be located in Allston. The operation of new train service out of Back Bay to the south parts of Boston is also among the proposals to serve a removable 60,000-seat Olympic Stadium. (*The Boston Globe*, January 10, 2015)

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

New City Council President Luis Aponte has stated that he is in favor of a planned streetcar system that would connect Lower South Providence with the East Side. The new Mayor, Jorge Elorz, has said he wants to learn more about the cost of the project, as the Mayor made a pledge in regards to keeping tax rates steady. The city has been approved for \$13 million in federal funding, but the total project is expected to cost \$117 million. (WPRI-TV, January 7, 2015)

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

The first eight railcars rebuilt by Alstom for PATCO finally passed their 500-mile acceptance test and are expected to hold down night and weekend runs beginning in February, 2015. After two months of successful operations, they are expected to begin running during the rush hours. This clears the way for six of the other 18 cars currently at Alstom for rebuilding to be returned to PATCO. As cars are returned, PATCO will send an equal number of cars to Alstom. With the rebuilding process now expected to be around four cars per month, the rebuild of the entire fleet will take until 2017 to be completed. The cars will have their original carbodies, trucks, and traction motors refurbished while new seating, lighting, heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) as well as control systems will be upgraded to modern standards. Unfortunately, the upgrade will also install full width operator's cabs, eliminating the forward facing railfan seat. (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 6, 2015)

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Most MARC commuter trains will be subject to 10-15-minute delays between January 16 and March 12, 2015 as Amtrak replaces an eight-mile section of the southbound track between Bowie and Odenton, Maryland on the Penn Line, which operates over the tracks of the Northeast Corridor (NEC). All Amtrak and MARC trains will be forced to use the two remaining tracks, causing congestion that will vary by time of day based upon train traffic levels, e.g., the three earliest southbound trains on the Penn Line will not experience delays as there is very little opposing traffic. However, after 7 AM, with a higher volume of northbound rail traffic, southward trains will be held at Odenton to allow Amtrak expresses to pass. In the evening, typical delays would include the holding of Trains #426 and #642 at Bowie State to permit Amtrak expresses to pass and operate ahead of the commuter locals. (*The Baltimore Sun*, January 8, 2015)

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Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 10)***WASHINGTON, D.C.**

As the New Year began, Washington, D.C. city officials announced that the oft-delayed H Street streetcar line was expected to commence passenger service on January 19.

The 2.4-mile line has received safety clearances from the Federal Transit Administration, but must still be certified by the D.C. Fire Department as safe. As the year waned, published reports of municipal squabbles over safety issues cast a 2014 debut into even more doubt.

Running along its namesake street in the city's Northeast quadrant east from Union Station toward Benning Road, the line was delayed repeatedly throughout 2014 by testing and by safety concerns, thwarting the ambitions of outgoing Mayor Vincent Gray, an ardent streetcar proponent, to inaugurate the service before stepping down on New Year's Day.

Newly elected Mayor Muriel Bowser has been less enthusiastic about the project, among other concerns, beginning her term with an emphasis on statehood for the District of Columbia. Bowser offered no comment on the projected opening date for the streetcar. (*Railway Age*, January 5)

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)'s Board of Directors appointed Jack Requa as the Interim General Manager, replacing outgoing General Manager and Chief Executive Officer Richard Sarles, who is retiring. Mr. Requa joined Metro in 1998 and is currently the GM for bus service. (*The Washington Post*, January 8, 2015)

A severe cold weather snap snarled WMATA's Metro-rail service on Thursday, January 8, 2015 with simultaneous broken rail incidents at Prince George's Plaza causing delays on the Green and Yellow Lines during two hours of single-track operation over the remaining track that was not affected and at East Falls Church, where the much more severe rail break forced single-tracking on the Orange and Silver lines until early afternoon. Passengers were left with long, cold waits for trains to arrive with sufficient room aboard to be able to board. Adding to the commuting woes on the Metro, frequent mechanical issues with the aging 1976-vintage 1000-series cars have been the source of many delays on the Red Line. That issue will not be resolved until those cars are replaced by the 7000-series cars on order from Kawasaki. (*The Washington Post*, January 8, 2015)

Adding to the woes of WMATA Metrorail operations, a six-car Yellow Line train that had just departed the L'Enfant Plaza station headed for Pentagon around 3:30 PM on Monday January 12 stopped approximately 850 feet into the tunnel due to arcing third rail feeder cables around 1,100 feet ahead, generating a lot of smoke, which filled the tunnel. Unsuccessful attempts were apparently made to back the train to L'Enfant or proceed to Pentagon to evacuate the passengers. Passenger reports allege that it took 40 minutes for fire and rescue

personnel to reach them in the stalled train while the Fire Department stated it they responded to the L'Enfant station within the standard response time. The delay led to many of the trapped passengers panicking and some self-evacuating into the tunnel, walking in the smoke-filled darkness back to the L'Enfant station. The rescuers had to wait until it was confirmed that the third rail power in the tunnel was indeed off before they ventured in. Rumbblings of trains operating on the lower level of the bi-level tunnel complex served only to confuse the situation. Once rescuers arrived on the scene, persons in the most serious need of medical attention were treated and evacuated, with the remainder of the passengers walked along the tunnel back to the L'Enfant station. 83 passengers were taken to local hospitals; one later died after being initially listed in critical condition due to complications from smoke inhalation issues. The cause of the arcing short circuit and the nature of the emergency responses are under investigation. Yellow Line service remained suspended between Pentagon City and Mt. Vernon Square, and Green Line service was suspended between Navy Yard and Mt. Vernon Square through Wednesday. (*The Washington Post*, January 12-13, 2015)

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

In South Carolina's largest city, proposals for streetcars have been floated and died during the past decade, but a recent tour for transit activists, at a meeting last September aboard the Lowcountry Loop Trolley service utilizing rubber-tired tourist "trolleys," has revived the idea again. Two local groups plan to work to persuade Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA), the regional public transit authority, to consider the idea. Streetcar service has not been in Charleston since the 1930s(WPRI-TV, January 7, 2015)

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Tram service in Atlanta started on December 30, 2014 following an opening ceremony for the Downtown Loop circulator at 11 AM. Travel will be free for the first three months of service.

The 2.7-mile standard gauge street running line with 12 stops links the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site with Centennial Olympic Park. Interchange is provided with MARTA rail services at Peachtree Center. The depot is on the eastern section of the route, under the I-75/I-85 highway.

Service runs at 10-to-15-minute frequencies between 6 AM and 11 PM (and until 1 AM on weekends). Breeze smartcard ticketing is available, in common with MARTA bus and rail services, and children under 10 will be able to ride for free. Ridership is forecast at 2,600 passengers/day.

Siemens has supplied four 70% low-floor cars from its S-70 Avanto LRV family under a \$17.2 million contract awarded in 2011. These are powered from overhead wires at 750 volts d.c.

Construction began in February, 2012. The project was developed jointly by City of Atlanta, Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, and MARTA. (*Railway Age*,

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January 5, 2015)

New Orleans, Louisiana

Regional Transit Authority (RTA) officials say construction work will commence early in 2015 to extend street-car service east from Canal Street through the famed French Quarter to St. Claude Avenue.

The line will traverse North Rampart Street, linking the city's Theatre District on Canal Street with Elysian Fields Avenue. Earlier reconstruction of the Canal Street line included placing a switch to allow eventual service along North Rampart.

RTA notes the 1.6-mile segment will connect with the venerable Canal Street Line and the Loyola Avenue Line serving Union Passenger Terminal, the latter having opened in January, 2013.

Construction of the new line is slated for completion in mid-2016, RTA says. (Railway Age, December 31)

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Metra service was impacted by two separate incidents triggered by the extreme cold temperatures that struck the Chicago area during the first week of January. On Tuesday, January 6 and Friday, January 9, two separate sprinkler system pipes froze and burst, cascading water from the ceilings and flooding the south concourse of Union Station. BNSF, Heritage Corridor, and Southwest services were affected as Tracks 6 and 8 were inaccessible. Pedestrian flow in Union Station was changed to limit the number of exterior exit and entrance doors that had allowed icy blasts of outside air to freeze up the station's water carrying pipes. (*Chicago Tribune*, January 9, 2015)

After closing on October 20, 2014 for a renovation project, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) reopened its station at Damen on the Blue Line to O'Hare Airport on Monday, December 22, 2014, right on schedule. The rehabilitated station features granite flooring and bike racks in the station building along with its historic 1895-vintage masonry walls and entrance canopy as well as new lighting, benches, and lighting and canopy roofing on the platforms. This and two other stations at California and Western O'Hare are the first three of 13 stations slated for overhaul under Mayor Rahm Emanuel's \$492 million "Your New Blue" program, which is rebuilding the Blue Line. (CBS Chicago, December 22, 2014)

Metra's capital projects for 2015 will focus on improvements to its signal systems as well as station facilities. That includes completing the planning and design work for the new station at Auburn Park on the Rock Island District and preliminary studies for two new stations, one being a part of a proposed extension of the BNSF line to Yorkville, 10 miles west of Aurora and the other on the Union Pacific Line at the intersection of West Peterson and North Ridge Avenues near a former Chicago & Northwestern station site in the neighborhood of Edgewater. 29 other station and parking lot improvements are planned for this year, nine on Metra Electric, six on the Rock Island, six on the Union Pacific, three

on the Milwaukee District, and one on the BNSF Line. Signal improvements include design work on Tower A2 interlocking controlling the Milwaukee and UP Lines and a new 16th Street Tower on the Rock Island district. Metra Electric (former Illinois Central electric lines) will have bi-directional signaling installed from 11th to 67th Streets and new signal bridges from 42nd to 67th Streets. The Electric District will also see improvements to Kensington Tower, which controls the junction where the South Shore Line from Indiana joins Metra Electric as well as a new Van Buren Street Yard to store trains between weekday rush hours, a new car washing facility at 18th Street Yard, and upgrades to the electric power distribution system to accommodate the power demands of the newest gallery-style electric multiple unit (EMU) trains now replacing the venerable 1970s St. Louis Car Company gallery EMUs. The Milwaukee District will receive a new locomotive refueling system at the Western Avenue Coach Yard and a new crew facility at Fox Lake. The Rock Island District will receive upgrades of its 47th Street Yard with a rehabilitation of the 51st Street Mechanical building, 49th Street Railcar rehabilitation facility, and 49th Street Transfer Table as well as track and switch upgrades at 47th Street on the mainline where 2 serious wrecks had occurred in 2003 and 2009 when two commuter trains derailed and wrecked on the 70 MPH mainline that contains some antiquated 10 MPH crossovers. (AI Holtz, January 8, 2015)

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Minneapolis Metro Transit is offering its Northstar commuter rail line customers fare refunds whenever their train is late by 11 minutes or more at the Target Field or Big Lake stations. Customers must sign up for the Northstar Service Guarantee program to take advantage of this program, which was created in response to the dismal on-time performance during the severe winter weather in January, 2014, resulting in a significant loss in ridership down to just 2,500 riders per weekday. (*Metro Magazine*, December 19, 2014)

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Member John Pappas reported that the first six of 39 cars being built by CAF went into service on Wednesday, January 7, 2015. The planned opening of the Green and Purple Lines in April is contingent on having a sufficient number of cars available to cover the service. This car order was originally scheduled to have been completed by December, 2014 but quality control and other issues, such as the cars being overweight, resulted in delays. When all 39 of the class H-3 cars are delivered by CAF, Houston's Metro fleet will grow to a total of 76 cars, joining the existing fleet of 19 H-2 and 18 H-1-class cars. (*Progressive Railroading*, January 5, 2015)

CALIFORNIA

The U.S. Surface Transportation Board ruled that the lawsuits based upon issues surrounding state environmental laws that have challenged and delayed the construction of the California High Speed Rail project are without legal merit, clearing the way for the line's con-

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struction. (*San Mateo Daily Journal*, December 16, 2014)

Ground was broken in Fresno by California officials headed by Governor Jerry Brown on Tuesday, January 6, 2015 for the first 29-mile section (Fresno to Madera) of the projected \$68 billion California High Speed Rail Authority line which will connect Los Angeles and San Francisco in less than three hours with 220 mph trains when that portion of the line is completed in about 14 years. It is planned that this trunk line will serve as the backbone of an 800-mile network that would eventually be extended to Sacramento to the north and San Diego to the south. (*The Washington Post*, January 6, 2015)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LAMTA) announced that Arthur Leahy, its chief executive since 2009, will step down from his post at the end of his contract with the agency in April at the age of 65. There had been rumors that the majority of Metro's Board of Directors were leaning toward not renewing Leahy's contract when it expired. He has presided over a period when LAMTA embarked on a massive expansion of its system, funded by an estimated \$35 billion over a 30-year span coming from California Proposition R, with five rail lines currently under construction for \$8 billion. Under his tenure, LAMTA scrapped the honor system for its subway system, installing turnstiles to stem a flood of fare evasion and trying to turn around a downward trend in its farebox recovery ratio, now at just 26%. Under his watch, the fares were raised twice, from \$1.25 to \$1.75, an increase of 40%. While championing the expansion of rail lines from Santa Monica to Azusa, he had also been accused of favoring glitzy rail lines over bus transit lines serving the poorer neighborhoods. Leahy is a career transit professional in the Los Angeles area, starting out as a bus driver for the Southern California Rapid Transit District in 1971. LAMTA is now in a worldwide search for a successor who can continue the efforts to encourage transit use and get people out of their cars and make a successful political argument for increasing taxes to improve transit travel times across the region. (Los Angeles Times, January 6, 2015)

AMTRAK

Amtrak announced a new website, <http://nec.amtrak.com/>, that will highlight issues concerning the Northeast Corridor and provide updated information on infrastructure projects now under construction or are in the planning stages. Projects it would report on include the replacement of the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel in Maryland, the Portal Drawbridge in the New Jersey Meadowlands, and the construction of the Gateway Tunnels, which would supplement the aging Hudson River Tunnels to New York's Penn Station. (*Metro Magazine*, January 7, 2015)

Amtrak took delivery of the first 18 baggage cars via a special train that hauled them from the CAF plant in Elmira, New York to the Amtrak shop at Hialeah, Flori-

da. The train departed Elmira on Wednesday, December 17 and arrived in Hialeah Friday, December 19, 2014. In 2010, Amtrak placed an order with CAF for 130 Viewliner II cars to replace the 1940s-1950s era heritage equipment. The order includes 70 baggage cars, 10 baggage-crew dormitory cars, 25 dining cars, and 25 sleeping cars. It should be noted that all cars will sport the "Phase III" paint scheme that features three stripes of equal width; red, white and blue. (*Editor's Note by Ron Yee: Video of this Viewliner baggage car equipment move was captured by several railfans who posted their videos on YouTube. Two videos can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVCBoXqgHIM> passing through Peekskill, New York and at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjccX9MEHo0> passing through Winter Park, Florida. It is interesting how the Phase II colors have been resurrected with an "Amtrak America" slogan similar to VIA Rail Canada. Does this portend the return of the Phase III colors to the entire Amtrak passenger car fleet?*) (Amtrak, December 16, 2014)

The last of Amtrak's 15 HHP-8 class electric locomotives, nicknamed "Hippos," was retired from active passenger service on November 5, 2014 and all are now stored in Wilmington as a reserve fleet. Throughout their brief 14-year career with Amtrak, the 15 Alstom-built units had been plagued with reliability and maintenance issues, breaking down an average of every 12.5 days in 2009 after almost ten years in service, making the decision to retire them along with the 35+-year-old AEM-7s a relatively easy choice. The 70-unit order of ACS-64 locomotives currently being delivered provides fleet standardization with its economies of scale. (Amtrak, Wikipedia, January 4, 2015)

Member George Chiasson reports from a source within Amtrak, the status of Amtrak's AEM-7, HHP-8, and ACS-64 locomotive fleet as of December, 2014.

HHP-8 (15 units)

Withdrawal from service dates:

650: March, 11, 2014

651: November 5, 2014

652: August 17, 2013

653: July 21, 2014

654: June 30, 2014

655: November 5, 2014 (this was the last unit operated)

656: March 9, 2014

657: June 13, 2014

658: January 21, 2014

659: April 13, 2014

660: August 21, 2014

661: September 3, 2014

662: August 25, 2012

663: September 9, 2013

664: June 19, 2014

AEM-7 (52 rostered units; 900 and 903 were lost at Chase, Maryland 1987)

9 units out of service: 901, 902, 908, 910, 912, 937, 950, 951, 953

ACS-64 (70 units ordered)

26 units in Service: 600-625

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2 units undergoing acceptance testing: 626, 627
 2 units delivered from Siemens plant in Sacramento California: 628, 629

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) CLRV 4062, operating out of the Main Street station terminus of Route 506, and a TTC bus were involved in a collision at Main Street and Danforth. Apparently, the bus driver was at fault and it is expected that both vehicles will be repaired and returned to service. The ongoing delays in the delivery of Flexity LRVs from Bombardier (see below) make the repair of this CLRV necessary. (*The Toronto Sun*, December 28, 2014)

The delivery of TTC's 204-car order of Flexity light rail vehicles (LRVs) is being seriously delayed by a multitude of factors. Since the first LRV was placed into service in September, 2014, only a total of three LRVs are in passenger service. The original production schedule had called for 43 of the low-floor cars to be plying the streets of Toronto. In addition to a nine-week labor strike at the Bombardier factory plant at Thunder Bay, Ontario that stopped all production work, the TTC Flexity LRV order is being managed and sourced in a far different manner. Rather than manufacture most of the parts going into its product in-house as they have been for every prior car or equipment order (including the bilevel commuter coaches and subway cars it produces for Toronto and other cities), the LRVs are assembled from parts produced by manufacturers around the world. The carbodies are produced at Bombardier's plant in Sahagun, Mexico while the European heritage of the Flexity design was a major factor in the gearbox and traction motors being manufactured in Germany and the brakes in France and the U.S. Complicating the process is the fact that the carbodies from the Mexico plant have turned out to be defective or not built to the exacting specifications. The international nature of the supply chain for these LRVs is much like the world-wide supply chain involved in producing the Boeing 787 Dreamliner jet, which was also beset by production issues that delayed its debut by almost four years. With the ongoing issues with timely and accurate production and delivery of LRV parts, workers at the Thunder Bay plant are being temporarily furloughed as production grinds down to a very slow pace or is even halted. At present, the production schedule calls for the last of the 204-car order to be delivered by 2020, not 2018 as originally scheduled. (*National Post*, January 5, 2015)

There is an ongoing, politically driven debate in this city regarding the future of the Scarborough RT Line, which connects the suburban town of Scarborough with the #2 Line (Bloor-Danforth) at its eastern terminus at Kennedy. The line currently operates with cars similar to the original cars still in operation at Vancouver's Skytrain. Studies of future alternatives for the line have been conducted by Metrolinx, expert panels, and think-tank organizations. All three are in favor of a plan that

would overhaul the line and equip it with modern light rail cars for C\$1.8 billion. However, politicians (having made promises during the 2014 mayoral elections to woo Scarborough voters), have been leaning in favor of extending the #2 Line from Kennedy to Scarborough at a cost of C\$3.56 billion. This alternative has been met with criticism as being a waste of money that could be allocated elsewhere and literally being overkill. An extension of the heavy rail subway line would be capable of 30,000 passengers per hour compared with ridership forecasts of just 9,000 by the year 2031. The city had just gone through a similar political battle over the subway vs. surface alternatives for the Eglinton Crosstown light rail line where then-Mayor Ford had tried to force the line to be built as an underground heavy rail subway line instead of a surface light rail line. It has since been resolved that the line will be built as originally planned, a light rail line with only a brief portion being placed underground. Now, it appears that the Eglinton LRT Line debate is about to have a second act by the current politicians in charge. (*The Toronto Star*, January 3, 2015)

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

The 150 employees who staff the Canada Line linking downtown Vancouver with the airport almost unanimously voted to authorize a strike if the mediation over an ongoing labor dispute does not resolve the issues. As this line is operated and maintained under separate contract with Protrans BC, the Expo and Millennium LRT Lines of the Skytrain are not affected. (CBC News, January 8, 2015)

MEXICO

Mexico's Federal Secretariat of Communications and Transport (SCT) confirmed on January 4, 2015 that it would issue preliminary bidding documents on January 14 for a revised tender for the contract to build the 210-kilometer Mexico City-Queretaro high-speed line. A parliamentary inquiry was launched in December to investigate the tendering and subsequent cancellation of the initial contract, which was awarded to a consortium of Chinese and Mexican companies.

According to SCT the project will be tendered as a turn-key contract with the winning bidder being responsible for maintaining the line. Furthermore, an engineer is being brought in to oversee the bidding. Prior to the cancellation of the contract the government had intended to commission the line by 2018, but it is unclear how the inquiry and retendering will affect timescales for construction.

Nonetheless, SCT has confirmed that the government intends to extend the line beyond Queretaro in the longer term to serve Bajío and Guadalajara. (*International Railway Journal*, January 5, 2015)

NETHERLANDS

Both Alstom and Bombardier have initiated legal proceedings against Netherlands Railways (NS) over the direct award of an order for 60 Flirt EMUs to Stadler.

Despite running a public competitive tender for 118 Sprinter trains, which was won by CAF, NS announced its intention in November to order an additional 60

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Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 14)*

Sprinter EMUs without competitive tendering, stating that urgent and unforeseen circumstances would allow it to circumvent European Union legislation on competitive tendering for large equipment orders by public bodies, and enable it to negotiate a contract directly with Stadler for the trains.

This is the second time in a rather short period that NS has justified a major order without competitive tendering on the grounds of urgent and unforeseen circumstances. NS ordered class 186 Traxx locomotives directly from Bombardier — which are now being delivered — in the same way; however, there were no appeals from manufacturers or leasing companies that time. (*International Railway Journal*, December 30, 2014)

GERMANY

German Rail's (DB) next-generation long-distance train, the ICx, made its first appearance on the German mainline network at the end of December, 2014, when the first ICx set was hauled from Bombardier's Henningsdorf plant near Berlin to Siemens' Wildenrath test centre in North Rhine, Westphalia.

DB signed a framework contract with Siemens in May, 2011 for up to 300 ICx trains, placing an initial firm order for 130 sets, with an additional 90 trains planned and an option for a further 80 trains, which can be exercised at any time until 2030. In 2013 DB revised the specification for the fleet with an improved interior and increasing the 10-car trains to 12 vehicles.

The first batch of 230 kilometer per hour trains comprises 85 12-car and 45 seven-car sets, which will replace locomotive-hauled trains. Limited trial operation with passengers is expected to begin in mid-2016, with full service introduction of the 12-car trains scheduled for December, 2017. The seven-car trains are due to enter service from 2020 onwards.

DB plans to order a 250 kilometer per hour variant, which will replace the ICE 1 and ICE 2 fleets.

To aid production, Bombardier is producing body shells and trailer bogies, and is also carrying out final assembly of driving cars and two intermediate vehicles for each set under a €336m contract awarded by Siemens in April, 2013. (*International Railway Journal*, January 8, 2015)

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Metropolitan Municipality has placed a Won 103.8 billion (U.S. \$93.3 million) provisional order with Hyundai Rotem for the supply of 17 four-car metro trains that will boost capacity on Line M2 between Yenikapi and Haciosman.

The new trains will complement the line's existing fleet of 23 four-car Hyundai Rotem trains, which has experienced a spike in demand since the opening of the Marmaray tunnel for suburban services and the Line M1 interchange at Yenikapi. Demand is expected to continue to increase with the opening of Line M6 between Levent and Hisarüstü later this year.

Despite M2's signalling and existing rolling stock not yet supporting driverless operation, Hyundai Rotem will deliver vehicles suitable for conversion to UTO with a view to a future upgrade of the line. The new trains are due to be delivered in the second half of 2017.

Hyundai Rotem secured the order ahead of CNR Changchun, which reportedly offered a price 12% below Hyundai Rotem's bid. However, with the trains set to be produced at Hyundai Rotem's Turkish factory in Adana, it was able to overcome the cost difference to secure the contract, although with the official announcement yet to be made, CNR may seek an appeal against the decision. (*International Railway Journal*, January 5)

ITALY

The first of five ETR 452 Civity EMUs being supplied by CAF for the Bari suburban network were on December 19, 2014. The first two trains are now being used on services from Bari to Barletta and the Karol Wojtyła airport rail link, which opened in 2013.

The remaining three trains are due to be delivered to Ferrotramviaria later this year.

The 160 kilometer per hour four-car ETR 452s accommodate up to 448 passengers, 243 of them seated, with dedicated spaces for bicycles and wheelchairs.

The trains are currently only approved for operation on the suburban lines north of Bari, but the fleet will also be certified for operation on the national network in the near future.

CHINA

Beijing expanded its metro network to 527 kilometers on December 28, 2014 with the launch of trial operation on one new line and three extensions of existing lines. The new 23.7-kilometer east-west Line 7 runs parallel with the existing Line 1, linking Jiaohuachang in the district of Tongzhou with the Beijing West mainline station. The line has 19 stations, including interchanges with six other metro lines.

Line 6 has been extended 12 kilometers east from Caofang to Lucheng, taking the total length of the east-west line to 43 kilometers. In the east of the city the 14-kilometer second phase of Line 14 from Jintailu to an interchange with Line 6 at Shangezhuang has opened, while in the north passenger services have commenced on the 10-kilometer third phase of Line 15 from Wangjing West to Qinghuadongluxikou.

With further new lines and extensions nearing completion the network is expected to reach 600 kilometers by 2016.

December 28 also brought major changes to the fares structure and the first price increase in seven years. The flat Yuan 2 (U.S. \$0.32) fare for all journeys has been replaced by a distance-based system with discounts for students and contactless smartcard users. (*International Railway Journal*, December 29, 2014)

The fifth modern tram line in China opened on December 31, 2014 in Guangzhou. The 7.7-kilometer east-west Haizhu Line with 11 stops is first phase of a planned circular route in the Haizhu district.

The standard gauge line runs along the south bank of

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Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 15)

the Pearl River, connecting Canton Tower with Wanshengwei. Interchange is provided at Canton Tower with metro Line 3 and the Zhujiang New Town Automated People Mover, and with Lines 4 and 8 at Wanshengwei.

Service is operated by Guangzhou Metro Corporation subsidiary Guangzhou Tram Company, Limited. During the trial operation period, due to run until February, services run every 13 minutes between 9 AM and 5 PM. Fares are set at 2 yuan.

CSR Zhuzhou has supplied seven 100% low-floor trams. These were ordered in June, 2013 and arrived in Guangzhou between September 28 and December 20. The four-section trams are powered only by supercapacitors and include drive components supplied by Siemens under a technology licensing and co-operation

agreement. Maximum operational speed is 70 kilometers per hour (*Railway Gazette*, January 5, 2015)

AUSTRALIA

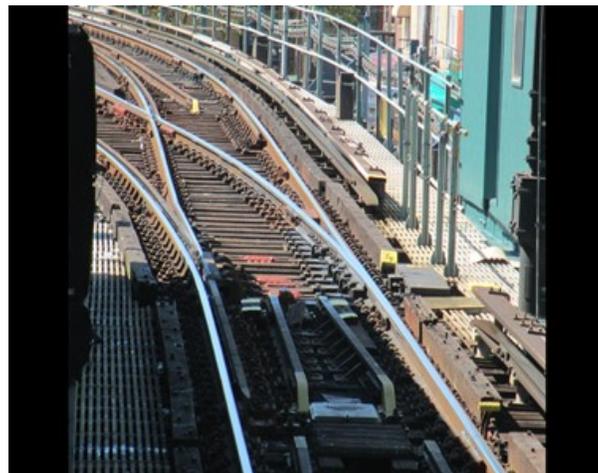
The Western Australia Public Transport Authority (PTA) has confirmed it would issue a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) at the end of January or early February for the contract to construct Perth's A\$2.2 billion (U.S. \$2 billion) Forrestfield-Airport Link. The 8.5-kilometer line will extend the existing TransPerth Midland Line through an 8-kilometer twin-bore tunnel beneath the Swan River to reach Perth Airport. Geotechnical surveys for the tunnels were completed in December and construction is due to begin in mid-2016. The project, which will be a design-build package, is scheduled to open in 2020. (*International Railway Journal*, January 14, 2015)

From My Vantage Point: What Is Normal?

(Continued from page 20)



Normal position.



Reverse position.

The Genesis of “Dashing Dan”*(Continued from page 6)*

LIRR President Ralph Peters.

Despite extensive pre-opening preparations, the comparatively incomplete status of that initial multiple-unit trip described above was symptomatic of things as they would be in certain precincts for months and even years to come. At the new terminal itself, even the completed rail facilities were only partly activated, with all Long Island Rail Road trains kept strictly between Tracks 14-21 and only passing through Tubes A and B beneath 33rd Street (which were intended almost exclusively for LIRR use from the outset). There was only a rushed, temporary trackage rights agreement in force between the two railroads on that day to permit the station to open, but a finely-tuned and permanent accord was signed into effect by the two presidents (Peters and McCrea) on September 14. The Pennsylvania was willing only to staff Penn Station Towers “A” and “C” full-time at this juncture along with “F” and “H” on the Queens side, while those at “KN” and “JO” were held back until such time as the company’s own trains started running (though they were being used on an instruc-

tional basis), as were the facilities at Sunnyside Yard. Nevertheless, there were several suburban routes which could now truthfully call Penn Station home, and in the enterprising spirit of the time this was not at the expense of service already being offered from LIRR’s existing termini. When its side of Penn Station opened, LIRR had no less than five fully-electrified routes serving three jurisdictional “Divisions,” plus one temporary shuttle line. In time these would be joined by six more outward destinations in non-electrified territories that stretched as far as Greenport, almost 95 miles from the banks of the East River. Several had multiple routings available; at least a couple of them were confined to the most populous districts and did not serve their entire piece of the railroad. In sum, LIRR’s lines from Penn Station were designed from the start to be a 20th century regional transportation tool for those needing practical, economic, or leisure-time access between the outer reaches and New York City. This was wholly different in nature from the 19th century railroads, which had criss-crossed Long Island for the intended purposes of agricultural, industrial, or recreational travel.

*(Continued next month)***New York City Subway Car Update***(Continued from page 7)*

(5522-5 and 5698-5701) remained on the sidelines as 2014 ended—some with door frame and driver arm damage. To compensate for their loss, the following 12 R-46s have been temporarily loaned to Jamaica (F R) from Pitkin (A): 5994-7, 6094-7, and 6170-3.

At least one train of mixed Alstom- and Siemens-equipped R-160s were observed on the Coney Island-based (N) and (Q) this past fall. (Specifically seen by member Bill Zucker were 9053-7 with 8738-42 on (Q) September 28, 2014). It may have been an experiment, or possibly indicative of spot R-160 shortages experienced in the wake of annual “Leaf Season,” which can produce many a flat (noisy) wheel and send entire trainsets to the “cutting” machine again and again. The latter was definitely in play when the use of several Jamaica-based R-160s was recorded on (N) and (Q) between mid-October and early December. At year-end there was also news that Jamaica R-160s 9423-7, which had suffered adverse (electrical) effects from the floods of Superstorm Sandy in 2012 and were sidelined during 2014, had been restored to service on (E F) and sometimes (R).

There were no R-68/68As spied on (Q) during this interval but R-68s and R-68As were showing up on (N) just about every weekday in the first half of October and last half of December, 2014 (though other appearances may have been unnoticed).

R-68/R-68A’s observed on (N) in late 2014:
September 25: R-68A 5176-5-3-4/5040-39-7-8
October 1, 2, and 3: R-68 2824-5-7-6/2842-3-1-0

October 6 and 8: R-68A 5100-5099-7-8/5012-1-09-10 and R-68 2810-1-09-8/2840-1-3-2

October 16: R-68 2820-1-3-2/2854-5-3-2

October 17: R-68A 5090-89-91-2/5100-5099-7-8

December 10: R-68s 2912-3-5-4/2902-3-1-0 and 2856-7-9-8/2820-1-3-2 along with R-68A 5156-5-3-4/5166-5-7-8

December 12: R-68 2880-1-3-2/2820-1-3-2

December 16: R-68As 5156-5-3-4/5160-59-7-8 and 5102-1-3-4/5072-1-69-70

December 18: R-68A 5102-1-3-4/5016-5-3-4 and R-68 2834-5-3-2/2800-1-3-2

December 19: R-68 2890-1-89-8/2854-5-3-2 and R-68As 5168-7-5-6/5154-3-5-6, 5032-1-29-30/5086-5-7-8, and 5014-3-5-6/5104-3-1-2

December 23: R-68A 5156-5-3-4/5088-7-5-6

December 24: R-68As 5156-5-3-4/5088-7-5-6 and 5196-5-3-4/5110-09-11-2

December 26: R-68A 5196-5-3-4/5110-09-11-2

December 29 and 30: R-68As 5018-7-5-6/5048-7-5-6 and 5112-1-09-10/5194-3-5-6 along with R-68 2836-5-7-8/2846-5-3-4.

Work Cars & Miscellaneous

The initial ex-R-110A pump train was officially designated as P8002-3-4 in October, but work on the former 8007-8-9 was still proceeding slowly at 207th Street as of early December, 2014, with a current projection of springtime for its release. NYCT is also exploring the possibility of an outside contract to convert at least three of the left-over R-110A “A” (cab) cars into yet another pump train, given the onerous cost anticipated for their adaptation thanks to their beefy structural composition.

TRACTION TOUR TO SOUTHERN EUROPE

by Jack May

(Photographs by the author)

(Continued from January, 2015 issue)

We would not be in port on the following day, Thursday, April 25, but instead would suffer a “Fun Day at Sea” en route to Tunisia. The weather was not very pleasant, with lots of rain and wind, but that did not bother us too much. We relaxed, played cards, watched movies, and got a little fatter. We were looking forward to our next day, as I planned to visit the light rail system in Tunis while Clare would tour some major Roman archaeological sites. The weather forecast was for sun.

And it was sunny when we arose in the morning. But our visit to North Africa was not to be. Prior to our scheduled 8:00 arrival at La Goulette the Captain announced it was too windy for safe navigation in the small harbor, and instead, we would have a sunny “Fun Day at Sea.” I went out on deck, and while it was a bit breezy, it did not seem that bad to me; there were no whitecaps on the waves. But such is life. Friday, April 26 became a wasted day for this traveler, who always likes to be on the go. At least, I thought, we should not be late into our next scheduled port, Palermo in Sicily.

I would leave Clare and the *Eurodam* in Palermo, and go by rail to Naples, visiting Messina and Catania en route. I informed the ship’s office the night before that I would not spend the night of Saturday, April 27 aboard and would rejoin on the 28th.

And we did not arrive late; in fact, we were early. I was off the boat with many others in drizzle at 7:20 (8:00). Apparently quite a few people on the cruise had some Italian/Sicilian roots and had plans to visit areas of the island containing family or at least having some meaning to them. I shared a taxi with two of them to Central Station, arriving at 7:48.

Palermo, the largest city in Sicily, with a population of about 650,000, has an embryonic, but possibly dormant, project to build a three-line light rail system, and even has accepted the delivery of at least the first two of a 17-car fleet of Bombardier Flexity Outlook 100 percent low-floor trams. I am told that some track has been constructed, but I did not see any, at least near the station, where Line 1 is to run. To paraphrase the lyrics of Rodgers and Hart’s *Manhattan*, I hope to see it open some day.

I was happy I would be able to catch the 8:08 train to Messina, and immediately purchased a through ticket all the way to Catania from a machine. While waiting for the train I noticed that some others from the ship had arrived at the station and were trying to figure out how to buy tickets to various destinations. Trenitalia seems to run a half-hourly S-bahn-type service on two lines

from the station.

The 8:08 train to Messina (150 miles, 3 hours), as compared to the slower 9:03, would give me a great deal more time in that city. The rail line parallels the north shore of the island and I was looking forward to the scenery. Foiled again! This time it was fog and mist that prevented visibility. For over half the trip all I saw was faded views of the villas and churches in the towns lining the tracks, with some like Cefalu, pitched on hillsides. The fog eventually lifted revealing cloudy skies. The train was a sort of local-express, making relatively few stops. Patronage was good, with lots of ons and offs, but few through riders.

Arrival in this city of 242,000 was two minutes early at 11:06. The 150-mile trip took about 3 hours, for an average speed of 50 mph. Not bad, as there 6 intermediate stops. Messina has but one tram line, running for a distance just short of 5 miles. The fleet of 15 Cityway 100 percent low-floor LRVs was built by Alstom (Fiat) in 2001. With the railroad station as its focus the line runs north along the harbor and southwest through the city’s downtown area, making a total of 18 stops. See <http://www.urbanrail.net/eu/it/mess/messina.htm>.

The weather remained dank, but began to clear up right after I rode and photographed most of the line. Using a day ticket I first rode south, where most of the line was on central reservation between palm trees. Even with that, the overall appearance of the system was not attractive. The northern part of the line paralleling the harbor was just a little bit better, projecting a more open feeling, as the narrow right-of-way was protected only by concrete curbing in the center of wide streets. The trams were running every 15 minutes on this Saturday, but headways are no better on weekdays.

The line and the city it runs through are not very pleasant. The cars are dirty, there is graffiti on the shelters, and plenty of broken glass to go with that. When the operator closes the doors, seven shrilly notes are blasted throughout the car. Additionally, operation was excruciatingly slow, with no signs of traffic light preemption or even priority. We did pass some automobiles, but they were parked. And we also raced ahead of some pedestrians — but they were invariably using walkers. All in all, a slow, grubby operation.

I completed my work at about 13:30, recovered my bag from the left luggage, and rode the 14:10 to Catania.

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Traction Tour to Southern Europe

(Continued from page 18)



A close-up view showing the rear of car No. 6 as it left the forecourt of the railroad station. All of the rolling stock encountered was bedecked with advertising, and the silver metallic paint, which once may have been shiny, had turned dull and tarnished.



The line has one short section of pure prw, located along its southern portion, near the cemetery and the Villa Dante stop.



Car 9 is shown in the central reservation between the palm trees near the Viale San Martino stop in the city center.



One of Messina's most attractive vistas, along Via 1 Settembre, is just north of the railway station.



Clearly Uncle Junior was the lowest bidder for the installation of track on the northern portion of the line. The right-of-way is in the center of Viale della Libertà.

(Continued next issue)

Around New York's Transit System

Emergency Exit Alarms Silenced

The 1,400 automatic alarms that emit a loud annoying screech whenever the emergency exit door/gates in the NYC subway system are opened by passengers exiting the fare-controlled areas of subway and elevated line stations have been silenced. Originally installed in 2006, they have been deemed ineffective at deterring fare evasion. The last of the exit gate alarms were deactivated at the end of 2014. Journalists watching the use of these now-silent doors did note several fare-beaters who entered into the subways as people were using them to expedite their exit, taking advantage of the lack of any audible alarm.

Flushing Line Rehabilitation Projects

2015 will bring another series of 11 weekends between January and late March where 7 will be closed for a combination of signal upgrade work to install Communications Based Train Control (CBTC), replacement of worn-out tracks, and repairs to the Steinway Tunnel, which was damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The service outages will all result in the line not operating to Manhattan with trains terminating at Hunters Point Avenue, Queensboro Plaza, or 74th Street, depending on the work schedule demands of each particular week-

end. The City Councilmember representing Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Woodside has repeatedly expressed concern that the ongoing project, which has resulted in weekend line closures over the past four years, has adversely impacted most of the businesses along the line and will continue to do so until the project is completed in 2017. The time windows to perform the work are also limited to periods when the sports arenas hosting the New York Mets (Citi Field) and the U.S. Open tennis matches (Arthur Ashe Stadium) are not in use. Customers are advised to refer to posted signs at each station as well as aboard most subway cars on the line or consult the MTA New York City Transit website.

Second Avenue Subway Progress Report

MTA announced that the tunnel cavern "shell" for the 86th Street station on the \$4.5 billion Second Avenue Subway was completed on December 15, 2014. Work had begun on the \$332 million project in August, 2011 and was completed on schedule. Work will now proceed on installing the infrastructure related to elevators, escalators, lighting, heating ventilation air-conditioning and architectural finishes. At this time, 76% of the work needed to complete Phase I of the line has been completed.

FROM MY VANTAGE POINT: WHAT IS NORMAL? by Michael Ditkoff

Vantage Point: a position or place that allows one a wide or favorable overall view of a scene or situation

This month, I elaborate on the switch positions "Normal" and "Reverse." I could write thousands of words on the topic but instead, I offer two photos. (They are posted in the Vantage Point folder on the RRE website (www.nyrre.org/Gallery) in the 2015 articles album where you can enlarge them.)

There are two types of rail, straight and diverging. Straight rail track is built for straight moves and diverging track is curved for turning moves. A switch has two rails, one straight and the other diverging. The tip each switch rail is called a point.

Look at the "Normal Position" photo on page 16. The right rail is the straight rail because it goes straight. The left rail is the diverging rail because it "diverges" to the left. Notice that the left switch point covers the diverging rail at the point of diversion. The left rail of the switch is a straight track. A train will go straight because both rails (straight and switch rails are straight.)

Look at the "Reverse Position" photo, also on page 16. Notice that the right switch point covers the straight rail at the point of diversion. The right rail of the switch is a diverging track. The left rail is a diverging rail because it curves to the left. Unlike "Normal Position," the left switch point does not cover the diverging rail. A train

will take the diverging route because both rails are diverging.

Only one point of the switch is always in contact with the other track. In the "Normal" photo, the left point is in contact with the main track. In the "Reverse" photo, the right point is in contact with the main track.

The reverse position photo shows the alignment for a diverging movement to the left. A diverging movement to the right would be the opposite. The diverging rail would go to the right. A switch in the normal position would have the right point cover the diverging rail for a straight move. A switch in the reverse position would have the left point cover the straight rail at the point of diversion.

How fast a train take go through a switch in the reverse position is governed by signal indication or special instructions in the employee timetable.

Michael Ditkoff (trip@nyrre.org) writes the Vantage Point column in the New York Railroad Enthusiasts' Bulletin newsletter. NYRRE's website is www.nyrre.org. The Enthusiasts' new photo gallery can be found at www.nyrre.org/Gallery. This article originally appeared in the January, 2015 NYRRE Bulletin.

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