

The Bulletin



Electric Railroaders' Association, Incorporated

Vol. 58, No. 3

March, 2015

The Bulletin

Published by the Electric Railroaders' Association, Incorporated, PO Box 3323, New York, New York 10163-3323.

For general inquiries, contact us at bulletin@erausa.org. ERA's website is www.erausa.org.

Editorial Staff:
Editor-in-Chief:
Bernard Linder
Tri-State News and Commuter Rail Editor:
Ronald Yee
North American and World News Editor:
Alexander Ivanoff
Contributing Editor:
Jeffrey Erlitz

Production Manager:
David Ross

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THIRD AVENUE BUILT ITS LAST TROLLEY CAR 75 YEARS AGO

In the 1930s, Third Avenue just barely made a profit, but was able to solve the urban transit problem by building inexpensive light rail vehicles that were easy to maintain. This modernization program, which began in 1930, continued for nearly a decade.

The 100s described in the previous issue were placed in service on the busy Broadway Line. The first car appeared on November 21, 1934 and 83 new cars were operating there on December 30, 1935. Most of the Broadway convertibles replaced the Third and Amsterdam Avenue, Broadway-Amsterdam Avenue and 125th Street, 125th Street Crosstown convertibles, which were scrapped.

On March 23, 1936, buses replaced the street cars on New York Railways' Lexington Avenue Line, one block west of the Third and Amsterdam Avenue Line. Cars 185-199 were immediately transferred to Third and Amsterdam. The company probably expected to attract new riders who would prefer the smooth-riding rebuilt cars to the uncomfortable, poorly ventilated buses.

Meanwhile, the company started building new cars as soon as it completed rebuilding its single-truck cars. Third Avenue built the 300s in its own shops at E. 65th Street and Third Avenue, Manhattan. The 300s weighed 38,100 pounds, nearly 1,000 pounds lighter than the rebuilt 100s. Cost and weight were reduced by using mild steel bodies and equipping cars with aluminum alloy stanchions, grab handles, seat back handles, and sash. New car construction proceeded rapidly and cars were transferred frequently. The first cars 321-330, which started operating on A/New Rochelle-Subway on July 1, 1936, were followed by 301-315 on Yonkers Ave-

nue on or about December , 1936. Most of the remaining 300s were placed in service on Third and Amsterdam Avenue or Broadway from mid-1936 to mid-1937, after which they were transferred to Yonkers or the Bronx. As soon as the company completed production of the 300s, it started building the Huffliners, the only center-exit cars it ever operated. Aluminum cars 551-600 and alloy steel cars 601-625, which included 1,000 pounds of aluminum parts, were placed in service on the busy Broadway Line between September, 1937 and February, 1939. When all the Huffliners were in service, the Manhattan cars were transferred again. During the 1940s, the following assignment was in effect with only slight changes.

CARS	LINE
101-179 393-399	Third and Amsterdam Avenue, Broadway-Amsterdam Avenue and 125 th Street, 125 th Street Crosstown
180-200	Broadway, Tenth Avenue
551-625	Broadway
Convertibles	42 nd Street Crosstown

Cars 626-685 were the best and the last cars that Third Avenue built. Operation was smooth and quiet, and their estimated speed was more than 35 miles per hour. Cars weighed 37,450 pounds, slightly lighter than the 300s. We saw the first car, 626, on January 8, 1939 and the last car, 685, on February 4, 1940. Cars 626-645 were operated on the 59th Street Crosstown at all times and the 42nd Street Crosstown on Sunday. They replaced 819-838, most of which were sold to

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NEXT TRIP: GRAND CENTRAL TOUR — SATURDAY, APRIL 11

THE GENESIS OF “DASHING DAN,” PART THREE —

Penn Station Opens and a Suburban Colossus Emerges

by George Chiasson

(Continued from February, 2015 issue)

On September 8, 1910, electrified service was operated on the following complete routes, in general using MP-54-type steel multiple-unit equipment, and with a controversial 14 cents extra tacked onto each fare to cover a per train rental fee paid to the Pennsylvania Railroad:

- Rockaway Beach Branch: Penn Station to Rockaway Park via White Pot Junction and Hammels. Stops at Woodside, Winfield, Matawok, Woodhaven Junction, Ozone Park, Aqueduct, Ramblersville, Goose Creek, The Raunt, Broad Channel, Hammels, Holland, Steeplechase, Seaside, and Rockaway Park. Summer Specials were operated express to Hammels starting in 1911
- “Far Rockaway Loop” via Hammels: Penn Station to Far Rockaway via White Pot Junction and Hammels. Return via Valley Stream and Jamaica*. Stops at Woodside, Winfield, Matawok, Woodhaven Junction, Ozone Park, Aqueduct, Ramblersville, Goose Creek, The Raunt, Broad Channel, Hammels, (Olde) Arverne, Arverne (Straiton), Edgemere, and Mott Avenue-Far Rockaway. Summer Specials were operated express to Hammels starting in 1911. *May return to Flatbush Avenue
- “Far Rockaway Loop” via Jamaica: Penn Station to Far Rockaway via Jamaica and Valley Stream. Return via Hammels and White Pot Junction*. Stops at Woodside, Winfield, Forest Hills, Hillside, Jamaica (Beaver Street), Cedar Manor, Locust Avenue, Higbie Avenue, Laurelton, Rosedale, Clear Stream Road, Valley Stream, Hewlett, Woodmere, Cedarhurst, Lawrence, and Mott Avenue-Far Rockaway. *May return to Flatbush Avenue
- Hempstead Branch: Penn Station to Hempstead via Jamaica and Floral Park. Stops at Woodside, Winfield, Forest Hills, Hillside, (old) Jamaica, Rockaway Junction, Hollis, Bellaire, Queens (Village), Belleroose, Floral Park, Stewart Manor, Nassau Boulevard, Garden City, and Hempstead
- Long Beach Branch: Penn Station to Long Beach via Jamaica, Valley Stream, and Lynbrook. Stops at Woodside, Winfield, Forest Hills, Hillside, Jamaica (Beaver Street), Cedar Manor, Locust Avenue, Higbie Avenue, Laurelton, Rosedale, Clear Stream Road, Valley Stream, Lynbrook, South Lynbrook, East Rockaway, Atlantic Avenue, Jekyl Island, The Dykes, Wreck Lead, Queenswater, and Long Beach. Summer Specials were operated express (probably Penn Station to Jamaica to Valley Stream) starting in 1911
- Main Line Shuttle: Electric multiple-unit cars were also operated on an interim shuttle service as de-

scribed above, from Penn Station to Jamaica via Main Line. This made stops at Woodside, Winfield, Forest Hills, Hillside, and (old) Jamaica, connecting with steam trains from Long Island City to Whitestone Landing and Port Washington at Woodside (which in turn were cut or joined at Great Neck Junction). It also met with steam trains from Long Island City to additional points (Oyster Bay, Hempstead via Mineola, Mineola via West Hempstead, Hicksville, Babylon, and beyond) at Jamaica.

On the day that those first Long Island Rail Road MU trains commenced revenue operation to Pennsylvania Station, the Main Line across Queens exhibited a mixed bag of rights-of-way: in part on the original road bed, which included grade crossings, in part grade-separated, and in part relocated. To summarize, trains escaping the East River tunnels found a 6- to 8-track right-of-way through the Pennsylvania's Sunnyside Yard complex, which sorted into four tracks for the LIRR Main Line and two for its “North Side Division” (Whitestone and Port Washington Branches). As it passed Laurel Hill Avenue, the line arced around a long 90° curve and merged into the existing four tracks of the original line just past the 1908-opened 1st (54th) Street overpass, two each for the Main Line and North Side. The Woodside Branch diverged from the latter by its namesake station, where the tracks then swung gracefully back through numerous, concentrated urban grade crossings (each individually and manually attended) in the former village (and now burgeoning neighborhood) of Woodside.

Just after the two North Side tracks cut away at Winfield Junction, the Main Line still spread to three tracks at Maurice (51st) Avenue, then passed onto a newly-completed six-track elevation at Remsen Lane (63rd Drive), as initially rebuilt in 1908-9 for the Glendale cut-off. There it began pursuing its unwavering survey through what had once been the rural Queens County municipalities of Newtown and Jamaica, which by this time were transforming into such steadfast areas as Rego Park, Forest Hills, Richmond Hill, and Kew Gardens. All six tracks (four for the Main Line bracketed by two for the Rockaway Beach Division) continued through a grade separated junction as far as Herrick (70th) Avenue, from there reverting to its enhanced (1907) state of three-track width through Forest Hills station. At Ascan Avenue it entered the 1909-opened Maple Grove realignment and followed it as far as Metropolitan Avenue (including the local station at Hillside), with the fourth iron finally being installed and electrified after it was roughed in during original construction. The

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The Genesis of "Dashing Dan"

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four electrified tracks then continued as far as Lester Avenue (135th Street), just one block shy of Van Wyck, before consolidating back to two for "AC" Tower interlocking, where they merged with the Atlantic Division and took aim at (old) Jamaica station.

As aged, abrupt, and messy as its end was at the time, this arrangement of the Main Line would prove to be short-lived; immense improvements to support the new Jamaica Station would soon bring extensive revisions to all junctions in that entire area. Nearby on the Glendale cut-off, a temporary set of low platforms called "Brooklyn Manor" were also opened in November, 1910 on the north side of the original Jamaica Avenue overpass, which dated from the 1880 start-up. This was intended for use by Rockaway Beach Division trains serving Penn Station (as well as those destined to and from Long Island City) and acted as a better-located replacement for the former Brooklyn Hills. The permanent station would be situated on the south side of the Jamaica Avenue overpass and consisted of high wooden platforms with substantial shelters and electric lighting. Its construction lagged into the winter of 1911, and it was finally ready for public use as of January 9. The overpass itself was effectively replaced by 1914 when it was enlarged and reinforced in part to provide improved access to the station.

A NEW ERA BEGINS—NUMBER 2: ISSUES WITH ROLLING STOCK

As an after-effect of ACF's post-strike backlog and continual post-production refinements of the otherwise capable DD-1 locomotives, overall equipment availabilities remained a problem for both of Penn Station's resident railroads through the end of the year. By December 31, 1910 the Long Island Rail Road had received a total of 150 MP-54 MU motors, 15 MB-62 baggage motors, and 15 MPB-54 baggage "Combinations" to cover the needs of its electrified system in addition to the MP-41/T-39 and MP-41/MB-45 tandems that had been running for several years. The only steel coach also on hand was the same P-58 class prototype delivered in 1907 (1451, originally 1401), which by the end of 1910 had been converted to a "Club" car and was being used in company with traditional wooden equipment. There were 10 other steel "production" cars on the property as well (682-691), but they were B-62 class baggage cars and of little help in expanding passenger service. Between this limitation and the Pennsylvania's own tardiness in establishing its operations into Manhattan, any hope of initiating Long Island Rail Road through service from East End points was forced to await a longer-term resolution to the equipment shortage and qualification requirements. Neither was LIRR compelled to pursue the acquisition of more steam locomotives to meet additional service needs that might be generated by the opening of Penn Station; in 1910 the company had a strong stable of approximately 154 passenger engines in 4-4-0, 4-4-2, 4-6-0, and even 2-6-2T configurations,

about one-third of which were of the "Camelback" type, with all between 4 and 28 years of age. The majority of this motive power collection went on to serve LIRR into the 1930s, by which time the second round of electrification and next generation of "G-5s" steam engines had taken hold. The final five 2-6-2T "tank" engines described above had been the last acquired from Baldwin in 1904 for latter-day steam-powered rapid transit service, and were sold to the Central Railroad of New Jersey soon after Penn Station's opening in November, 1911. Renumbered to 220-224 in their new home, they remained active until the end of World War II.

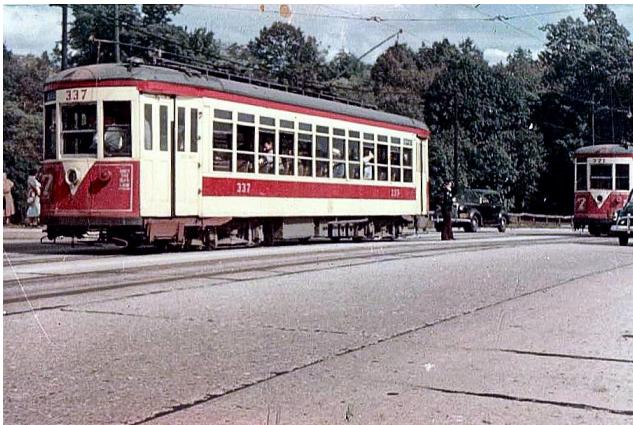
A NEW ERA BEGINS—NUMBER 3: PENN STATION'S OPERATIONAL COAT-TAILS AND OTHER ISSUES TO BE DEALT WITH

Soon after the Pennsylvania Railroad had received sufficient quantities of DD-1 electric locomotives and steel coaches, and after its personnel had continued to train for their new work routine right up to the final minutes beforehand, the remainder of Pennsylvania Station, plus all attendant facilities including Sunnyside Yard, was opened for revenue service on November 27, 1910. This included all intercity trains, most of the company's regional (i.e., Northeast Corridor) service and a healthy percentage of its commuter traffic from New Jersey points, all of which was required to undergo a motive power change at Manhattan Transfer. The new Penn Station interlockings at "KN" (used mainly by LIRR) and "JO" (used by both railroads) also commenced formal operation on that date, as did those inside the new Sunnyside Yard in Queens, which then was at least technically available for LIRR equipment servicing and storage (though in fact it was sparingly employed for such). Along with that, PRR passengers were able to connect for Manhattan and Brooklyn through a pair of dedicated, hourly "Annex Shuttle" services (fare 30¢) that had short, 2- or 3-car MU consists assigned. One set was operated by the "Pennsy" from Manhattan Transfer to Penn Station and employed a small lot of six MP-54s that had been specially procured for this purpose, while another was operated by the Long Island Rail Road from Penn Station to Flatbush Avenue. This was a railroad version of the Pennsylvania's former "Annex Ferry" that navigated from Exchange Place in Jersey City to Downtown Brooklyn, which was discontinued with the start of complete operations at Penn Station. Its electric MUs (also nominally LIRR MP-54s) used the Glendale cut-off from the Main Line to the Rockaway Beach Division, passed through Woodhaven Junction, and relayed at Ozone Park. To reach Brooklyn this shuttle then took the Woodhaven Junction connector at "WT" (formerly Tower 66), proceeded onto the Atlantic Division main line and headed west for the Flatbush Avenue terminal with stops only at East New York (ex-Manhattan Beach Crossing) and Nostrand Avenue. As things later sorted out in that pre-subway era, the Annex Shuttle enjoyed very little patronage on the LIRR side compared to its maritime pre-

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Third Avenue Built Its Last Trolley Car 75 Years Ago

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Car 337 on Route 7 at Tibbets Brook Park, Yonkers.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 339 on Route 2/Yonkers.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 340 on Route 7 at Getty Square.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 343 on Route 7 at W. 1st Street and Scott's Bridge, Mount Vernon.
Bernard Linder collection



Cars 561 and 621 at W. 117th Street and Broadway.
Bernard Linder collection

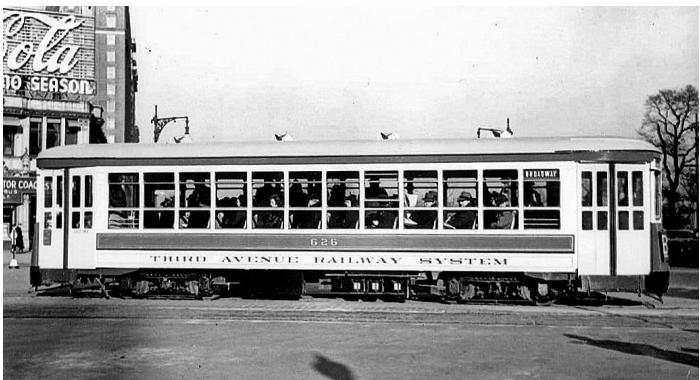
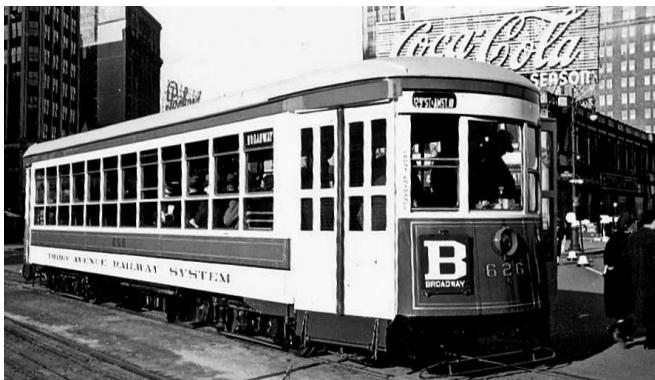


Car 577 on Route K on Amsterdam Avenue at W. 155th Street,
August 15, 1939.
Bernard Linder collection

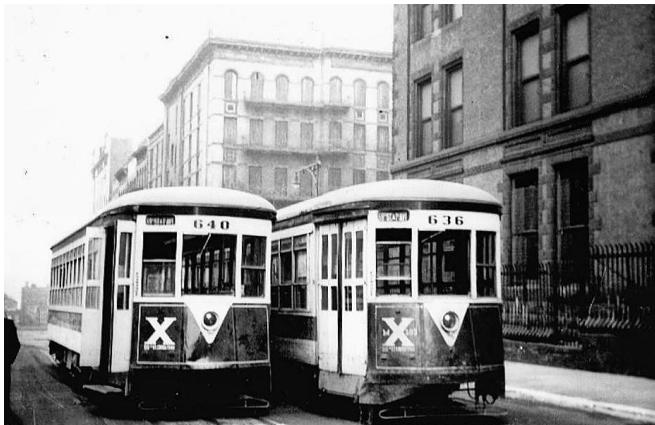
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Third Avenue Built Its Last Trolley Car 75 Years Ago

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Car 626, first of the non-center door 600s, entered service January 3, 1939; photos taken January 7, 1939 at Columbus Circle.
Bernard Linder collection



Cars 640 and 636 on 59th Street Crosstown.
Bernard Linder collection



Huffliners 624, 611, 603, and 616 en route to Brazil, March 31, 1947.
Bernard Linder collection



Huffliner 625 en route to Brazil, March, 1947.
Bernard Linder collection



Car 674 at National Tramway Museum, Derbyshire, England.
Bernard Linder collection

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Third Avenue Built Its Last Trolley Car 75 Years Ago

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San Diego or Quebec. Cars 821, 823, 828, 829, and 830 were placed in service on Harlem Shuttle, Morris Avenue, St. Anns Avenue, and 138th Street Crosstown in January, 1940. Cars 646-685 were placed in service on Southern Boulevard and Tremont Avenue between May, 1939 and February, 1940. They replaced ex-New York Railways 401-525, which were sold to San Diego or scrapped.

In the January, 2015 issue, we explained how the car building program ended abruptly when the company was forced to accept a bus franchise. But the company could not comply immediately because of the shortage of buses and fuel during World War II.

The Genesis of “Dashing Dan”

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decessor. Not surprisingly, it was the first line from Penn Station to be discontinued, on August 31, 1911, while the PRR shuttle on the New Jersey side, between Penn Station and Manhattan Transfer, survived for several years longer.

Also noticeably enlarged during 1911 were several of the existing “rapid transit” stations on the Atlantic Division (Railroad Avenue, Union Course, and Woodhaven) where platforms were broadened to accommodate the strong ridership they had attracted since the 1905 electrification, particularly in rush hours. Event crowding between LIRR trains and Jamaica Race Track was also responsible for the addition of “LA” Tower at Locust Avenue, which oversaw the special siding and high platform used to serve its large mass of patrons, who were guided to the train station through wooden pens. Away from the electrified zone, two other new stops were added at about this time in response to the natural, long-term growth of surrounding communities. One was on the lightly-served ex-Central Railroad of Long Island main line at Clinton Road (1911), acting as a civilian convenience stop short of the military reservation. Just as it was in 1899 this line was being used irregularly (and probably rarely, in peacetime) by special trains and/or shuttle service from Garden City, generally related to associated Army National Guard activities. A portion of the line had been modified for the Pennsylvania Railroad’s a.c. electrification tests of 1908, which included some third rail installation as well, and over time it would regenerate in part and be expanded to serve a mixed industrial, residential, and military clientele. Opened sometime in 1912, “Merrillon Avenue” was located in the new village of Garden City Park where that road converged with Nassau Boulevard as they crossed the Main Line between New Hyde Park and Mineola. Finally, with the newly-relocated depot at Floral Park complete, space became available and on June 3, 1912 connecting trackage from the (ex-CRRL) Hempstead Branch to the Main Line was doubled. This at last enabled a Hempstead-bound train to leave the Main Line

Transit Commission records reveal that 752 old cars were available in 1933 before the modernization program began. After the surplus cars were scrapped, 658 cars were available in 1943. This total included 397 second-hand, rebuilt, and new cars in addition to 261 convertibles and box cars, which were 36 to 39 years old when they were scrapped about 1947. But the new cars were out of service long before they reached the end of their useful life. The Huffliners were sold or scrapped when they were only eight years old and the last Third Avenue cars, the 300s, ran for only 16 years in Yonkers.

This concludes the interesting story of a company that just barely made a profit. Because PCCs were too expensive, it rebuilt newer cars and built new cars. It produced inexpensive cars that were almost as fast as the PCCs.

when waiting for an opposing move off the single track branch, but the short suburban electric line and its growing ridership base would remain a source of operational folly for a few more years.

On May 15, 1911 a replacement depot building was opened on the north side of the Main Line at 178th Place for the Rockaway Junction local station. Most of the original 1890-built station on the south side had been moved slightly eastward in 1906 to provide space for a lead to the new Holban Yard, but subsequent access to the station then became slightly circuitous and was sometimes obstructed by freight activity on the yard lead. Its complete relocation did away with such difficulties, yet left the platforms and overhead bridge from the 1905 electrification to remain as they were, though enlarged. The following year (1912) Rockaway Junction station was rechristened “Hillside,” while the 1909-created Hillside station on the Main Line at Union Turnpike (now Lefferts Boulevard) was re-titled “Kew” to recognize the quickly-blossoming residential development in its area. This location then underwent a third name change in 1914 to finally become the present “Kew Gardens.” Other incremental upgrades continued on the emerging commuter rail system as the end of 1911 approached, with a depot added at South Lynbrook on the Long Beach Branch in November and yet another completely new station opened on December 3 between Lawrence and Far Rockaway to serve the southwest Nassau County village of Inwood (though not directly located within it).

The improvement of additional sections of the Main Line across Queens was carried out incrementally as the establishment of Penn Station progressed, governed by the railroad’s financial resources and land availabilities. As a natural result such work was prioritized to that which could be accomplished in the fastest time at the lowest cost, which in turn resulted in a somewhat haphazard sequence of implementation. Following completion of those elements most essential to the opening of Pennsylvania Station and Sunnyside Yard (the Glendale cut-off and Maple Grove Relocation in that order) attention was turned to upgrading of the bal-

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IN MEMORIAM: JAMES MATTINA, 1954-2015

by Jeffrey Erlitz

With deep sadness, I must pass along the news that our Inspector of Elections and former Membership Secretary, James Mattina, passed away early in the morning of Saturday, February 7, just past his 61st birthday. He had been battling an advanced form of cancer for a year and a half.

Jimmy, as most of us knew him, joined the Electric Railroaders' Association on January 28, 1971 at the age of 16 and was member number 4109. If memory serves me right, he probably started volunteering at Headquarters in the late 1970s, initially on Saturday mornings and then on Monday evenings. Like most of us, he could be found collating, stamping envelopes, and bagging sacks of mail for both the New York Division *Bulletin* and National's *Headlights*. Around 1986-7, ERA purchased its first personal computer, an actual IBM PC. Together, Jim and I constructed the membership database from scratch, typing in the data from each and every membership application starting with the earliest records. We used Ashton-Tate's dBase III+ relational database. I believe Jimmy continued using this software until last year.

Jimmy loved to travel and took advantage of ERA's very first trip to Europe, in 1983, which was planned and led by Jack May. I did not go as I used to think there was nothing to see there for the electric traction fan. Obviously, I had a lot to learn and when Jimmy returned from this overseas excursion, he raved about all the transit systems and railroads he had seen and ridden. Convinced, I went with Jimmy and many others on ERA's second trip to Europe in 1985. Jimmy was absolutely correct; I had a railroad and transit epiphany. What would you expect, since my very first train ride in Europe was on the Swiss Federal Railways! Jimmy had told me about the level of track maintenance over there and it kind of went in one ear and out the other at the time he told me. As I sat looking out the window on that very first train ride from the Zürich airport into downtown, I was astounded at the smoothness of the ride, especially through the interlockings. "See," Jimmy said, "I told you!" That was the first of many trips with him overseas.

Outside of ERA, Jimmy worked almost all of his adult life at the one place he really wished to work, the New York City Transit Authority. Holding various positions over the years, Jimmy was most recently in Maintenance of Way. He often said that because his hobby and his means of employment were the same, it really was not "work." How very true.

On a personal note, I really have Jimmy to thank for broadening my tastes in foreign cuisines. If I recall correctly, it was he who initially suggested trying out Indian and Korean restaurants after our work sessions on Monday nights at ERA Headquarters. Jimmy loved good food, and regardless of country of origin, the spicier the food the better. In September, 1987 we and two other friends were on vacation in London, England. We went to Edgeware Road one evening for *real* Indian cuisine. Jimmy, of course, asked the waiter to make his dish very hot. Apparently, it was the hottest he had ever had, which suited him just fine, sweat pouring off his head notwithstanding. The other three of us had to help him finish it. We amateurs could only help a little, as it really was too hot for us mere mortals. Additionally, one of Jimmy's most favorite restaurants was a Czech

place on 31st Street in Astoria, now sadly closed. Besides having fabulous food, they always had his preferred beer, reasonably fresh Pilsners from the Czech Republic, and of course, sauerkraut!

Another major interest of his was foreign languages. He had taken four years of German in high school and had retained an awful lot of it, so much so that he was an absolute Godsend on our trips through Germany, Austria, and the German part of Switzerland. He managed to learn at least a few phrases in several more languages, including Hungarian(!), just to be able to initiate a conversation.

Jimmy was a beloved friend to many. He was full of good cheer and brought laughter and smiles to any gathering he attended. Above all, Jimmy was an absolute gentleman who would give you the shirt off his back. A truer friend would be very hard to find. He will be sorely missed.



Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 316

by Ronald Yee and Alexander Ivanoff

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo announced plans to spend as much as \$5 billion of a state budget surplus on transportation-related projects across the state. In the New York City area, major improvements could occur at commuter rail station hubs at Ronkonkoma and around Nassau County on the Long Island Rail Road and near Tarrytown on Metro-North Railroad. For New York City, this funding could provide 900 new subway cars to replace the oldest cars dating back to the 1970s and a continuation of ongoing improvements to the signal systems and strengthening the infrastructure to handle future storms and the floods they can bring. High-speed ferry services similar to those seen in Europe would be studied as a potential new travel option linking Manhattan with John F. Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports as well as Westchester and Long Island. Those two airports would be the recipients of funding to vastly improve the runways and passenger terminals. LaGuardia could receive a \$450 million, 1.5-mile rail connection in around five years. It would operate between the airport's passenger terminals and the Willets Point stations of the Flushing Line (7) and the Long Island Rail Road alongside the alignment of the Grand Central Parkway, which would minimize impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. In Orange County, Stewart Airport would become the cargo airport for New York City and Republic Airport the private aircraft hub of the region. (*Editor's Note by Ron Yee: Two other viable and sensible long-term alternatives that should be seriously explored before committing to this stand-alone line would be to: 1) extend the current JFK Airtrain from Jamaica northward on the Van Wyck and Grand Central Parkways to LaGuardia with a possible connection at Willets Point with 7 and LIRR, keeping this as a primarily Port Authority project, or 2) hand over rail transit to LaGuardia to MTA by extending the elevated Astoria Line (N/Q) along Ditmars Boulevard to LaGuardia and having it serve the Marine Air Terminal in addition to the Central Terminal Building and the U.S. Airways/Delta terminals at the eastern end of the airport. As it would be a MTA project, a local station or two along the route could be constructed to serve the local neighborhoods it would pass over. The ability of it to provide a one-seat ride from not only midtown but also lower Manhattan and the financial district would be a key selling point of this alternative. However, in the past, this alternative has been met with opposition from the local communities.*) (**New York Daily News, New York Newsday**, dnainfo.com, January 20)

Effective Sunday, March 22, fares and tolls will increase on all MTA transportation facilities and services. The base *MetroCard* and local bus fare goes up from \$2.50 to \$2.75. The single ride ticket that was \$2.75 (\$2.50 plus 25 cents), will be \$3.00 (\$2.75 plus 25 cents). The *MetroCard* fare bonus goes from 5% with a \$5.00 purchase to 11% with a \$5.50 purchase (the

equivalent of \$2.48 per ride). The 7-day unlimited *MetroCard* goes up by \$1 to \$31. The 30-day unlimited *MetroCard* goes from \$112.00 to \$116.50. For MTA express buses, the fare goes up from \$6 to \$6.50 with the *MetroCard* discounted express bus fare rising from \$5.71 to \$5.86. Access-A-Ride goes from \$2.50 to \$2.75. No mention was made of changes to the senior disabled fare at the time of this printing. At most, it would increase from the current \$1.25 to \$1.50. On the commuter railroads (Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road), the average fare increase of all fare types will average just under 4.25%. Due to a requirement that fares increase in 25-cent increments, some local fares may rise by greater than 4%. However, any fare increase exceeding 6% will be limited to a maximum increase of 50 cents. City Ticket increases by 25 cents from \$4.00 to \$4.25. For automobiles, the cash toll will go from \$7.50 to \$8.00 and the E-ZPass toll will become \$5.54. Despite spending cuts of \$1.1 billion per year increasing to \$1.6 billion by 2018, with the forecast for upwards of a \$5 billion budget gap for its five-year capital plan, the next fare and toll increase is slated for 2017. (**The New York Times**, MTA website, January 22)

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

As of January 5, 393 M-8 cars have been delivered to Metro-North Railroad's New Haven Yard. 378 cars have been accepted for passenger service and 11 cars (including 9 single cars) are undergoing inspection and testing by Kawasaki Rail Car, Incorporated. 91 M-2/M-4/M-6 cars remain in active service, giving the New Haven Line a total of 469 cars. (*Editor's Note by Ron Yee: A railfan commuter acquaintance rode aboard M-8 single car 9500 in mid-January and reported that while the lights and public address systems worked and the car rode well, there was no heat in that car on a subfreezing morning commute.*) (Randy Glucksman, MTA website, January 30)

The town of Clarkstown is studying the possibility of moving the Metro-North west-of-Hudson railroad station at Nanuet a few hundred yards north to a location closer to its business district and new shopping mall and be the anchor point of a new transit-oriented development community that would be attractive to younger professionals currently living in the area who would otherwise move to Brooklyn, New York or Hoboken, New Jersey. However, the proposed site of the new station is located on an existing curve on the rail line, a feature that presents safety issues for people boarding or alighting from their trains. Metro-North has met with town officials and taken a position that should the station be relocated, the local town must assume all costs associated with its relocation and the new station being made compliant with all codes and regulations in effect. Nanuet is also conveniently located near road access to the New York State Thruway as well as Routes 59 and 304 and does

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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have a main street with shops and residential housing, albeit one block in the opposite direction of the station's parking lot, a factor that discourages patronage by commuters alighting from the trains in the evening rush hour. Clarkstown cites the successful rebirth of the cities of White Plains and Rye following similar redevelopment around the train station as being valid toward their argument in support of this proposal. (*The Journal News*, January 16)

As a part of New York Governor Cuomo's plan to improve the transportation infrastructure of the New York City area, the state would contribute \$250 million toward a new line that would connect Metro-North's New Haven Line with Penn Station as part of the nearly \$1 billion Penn Access Project. Four new stations would be constructed at Co-op City, Morris Park, Parkchester, and Hunts Point. Morris Park has some of the highest concentrations of medical research facilities in the region and the line could provide a transportation option for up to 39,000 local residents. MTA expects the environmental and federal level reviews to be completed by 2017. (Office of the Governor of New York, January 21)

In 2015, Metro-North will focus on aggressive track improvement projects to address several longstanding issues that have been the primary cause of poor track conditions and delays for trains. Areas with poor drainage and/or fouled ballast along with the replacement of worn or decayed railroad ties on the tracks will be addressed this year. Eight miles of continuous welded rail (CWR), eight grade crossings in Connecticut, and the installation of channels and fiberglass brackets to support new aluminum third rail are also planned. In 2014, the railroad pointed to its accomplishments in improving track infrastructure, such as the replacement of 42,500 ties, 83 miles of track resurfaced, 24 new switches/crossovers installed, 7,000 feet of CWR for six curves on the Hudson line, and 4,700 feet of CWR for three curves on the New Haven line. Three highway grade crossings at Chippewa Road and Pleasant Ridge Road on the Harlem Line and Manitou Road on the Hudson line were renewed, steel repairs were made to four under grade bridges, and the timber decks were replaced on nine bridges. The moveable bridges at WALK Bridge in South Norwalk, Connecticut (swing span) and DEVON Bridge in Milford, Connecticut (draw span) as well as the Harlem River Lift Bridge (center section lift) had their timber ties, mitre rails located at the moveable joints, and CWR along the spans replaced. While Metro-North posted a 91.5 on-time performance for the year 2014, 2015 goals are set at 93% for AM and PM peak trains and 92% for off-peak and weekend trains, reflective of the fact that most track maintenance would be performed during those periods. Fleet performance goals for 2015 will be boosted from 2014's 160,000 miles to 185,000 miles between road failures. Metro-North carried 84.7 million riders in 2014, a new high, exceeding its previous record of 83.6 million in 2008

prior to the economic downturn that started that year. On the safety front, "alerters" were installed on all non-equipped operating cabs, a contract awarded for the installation of inward and outward facing cameras for the entire fleet, and a pilot program launched to detect sleep apnea issues amongst key operating department employees. (*Railway Track and Structures*, January 20)

A winter storm forced Metro-North to suspend all service after 9 PM on Monday, January 26 in order to avoid the prospect of stranding passengers aboard trains that could become disabled in the blizzard conditions forecasted. The last trains departed their originating stations around 9 PM. Metro-North resumed service on the Hudson and Harlem Lines at 11 AM and on the New Haven Line at 1 PM on Tuesday, January 27. (MTA Metro-North website, January 26-27)

Train #953, the 5:19 PM to Wassaic, derailed its P-32-AC-DM locomotive and the first two coaches as it was departing Track 18 in Grand Central Terminal on Wednesday, January 28. No injuries were reported and all 800 passengers were escorted from the train's rear four cars, which were still adjacent to the platform. However, the derailed train blocked nine platform tracks, trapping numerous sets of equipment, resulting in major delays to many evening peak period trains. 24 hours later, all of the "trapped" equipment had been moved, enabling them to be returned to service while the derailed train was being investigated for the cause of the derailment. To add insult to injury, another train derailed as it was entering the yard at North White Plains just three hours after this incident. (*Westchester Journal News*, January 29)

An ice storm on February 2 caused an evening rush hour train on the New Haven Line to stall on the express track near the Pelham station. Issues with the pantographs not being able to be raised properly to draw power from the overhead lines resulted in the stranded passengers having to endure their ordeal without lights or heat. It took over 2 hours for the railroad to rescue the passengers by lining up a train on an adjacent track and transferring them over on evacuation ramps. (CBS News, February 2)

One of the findings of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation into the derailment and subsequent collision of two trainsets of new M-8 class EMU cars is that the eight "Grade 5" bolts that secure each wheel truck to the car body may not be strong enough to insure that the truck remains attached to the car body. It recommended that they be replaced by "Grade 8" bolts to prevent such separations in any future wreck. That translates into 6,000 bolts that could need to be replaced. Metro-North has taken a position that the existing bolts meet FRA guidelines and standards. No discussions on any decision to replace these bolts have been undertaken, nor has any agreement been reached on assigning any sort of blame or fault, as well as the cost of replacing the bolts. (*Hartford Courant*, February 2)

An errant Mercedes SUV found itself trapped on the

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two-track main line of the Harlem Line as the crossing gates came down on top of it around 6:30 PM on Tuesday, February 3. Rather than back up and get clear of the tracks, the driver, after getting out of her car to inspect it for damage from the gate arm that had come down on it, decided to get back in and drive it forward to get clear of the gate and probably avoid any more damage to her car. She did not comprehend the fact that Train #659, the 5:44 PM non-stop express from Grand Central Terminal to Chappaqua and destined for Southeast, was heading northward on Track 2. Seconds later, she was struck by the train and the wreckage shoved almost 8 carlengths down the track. Subsequent to the impact, there was an explosion and fireball from the fuel tank of the smashed SUV and the interior of the first car of the train (M-7A 4333) was set on fire by a combination of gasoline from the SUV's fuel tank as well as around 400 feet of third rail that was dislodged by the wreckage of the SUV and bent upward to pierce the floor of the lead car of the train near the location of the first door vestibule on the left side of the car. The third rail was literally fed into the lead car, scattering about inside of the car as it ground to a halt. The rail had broken apart into 39-foot sections, with one piece puncturing through the rear of the lead car into the second car. This puncturing is what probably allowed the flaming fuel from the SUV to get inside of the lead car and start (as well as fuel) the raging inferno that incinerated the mid-section of the car. Five passengers and the SUV driver were killed and 15 other passengers seriously injured.

Subsequent NTSB press conferences in the weeks following this tragedy revealed that Train #659 was traveling at 58 mph, 2 mph under the 60 mph speed limit of that section of the line, and that the Engineer was able to reduce the train's impact speed with the SUV to 49 mph by putting the brakes in emergency about 300 feet ahead of the crossing after spotting the errant car fouling the tracks and then incredibly, pulling forward, farther into the direct path of the train.

The Engineer was hailed as a hero who personally led nearly a half-dozen riders to safety out the side door on the right-front of the train before being nearly overcome by the smoke. The Conductor performed admirably as well, making public address announcements to prevent panic amongst passengers and checking on the status of everyone aboard as he went through the rear 6 cars of the 8-car train and directed them rearward to the last car of the train, which, by chance, had stopped right at the Commerce Street grade crossing, where they were ushered off the train on emergency ladders. Upon arriving into the third car, emergency responders instructed him to leave the train as they were handling the evacuation of the first three cars.

New York and Connecticut Senators are now calling for a thorough investigation into this tragedy and the implementation of measures to prevent this from hap-

pening again. Train service was suspended between North White Plains and Pleasantville from the time of this grade crossing collision through Wednesday evening while the National Transportation Safety Board conducted its investigation. Peak period train services were restored Thursday morning with some delays, operating on a modified schedule to allow for slow speed operations past the accident site. Normal service was restored for Friday, February 5. (*New York Daily News*, *New York Post*, *New York Times*, CBS News, February 5, 6, and 7; *The New York Times*, February 23)

NJ TRANSIT

NJT expanded its Quiet Car Commute service to all weekday trains between 6 AM and 8 PM based upon the time of their departure from originating terminal. The quiet car will be the first and last open cars on Northeast Corridor, North Jersey Coast, and Raritan Valley Line trains. On the Hoboken district, covering the Morris & Essex, Montclair-Boonton, Main/Bergen County, Port Jervis, and Pascack Valley Lines, the quiet car will be the open car closest to the Hoboken end of the train. A similar logic applies to Atlantic City line trains, the quiet car being the open car closest to Atlantic City end of the train. For Bay Head shuttles, the first open car of the train will be the quiet car, regardless of direction. (NJ Transit, January 15)

NJT's Hudson Bergen Light Rail (HBLRT) was forced to suspend operations just before 1 PM Monday, February 2 due to ice build-ups on the catenary. Limited substitute bus service was provided but resulted in major delays to commuters. Service was restored the next day. (*The Jersey Journal*, February 2)

AMTRAK

Indiana State Representative Randy Truitt filed Indiana House Bill 1217, providing \$3 million annually to enable the state to contract with Amtrak to operate the *Hoosier State* train between Indianapolis and Chicago. This funding is a temporary measure until a more permanent solution can be agreed upon. This was to enable the service to continue beyond the January 31 expiration date of the contract with Amtrak. (*Lafayette Journal and Courier*, January 14)

In response to the severe weather forecast for a winter storm on January 26, Amtrak suspended service between New York Penn Station and Boston on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and Albany on the Empire Corridor during the storm. Limited service was resumed the following afternoon. The Boston section of the *Lake Shore Limited* was suspended as were the *Vermonter*, *Downeaster* and the *New Haven-Springfield* services. Northeast Corridor train schedules between New York City and Washington D.C. and *Keystone* service to Harrisburg were modified to a reduced frequency for the two-day duration of the storm. Boston-New York City services were restored on Wednesday, January 28, the day after the storm slammed New England with up to 32 inches of snow. (*Providence Journal*, January 27)

MISCELLANEOUS

Member Randy Glucksman has forwarded a website

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that tracks the real-time movement of all trains on the subways and commuter rail lines along the east coast:

<http://tracker.geops.ch/?z=11&s=1&x=-8236398.3443&y=5017108.9652&l=transport>

It is interesting to watch trains move along their routes in real time simultaneously in the New York City metropolitan area, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C., just by sliding one's computer mouse up and down to the northeastern coastal cities. Click on any circular dot representing a train to get its destination and therefore its direction of travel. If one zooms in enough on New York City, some local bus routes have moving dots moving along them representing vehicles that must be reporting on their GPS driven transit system's tracking systems that provide information on "next bus" displays at many street side bus shelters. (*Editor's Note by Ron Yee: This system is based upon scheduled services, based upon the timetables available from each transit provider. It does not reflect the location of the actual transit vehicle or train. This was verified during the storm Juno of January 26-27. During the total shutdown, trains and buses were seen moving about New York City as if there were no storm. This tracker closely resembles Metro-North Railroad's "VTTS-Train Tracker" that was for employee use. It displayed all Metro-North passenger and deadhead trains as well as every Amtrak train currently operating on Metro-North tracks. On that system, each dot was color-coded: green for Hudson, blue for Harlem, and red for New Haven, with yellow dots for deadhead trains and purple dots for Amtrak trains. An arrow indicated direction of travel and the train number was listed adjacent to each dot. If the train was over 5 minutes 59 seconds behind schedule at that location, it was considered late at that location and its dot "pulsed" with concentric circles, highlighting its "late" status. The system was fed with the same real-time data supplied from the Metro-North Operations Control Center's Dispatcher's screens.*) (Jack May, Ron Yee, January 25)

The Obama administration included \$478 billion for investment into repairing the crumbling infrastructure of the nation in its proposed fiscal 2016 budget. Revenues from the gasoline tax have been declining in recent years as automobiles have become far more efficient and require less fuel. While its funds would still fall far short of the nation's actual needs, an important aspect overlooked by many thus far is the wording of this budget proposal, the Transportation Trust Fund, not the Highway Trust Fund, a nod toward the need for multimodal approach to America's transportation needs. It is hoped that if this proposal does come to pass, transit will receive some of the funding rather than it going almost exclusively to the roadway and highway projects. This proposal could boost federal spending well above the current levels. (*The Washington Post*, February 2)

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

During January, just four of the 40 Motive Power HSP-46 locomotives ordered by MBTA for \$222 million were

in service. Most of the units already delivered have been sidelined by an issue with the traction motor bearings, which may be prone to premature failure. Warranty work is currently being performed under contract by Norfolk Southern shops at Altoona, Pennsylvania and at the nearby maintenance facilities of the Providence & Worcester short line. As of mid-January, only eight units have been put through the warranty-related work, at no charge to MBTA, which still expects all 40 units to be in service by the end of 2015. However, four of these eight "repaired" units have been sidelined for other maintenance-related issues, leaving just four units in service. MBTA has been assessing penalties to Keolis, the contract operator for its commuter rail services, for poor on-time performance, which has hovered around 98.8%, a very slight improvement over the same period one year earlier. The penalties issued to Keolis are itemized, a minimum of \$250 for peak trains that are late and \$500 for every late peak period train to a maximum monthly fine of \$434,425 As of January 23, it has been fined a total of \$2.4 million in its seven months of operating Boston's commuter trains. Half were for late trains in October, November, and December, 2014 and the other half of the fines were for issues regarding cleanliness, staffing, and fare collection. In return, Keolis has cited the high failure rate for its older locomotives and the inability of the new units to assume the reins as the primary cause for half of all recorded late or cancelled trains. The HSP-46 utilizes a prime mover, a.c. traction systems, head-end power equipment, and computer systems from General Electric with Motive Power being the source of the braking, air, and cooling systems. (*The Boston Globe*, January 21 and 23)

Boston's rail transportation network suffered service meltdowns following a blizzard that laid down up to 32 inches of wind-driven snow on January 26-27 and by a winter storm on February 3, 2015. Despite efforts by Boston's Mayor to encourage people to use mass transit in an attempt to reduce vehicular traffic on snow and ice-clogged streets of Boston, MBTA rail transit services were unable to meet the increased ridership demands. Equipment broke down from the effects of sustained operation over rails that were covered in heavy snow and ice accumulations that coated vital electrical components and disabled the trains. After two weeks, many services had still not been fully restored on a reliable basis. Red Line services on the Ashmont Branch were "bustituted" between JFK/UMass and Ashmont, as was Orange Line service between Oak Grove and Sullivan as snow removal operations continued on those lines. At one point, around 40% of the aging car fleet of the Orange and Red Lines were out of service from traction motor issues brought on by the heavy accumulations of snow and ice. MTA New York City Subway loaned out two of its jet blower snow clearing machines to MBTA to assist in the recovery efforts. (MBTA website, *Boston Globe*, February 4 and 7)

In the wake of the poor performance described above, Keolis, operator of MBTA's commuter routes, has re-

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placed the General Manager of its Boston operation, Thomas Mulligan, with his deputy, Gerald Francis. MBTA General Manager Beverly Scott announced her resignation on February 11. Frank DePaola will take over as Interim General Manager; Dr. Scott will stay on until April to aid in the transition. (**Boston Globe** via Todd Glickman, February 25)

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

PATCO is working toward the goal of fare compatibility with SEPTA subways and buses when the latter inaugurates its “smart card” fare system known as the Key card. If the negotiations over the billing and accounting functions are successful, PATCO’s “Freedom” card would be valid on SEPTA subways and buses once the customer registers it with SEPTA. However, SEPTA’s Key cards will not be valid for use on PATCO’s fare gates. Part of the ongoing talks between SEPTA and PATCO may involve reciprocity for Key card holders as PATCO’s turnstiles, built by Cubic, were once fitted with a feature that are now capable of accepting contactless cards. The Key card will be inaugurated this year on SEPTA’s buses, trolleys, and subways, but not until sometime in 2016 for SEPTA Regional Rail. (**Philadelphia Inquirer**, January 21)

Acceptance of PATCO’s overhauled fleet has been delayed again. This time, the culprit is communication between the signal system and the cars. The first eight cars were to have been put into service in February, but this did not happen. Alstom is rebuilding the cars under a \$194 million contract signed in 2010. Eighteen cars are now at the factory, of which six are near completion. When they are delivered, six cars will be sent from PATCO to Alstom for rebuilding. Cars are expected to be rebuilt at the rate of four a month, meaning that the 120-car project will not be completed until at least 2017. (philly.com via Pete Donner, February 24)

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Most MARC commuter trains are subject to 10-15-minute delays between January 16 and March 12 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 would 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)

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Following a fatal fire on the Yellow Line just outside of the L’Enfant Plaza station on January 12, Washington

Metro has stepped up the pace at which third rail feeder cables in its tunnels are being replaced. The arcing feeder cables that burned were slated for replacement in a program that was to be completed in 2023. A program is currently underway to replace the older feeder cables that emit toxic gases and smoke if ignited with cables that are designed to emit lower amounts of smoke that are not as toxic. This and a program to replace 126 miles of third rail are slated for completion by 2023. (**The Washington Post**, January 31)

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

A spokesman for Detroit’s public-private partnership M-1 Rail project, now under construction, told a community group on January 29 that the project would be open for passenger service some time next year.

Sommer Woods, M-1 Director of External Affairs, made the pledge at the second of six community meetings scheduled the Garden Theater in the city’s midtown neighborhood, according to local media.

Construction along Woodward Avenue is expected to intensify as 2015 progresses, but project representatives vowed to ease any inconvenience to local business.

Last October **Railway Age** reported M-1 Rail awarded a \$30 million contract to Prague, Czech Republic-based Inekon Group for six vehicles, which was subsequently affirmed by M-1 as winter approached.

Last July Alameda, California-based Stacy and Witbeck, Incorporated was named construction manager and general contractor for the 3.3-mile, \$140 million project. (**Railway Age**, January 30)

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority officials, Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu, and City Councilmembers gathered in late January to officially kick off the construction on the 1.6-mile North Rampart Street/St. Claude Avenue Streetcar Project. The new line will connect the French Quarter to Canal Street and Loyola Avenue. The historic system dates as far back as 1835, with electrification in 1893. Mayor Landrieu was quoted as saying that the system is both “the envy of the world and an enduring icon for our city.” More than 70,000 residents live in the historic, medium-density neighborhoods adjacent to the French Quarter. Much of the housing in these areas is considered affordable, and residents who live in those neighborhoods often are cultural workers who work in the arts and/or hospitality industries in venues located in the French Quarter and the Central Business District. In addition to track installation on the inside lane on both sides of the street, the project includes underground utility upgrades/relocation, asphalt and concrete restoration/replacement, installation of historically-accurate street lights, traction power, and overhead electric cable system, traffic signalization upgrades, six covered shelter stops, and new landscaping. A dedicated bike lane will be marked on the lake side of the street. The vehicles that will run on the line will come from the roster that currently operates along the Loyola and Canal Street Lines. The locally-built

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streetcars, replicas of the historic cars that roll on the St. Charles Line, are air-conditioned and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The streetcar project is scheduled for the later half of 2016. (**Trains** via Al Holtz, February 5; NORTA press release, January 28)

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

The Downtown Milwaukee streetcar project is moving forward. The Milwaukee Common Council on February 10 approved the controversial \$124 million streetcar project that will connect Downtown Milwaukee and the Lower East Side.

Mayor Tom Barrett signed a resolution that clears the way for a downtown streetcar. This, as those opposed to the project say they will still collect signatures in their ongoing petition drive to bring the issue to a referendum.

The Common Council approved the project in a 9-6 vote, upholding a vote in January to approve the streetcar. A final vote had been delayed in order to give opponents more time to collect petition signatures. The petition drive continues, and those opposed to the nearly \$124 million project say it is an entirely bitter defeat, in large part because there was no referendum.

Supporters of the project are now looking beyond the initial 2.5-mile downtown route. The proposed extensions would take the streetcar to UW-Milwaukee, Marquette University, Bronzeville, and Walker's Point. However, The group organizing a petition drive against the streetcars, Citizens for Responsible Government, states that it has many signatures required to force a referendum. It says if it is too late to force a referendum on the initial streetcar construction, it at least wants a referendum on any future expansion.

Groundbreaking is expected to occur by the end of 2015, with streetcars in operation by the end of 2018. (**Trains** via Al Holtz, February 10; fox6now.com, February 10)

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

On February 9, a ceremony was held to mark the opening of the Cermak-McCormick Place station on the Green Line. The new station fills a 2.5-mile gap between the Roosevelt and 35th/IIT stations that has existed since 1977, when the Cermak station was demolished. In addition, it will serve the McCormick Place convention center, which is two blocks away. (transitchicago.com via Bob Hansen, February 9)

On February 13, Metra's Board approved a \$91 million contract to rebuild 41 locomotives to "like new" condition. Progress Rail Services of Paterson, New Jersey will rebuild the locomotives, part of a fleet of 85 to be rebuilt. Metra also plans to buy 52 new locomotives and replace or rehabilitate 810 railcars under a 10-year, \$2.4 billion program. (chicago.suntimes.com via Pete Donner, February 13)

MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Department of Transportation, in coop-

eration with the Federal Railroad Administration and the Olmsted County Regional Railroad Authority, released the Final Scoping Decision document on the ZipRail, a plan for high-speed passenger rail service between the Twin Cities and Rochester.

The ZipRail study area covers approximately a 100-mile corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities, which includes Dakota, Dodge, Goodhue, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, and Rice Counties and various end points in the Twin Cities and Rochester. There is no continuous existing railroad connection between the Twin Cities and Rochester, so many of the potential corridors would create new transportation routes. (**RT&S**, January 21)

TEXAS

A project to bring commuter rail line service to South Texas gained speed on January 20.

The Lone Star Rail Line held its first public meeting in San Antonio to grow momentum for a project that could cut traffic on Interstate 35.

The idea is instead of having to drive to Austin, commuters would be able to hop onto a train.

The UTSA Downtown Campus is a proposed Lone Star Rail station site. Students like the idea of being able to get on a train after class and be in Austin in a little more than an hour.

Lone Star's proposal includes 32 commuter trains a day, every day of the week from San Antonio to Georgetown, just north of Austin. The trains would make stops at every major town and city along the route.

Riders would also have the option of a 75-minute express service from Downtown San Antonio to Downtown Austin, with stops only in New Braunfels and San Marcos.

As more people move to south and central Texas, the fallout spills on to I-35, from massive traffic jams to car crashes. Lone Star said its service would take people off the roads and onto trains.

Downtown homeowners liked Lone Star's pitch to move freight train traffic out of their backyards. To make space for the commuter rail, freight traffic would be shifted to less populated areas, further from downtown.

The Rail District says the project could serve around 300,000 students and faculty due to the amount of universities along the proposed route. The project would cost around \$1.7 billion, but funding still has to be sorted out and could come from several sources, including federal, state, local, and private funds. If approved, construction could begin within five years. (KENS-TV, January 20)

PORTLAND, OREGON

For the first time, Oregon's TriMet operated an electrified MAX test train on the northern segment of the new Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Transit Project alignment, including Tilikum Crossing, Bridge of the People, on Wednesday, January 21. A powered Portland Streetcar train also traveled across the bridge during the systems test.

TriMet said the successful test along the future MAX

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Orange Line verified the interface with the track, the overhead catenary system that supplies power to the vehicles and signals. The first test trains traveled at walking speed.

The 7.3-mile project is the region's sixth MAX construction project and will improve transit in this corridor, which extends from the terminus of the MAX Green and Yellow Lines at Portland State University in Downtown Portland to South Waterfront, Southeast Portland, Milwaukie, and North Clackamas County. The line will have 10 stations and a multi-modal bridge that will carry light rail and streetcar trains, buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The project expands the MAX system to 60 miles and 97 stations. (**RT&S** via Randy Glucksman, January 21)

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

The process of electrifying the Caltrain commuter line linking San Francisco with San Jose took an important step forward when the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board certified the final environmental impact statement and approved the planned electrification of the line. This \$1.5 billion project will involve the purchase of new electric multiple unit (EMU) cars, catenary, traction power support infrastructure that will minimally affect the right-of-way in terms of trees that would have to be removed, and an upgraded signal system with positive train control (PTC). This upgrade will enable the line to accommodate the projected increases in ridership and remove up to 600,000 private vehicles from the region's roadway network. It is expected that electric trains will begin operating on the line by Spring, 2021.(Caltrain, January 8)

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), also known as MUNI, exercised the first of two options for 40 additional S-200-SF light rail vehicles (LRVs) from Siemens at a cost of \$210 million. This is in addition to a \$648 million order for 175 LRVs ordered in 2014. There is a second option for an additional 45 cars, if MUNI chooses to exercise it, bringing the total fleet acquisition to 260 LRVs. The S-200-SF car body will meet the latest standards in crashworthiness and Operator safety and protection and be 75 feet in length, 104.32 inches in width, 11 feet 6 inches in height, weigh 78,770 pounds, have 60 seats and 83 "standing pads" to lean against, and accommodate a maximum of 203 passengers. The cars will be powered by four 174 HP a.c. traction motors with a maximum speed of 55 mph (limited to 50 mph in passenger service) with 3 mph/s acceleration and deceleration rates using electrodynamic service braking to zero mph to reduce brake pad wear. The emergency braking will be hydraulic for fastest response and decelerate the cars at up to 5.0 mph/s. A high-floor (34 inches above rail head) vehicle for the MUNI Metro with its high level platforms, the S-200-SF model will also incorporate many features of its standard low-floor design for the portions of its system with low-level platforms and areas where the cars will

operate in the streets. MUNI expects the first S-200-SF to be operational by the end of 2016. A survey sampling 8,755 customers from all sectors of the light rail system was conducted in English, Spanish, and Chinese to assist in the selection of the exterior and interior design and aesthetic appearance. A majority of passengers selected the longitudinal inward-facing seating arrangement to ease passenger flow and wider aisles to better accommodate standees, faster loading and unloading, and provide maximum accessibility for the physically challenged. Customers who rode the greatest distances to the outer ends of the system were the only ones who expressed a preference for transverse seating. The color scheme for the interiors was evenly split for the choices of standard, black, or red. MUNI will make a final choice in the coming months. (SFMTA, December 1, 2014)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Metrolink observed the tenth anniversary of a fatal crash that involved three trains at Glendale, California on January 26, 2005. An early morning rush hour train operating cab coach forward with the locomotive pushing from the rear had struck a large SUV that had been placed on the tracks in a failed suicide attempt. It derailed and slammed into a Union Pacific freight on an adjacent track and the wreckage was then struck by another Metrolink train traveling in the opposite direction. 11 people were killed and 180 were injured. Two years later, a head-on crash at Chatsworth between a Metrolink train and a Union Pacific freight train killed 25 and injured 125 people and was attributed to the Metrolink Engineer who was texting on his cell phone and missed a stop signal where the route entered a section of single track. In the years subsequent to these tragedies, numerous safety initiatives were taken and are now nearing completion, including inward facing cameras in locomotive cabs to better assure rules compliance for Engineers and a new car fleet of crashworthy passenger coaches ("the Guardian Fleet") designed to better manage the energies of a collision. The initial cars delivered by Hyundai-Rotem of Korea were the sloped nosed cab coaches with reinforced ends to better withstand and manage the energies of a crash. Metrolink received enough cab cars to enable it to ban the use of the older Bombardier double-deck cab coaches from leading a train in the push mode. 137 Rotem cars have been delivered to Metrolink, replacing all but 57 of the older Bombardier-built cars dating back to Metrolink's inception. The goal is to replace the entire car fleet to enhance safety. A \$210 million Positive Train Control (PTC) system is to be activated system-wide by Spring, 2015, well ahead of the nationwide federal mandate, with automatic train stop systems to protect against train overspeed at 49 speed-sensitive locations as well as sealed corridors to deter people from crossing the tracks. From a commuter rail operation that had accounted for ⅓ of all fatalities on passenger rail in a six-year study period, Metrolink has come a long way toward addressing these vital safety issues and considers

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itself the safest system in the nation. (**Metro**, January 30)

At 5:43 AM on Tuesday, February 24, a Los Angeles-bound Metrolink train derailed after hitting a truck in Oxnard. 28 people, including the truck driver, had to be hospitalized. The train had 51 people, including three crewmembers. The truck driver, who fled but was found dazed more than a mile from the scene, was charged with felony hit and run. Three of the cars were part of the "Guardian Fleet" described in the previous paragraph. (**Los Angeles Daily News**, February 24)

The first of 20 EMD F-125 "Spirit" tier 4 emissions compliant locomotives ordered by Metrolink in December, 2012 is now being built at the Progress Rail plant in Muncie, Indiana. Deliveries are scheduled to start by the end of 2015 with all units delivered by 2017. EMD is a subsidiary of Progress Rail Services, which is owned by Caterpillar Industries, and the F-125 will be the first passenger service locomotive to be built by EMD since the F-59-PHI was first produced 20 years ago. The F-125 is 69 feet long, 14 feet 7 inches tall (3 inches taller than Amtrak's P-42-DC), weighs 280,000 pounds, has a maximum speed of 125 mph, and produces 4700 horsepower with 3200 available for propulsion when providing head-end power for passenger coaches. The prime mover is not the standard two-stroke diesel engine that has been the staple of almost all EMD locomotives, but will be a 20-cylinder Caterpillar C-175 high speed, four-stroke diesel engine. (*Editor's Note by Ron Yee: This locomotive will sound more like the chugging of a General Electric (GE) locomotive, not the shrill whine of an EMD. With the four-stroke engine, the same principle as used for GE's Genesis locomotives of Amtrak, VIA, and Metro-North, I do hope that these units will be able to accelerate fast enough for commuter service. The P-42-DC and P-32-AC-DMs are not known amongst locomotive Engineers for having great acceleration rates.*) (Al Holtz, Wikipedia, January 30)

SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA

The Santa Ana City Council has approved an environmental impact report for a proposed streetcar in the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove. The approval now sets the stage for the Orange County Transportation Authority to take the lead on project implementation. The streetcar would operate from the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center along 4th Street and Santa Ana Boulevard through Downtown Santa Ana and the Civic Center. The route would continue along former Pacific Electric right-of-way and connect to a new multi-modal transit hub at Harbor Boulevard and Westminster Avenue in Garden Grove. The planned streetcar route is just over four miles and would have 12 stations. It is expected that by 2035, the line would carry more than 6,000 riders a day. Initial estimates put the cost of the project at \$250 million. It would be jointly funded, with local, state, and federal dollars being pursued. With the certification of the project environmental report by the

City Council, the Authority will continue developing the streetcar project. It is expected the project will move into the design phase later this year with construction expected to begin in 2017. On the current schedule, the streetcar would begin operating in 2019. (**Trains** via Al Holtz and Ron Yee, January 26)

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

With the recent full retirement of the original U-2 class trolley cars, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) introduced the first of 28 low-floor light rail vehicles (LRV) on its Blue Line on Tuesday, January 27. This line, MTS's original route, connects downtown San Diego with San Ysidro, a town along the Mexican border. Part of a 76-car fleet recently delivered from Siemens, these cars will provide accessibility to those who are physically challenged, with car floors closely matched to the level of the station platforms as well as on-board integrated access ramps that will eliminate the delays associated with the wheelchair lifts currently in use. (**Metro**, January 30)

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) has adjusted its timetable to implement its fare-card system, accelerating its completion date and now including its existing streetcar fleet in the mix.

TTC originally planned to phase in its *Presto* use as new Bombardier streetcars arrived on the property; delivery of the new fleet has fallen behind schedule. *Presto* is an operating division of Metrolinx, which oversees public transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, including GO Transit.

The Commission now plans to have *Presto* available on all active rolling stock by the end of this year, and on all public transit (subways and buses) by the end of 2016, one year ahead of its original schedule, and phasing out existing use of tokens. TTC began accepting credit and debit cards for fares on New Year's Day (**Railway Age**, January 21)

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

A mock-up of the forthcoming Alstom Citadis Spirit low-floor LRV for Ottawa's Confederation Line was unveiled Thursday afternoon, January 29 by Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson, Member of Parliament for Ottawa-Orléans Royal Galipeau, and Ontario's provincial transport minister, Steven Del Duca.

The mock-up will be on public display in the Aberdeen Pavilion at Lansdowne Park until the end of March.

Alstom is a member of Rideau Transit Group, the consortium led by ACS Infrastructure Canada, which was awarded a contract worth C\$2.1 billion (US\$1.7 billion) in late 2012 to design, build, finance, and maintain the east-west line from Blair to Tunney's Pasture. Alstom will supply 34 LRVs for the 7.8-mile line and will be responsible for maintaining the fleet for the duration of the 30-year concession.

The four-section vehicles will be designed to operate in multiple units; each LRV will accommodate up to 300 passengers. Final assembly will be carried out at Alstom's plant in the city.

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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Ottawa is the first customer for the Citadis Spirit, which has been developed specifically for the North American market.

The Confederation Line is scheduled to open in 2018 and service will operate at minimum headways of 1 minute 45 seconds with an end-to-end journey time of 24 minutes. This will provide a capacity of 10,700 passengers per hour per direction, which could increase to 18,000 passengers per hour per direction by 2031 if an option for 21 additional LRVs is exercised. (*Railway Age*, January 30)

FRANCE

On behalf of Île-de-France transport authority STIF and Société du Grand Paris, on January 30 Paris public transport operator RATP awarded Alstom a 15-year framework contract potentially worth more than €2 billion for the supply up to 217 MP-14 rubber-tired metro trainsets.

An initial firm order worth around €500 million covers 35 eight-car trains for Line 14. This is expected to be followed by a second order for up to 37 trains to support planned extensions of the line. Further options would cover trains for lines 1, 4, 6, and 11 and the Grand Paris program, which groups lines 15 to 18.

Alstom said the MP-14 would offer "an unprecedented level of comfort," with ergonomic seating, LED lighting, rapid boarding and alighting, and CCTV and on-board information systems including inductive loops for the hard of hearing. Regenerative braking is expected to reduce energy consumption by up to 20% and air pollution from brake pads. A unique aspect of the new cars is that much of the French rail industry will be involved in the development of them. (*Railway Age*, January 30)

GERMANY

Rhine-Ruhr Transport Authority (VRR) announced on February 10 that it has selected Siemens as preferred bidder for a contract to supply 82 EMUs for the Rhine-Ruhr Express (RRX) network and maintain the fleet for 30 years.

The deal is still subject to approval by the four tendering authorities, VRR, Rhineland Local Transport (NVR), Westphalia-Lippe Local Transport (NVR), North Rhine-Land Palatinate Regional Rail Transport (ZSPNV-Nord), and North Hessen Transport (NVV). A decision is due to be made by March 26.

VRR says Siemens made a better economic offer than its two competitors in the tender, Stadler and a consortium of Alstom and Škoda. The total value of the order is estimated to be around €900 million.

The 160km/h four-car trains will be based on Siemens' Desiro High-Capacity (HC) product platform, which combines single-deck driving cars with double-deck intermediate vehicles. According to Siemens, a 105-meter-long four-car Desiro HC set with two double-deck cars will seat up to 420 passengers.

The first trains are due to enter service in time for the launch of the RRX concession in December, 2018. Ac-

cording to the tender, 71 trains will be required to operate the full timetable, with the remaining sets covering maintenance.

The five-line RRX network is intended to bring a consistently high-quality fast regional rail service to Germany's most densely-populated region, with trains running at 15-minute intervals on the core Dortmund-Cologne Line.

VRR says the transport authorities decided to procure rolling stock directly, rather than through the operating concessionaire, because this will result in lower life-cycle costs and a standardized fleet.

DB Regio opposed this structure and launched a legal challenge against VRR, which was rejected by a court in Münster last October. (*International Railway Journal*, February 11)

Berlin Transport (BVG) unveiled the first of two prototype new-generation trains for the city's narrow profile U-Bahn lines at the Olympia-Stadion station on February 3. The four-car type IK train was assembled at Stadler Pankow's plant in nearby Velten, Brandenburg, and delivered by road to BVG's Machandelweg depot at the end of January. The second pre-series train will be delivered within the next four weeks and the two prototypes will undergo three months of trials before entering passenger service in May. The trains will be evaluated in regular operation over a year and are expected to cover around 120,000 kilometers during this phase.

If trials are successful, BVG will exercise an option with Stadler Pankow for 34 production trains, which are expected to enter service from 2017 onwards.

The type IKs are intended to replace the A3L71 fleet, which dates back to 1972-3. Each 51.6-meter-long set will accommodate 330 passengers and seat 80, with full-width gangways and level boarding to aid accessibility.

The vehicles will be unusual in that they will feature a slightly curved body shell. This so-called "ballooning" will allow interior space to be optimized within the constraints of the narrow-profile tunnels. This provides a maximum width of 2.4 meters, 10 centimeters wider than BVG's existing narrow-profile vehicles. (*International Railway Journal*, February 3)

ETHIOPIA

Celebrations on February 1 marked the official launch of test running on the Addis Ababa light rail line, ahead of the planned start of revenue services in May.

Attendees at the launch included the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs along with thousands of city residents. They were able to ride on the 9-kilometer Kaliti-Meskel Square section of the network, which will have two lines running 16.9 kilometers north-south from Menelik Square to Kaliti and 17.4 kilometers east-west from Ayat to Tor Hailoch, with a 2.7-kilometer shared section between Lideta and Meskel Square.

Mayor Driba Kuma said the US\$75 million project was "a testimony of fruitful journey towards Ethiopian renaissance." China Railway Eryuan Engineering Group be-

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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gan construction in January, 2012 under a contract signed in June, 2009. China's Export-Import Bank provided loans to cover 85% of the US\$475 million cost.

Huawei supplied telecommunication and fare collection equipment, while CNR Changchun has supplied 41 three-section 70% low-floor light rail vehicles. These are designed to run in pairs at up to 70 kilometers per hour, and have tinted windows and rubber components specified to resist premature aging from the effects of strong sunlight at altitudes of 2,400 meters.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn thanked the city's residents for their patience during the construction of the line. He said that as well as solving transport problems in the city and reducing carbon emissions, knowledge and technology transfers involved would enable the country to use its own human resources in future rail projects. (*Railway Age*, February 2)

Israel

The A-1 high-speed rail link between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem moved one step forward on February 5, with the announcement that Electra Bögl JV group has been awarded the 755 million shekel (US\$195 million) contract to design, build, and maintain the track and systems of the A-1's tunnels and bridges.

The new line will use slab track in tunnels and on bridges for the first time in the railway's history. The tunnels on the new line have already been completed, while the bridges and the new station in Jerusalem are in the final stages of construction.

Work on the line should be completed by 2017, with operations expected to start in 2018. (*International Railway Journal*, February 6)

AUSTRALIA

The government of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has announced that the option for an extension to the Capital Metro light rail network from the Canberra city center to the suburb of Russell will be included in the upcoming request for proposals for the first stage of the project. In its initial phase the extension is expected to boost ridership by more than 30%, equivalent to an extra 5,600 journeys per day.

The 3.2-kilometer extension would provide four additional stops that would link the city with the defense facility at Russell, which employs around 8,000 people.

The extension from Alinga Street to Russell would run via London Circuit and Constitution Avenue, where road upgrading work currently underway is designed to be "light rail-ready."

The ACT government has committed to a 12-kilometer City-Gungahlin light rail line as the first stage of an integrated public transport network that will ultimately serve all areas of the city.

A Light Rail Master Plan is currently being developed to look at future stages of the light rail network and how this will be integrated with other modes. (*International Railway Journal*, February 9)

AND NOW FOR A BONUS...

Ron Yee went to Florida in February, where he boarded the ship *Explorer of the Seas* for a cruise to Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, and Royal Caribbean International's private resort area in Labadee, Haiti. Here are some photos he took on his trip:



Double-deck tram with the ship *Carnival Breeze* behind it in Aruba.



Single-deck tram 1265 at the Water-Toren station in Aruba.



Sunrail MP-32-PH-Q 108 at terminal, DeBary, Florida.

TRACTION TOUR TO SOUTHERN EUROPE

by Jack May

(Photographs by the author)

(Continued from February, 2015 issue)

The 14:10 arrived at Catania on time at 15:53 after a 60-mile journey from Messina along the attractive east coast of Sicily. The push-pull train dawdled for most of its way, averaging just under 40 mph. By then the sky had turned to Kodachrome blue and so I congratulated myself on my luck. I stowed my bag in the station's left luggage and hurriedly followed signs to the platform for the Catania Metro, being directed through a long subway under the station's tracks and platforms. I ended up on a narrow platform serving a single track, with the posted timetable indicating a service frequency of every 15 minutes. I bought a single ticket, valid for 90 minutes.

I had researched the Metro to some extent (see <http://www.urbanrail.net/eu/it/cat/catania.htm>), and noted that it is only 2½ miles long with six stations, four being underground. Further, it is electrified at 3,000 volts d.c. and opened in 1999. The fleet consists of 4 Firema-built M88 articulated MU cars, which take 10 minutes to travel from one end of the line to the other.

I was taken aback when an inbound train entered the station, as it was totally covered with graffiti, and hardly anyone was aboard, with no passengers (except me) getting off or on. I made the 90-second trip to the end of the line, Catania Port, where I saw two more trains, each also totally swathed in ugly spray paint. Now three of the four cars on the roster were accounted for, and I would soon see the fourth, which was on the road to maintain the 15-minute headway.

Without much hope, I rode to the other end, and saw that once underground, the line expanded to double track. And then I was surprised that the subway stations were actually attractive, decorated with light blue tile, and totally free of graffiti. However, the whole thing was very eerie, as hardly any human beings were visible. The station at the outer end of the line is located under one of the terminals of the Circumetnea railway, a narrow-gauge diesel-operated line that circles the famous Mount Etna volcano. I am told it is very scenic and wished I had had the time to ride it. The 65-mile-long line operates the standard-gauge Catania Metro, and I guess I will have to stay in suspense about whether it too is covered with graffiti. In retrospect I should have ridden it for at least a few stations.

After returning to the railway station I walked through the mostly-empty rail yards to the Metro track near the portal for some photos, and almost immediately regretted exposing my film on the subject. I had thought that the Messina light rail system was bad and uncared for, but was totally amazed at how much worse Catania's metro is. I truly wasted an afternoon visiting this grim operation.

Catania, by the way, has a population of about 300,000, making it Sicily's second city, between Palermo and Messina in size. My train for Naples was not due out until 22:52, and I would have plenty of time to find dinner. I wandered through the area surrounding the railway station, where a great deal of construction is underway, and soon found the city's bus terminal. It was clear that the downtown section of Catania was somewhere else, and probably not served by the Metro, considering the line's poor patronage.

I eventually settled on a restaurant, and it turned out to be a good pick. I ordered a Pizza Margherita, and it was incredibly delicious, just the right mixture of garlic, basil, oregano, mozzarella, and tomato. This is not the kind of pizza I usually find in the U.S., and it matched the flavor we had encountered in the Naples area on previous trips to Italy. The only downside was having to deal with cigarette smoke. While there were No Smoking signs in the establishment, the restriction was pretty much ignored, with even the lady behind the cash register taking some puffs. I suspected that I might have done just as well at other restaurants, but maybe not. I was very happy with the results of my random selection.

I got back to the station in plenty of time for my train, which was originating in Siracusa, some 40 miles further down the line. I had bought an e-ticket via the Trenitalia internet site for a berth in a first class bedroom aboard the train to Naples, which would be shared with another male traveler (second class rooms have 3 bunks). The site is very user-friendly, if you do not count the fact it is only in the Italian language. Thus I had to use the Google translate function to figure out which choice to select on certain screens while I was led through the steps to buy my ticket. One for example was gender (male, female, mixed — for families) to make sure I was not getting into something I would not appreciate.

I retrieved my bag early, as I could spend some of the time before my train's arrival reading. As time went on the station began to fill up; there were plenty of travelers gathering for both the IC Notte overnight inter-city train to Rome and its counterpart to Naples. Some two hours after the Rome train had departed at 20:26, the Naples train was announced and the crowd headed out to the platform. It arrived at 22:49, and it was pretty easy to find my car among the coaches, couchette cars, and sleepers in the consist. Many of the boarding passengers were young men wearing the uniform of the Italian army, and they boarded second class sleepers. The train pulled out at 22:54 (22:54).

I related the number of my space to the porter, who

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Traction Tour to Southern Europe

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was waiting at the door of the car. Once we were underway he soon came by to pick up my e-ticket, and also asked for my passport, indicating he would return it before our arrival in Naples. He did not speak English, but I made an educated guess at what "pasaporte" meant. In response to my question, he also indicated that there would be no other passenger sharing the room. I liked that very much, as it allowed me to spread my belongings about.

The room was equipped with all of the accoutrements found in an Amtrak *Superliner* Roomette and more, including paper slippers, napkins, bottled water, soap, a cloth towel, a large mirror, heat and air-conditioning controls, sockets for electric razors, cup holders next to

the beds, and a basin with both hand and foot controls for warm and cold water. Of course there also was a ladder for access to the upper bunk. Two small rooms with toilets were at one end of the corridor. Everything was very clean and modern, and no doubt this was a reason why the train was so well-patronized, even on a Saturday night.

I read for a while and then easily fell asleep, but was wakened about an hour and a half later by the switching maneuvers to load the train onto the ferry between Sicily and the mainland. We rolled a tiny bit while underway, but I fell asleep again before the train was reassembled for the straight run to Naples. Prior to our arrival in that city I was served a limited Continental breakfast of juice, tea and a pastry, and my passport was returned. We pulled into Napoli Centrale at 7:15 (7:18) and I tipped the porter upon alighting.



A view of a single articulated Firema unit from the railway yard north of the Catania passenger station. I did not photograph the New York subway system when its cars were covered with graffiti (although now I wish I had taken some pictures), and I believe the only reason I took this one was because of the long walk I undertook.



A view at the Port station, including the storage tracks, which probably explains why it is so easy for "artists" to spray the cars. Ah, if only railroads had been in existence in da Vinci's time.

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Around New York's Transit System

Entire Subway System Shut Down for “Blizzard”

In anticipation of a massive blizzard forecasted to strike the New York City region with snowfalls between 18-24 inches (and possibly higher in some local areas) with up to 65 mph winds, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo ordered a total shutdown of all transportation services in and around the New York City area. In an unprecedented move for the New York City subways, even the underground sections of the system were ordered shut down. The Governor also ordered a literal curfew on private vehicles after 11 PM Monday, January 26, effectively shutting down the entire city. When the storm made an unexpected turn, placing its path 50 miles farther to the east of its forecasted track, only the eastern half of Long Island received the extremely high snow totals. By the next morning, with the storm leaving nowhere close to its forecasted snowfalls, the rail transit systems were brought back to service. Subway services were the first to be restored, offering Sunday headways. Metro-North Railroad resumed services on the Harlem and Hudson lines around 11 AM and 1 PM on the New Haven line, including the New Canaan, Danbury, and Waterbury branches, operating a Sunday schedule. The first trains leaving Grand Central Terminal actually departed at 12:04 PM to New Haven and 12:07 PM to Stamford, while the first inbound trains departed New Haven at 12:25 PM and Stamford at 1:02 PM. Normal weekday service resumed Wednesday morning, January 28. The Long Island Rail Road resumed service on its electrified lines around noontime, offering Sunday schedules. Services to eastern Suffolk County were not restored due to snowfalls that did exceed two feet. Service east of Babylon on the Montauk, Ronkonkoma on the main line, Huntington on the Port Jefferson branches, and the entire Oyster Bay Branch remained suspended until Wednesday. West of the Hudson River, after shutting down operations at 8 PM Monday, January 26, NJ Transit restored train services with weekend schedules on its Northeast Corridor and Raritan Valley Lines at 10 AM. Morristown Line service was resumed to Dover, but the Gladstone Branch remained shut

down until Wednesday. Light rail services on Hudson-Bergen, Newark, and *RiverLine* were restored earlier that day as well. As with MTA services, normal weekday schedules were resumed on Wednesday, January 28.

Ice Shuts Down Flushing Line

The Flushing Line was shut down along its entire length from Times Square to Main Street-Flushing from around 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM on Monday, February 2 due to the third rail becoming iced over to the point where a train could no longer draw power from it and move. Four express trains trapped behind it were forced to make reverse moves back to the 61st Street-Woodside station where passengers were discharged and had to seek other means of transport. Passengers had been stranded aboard these trains with no power for as long as two and a half hours. Service was immediately suspended in both directions to provide the ability to potentially evacuate passengers from the four stuck trains on the middle or express tracks if they, too, became marooned on iced-over third rail. Had that scenario unfolded, trains on the local tracks would have pulled up alongside the stalled trains and enabled passengers to be transferred across on gangplanks. By 4:30 PM, service had been restored between Main Street-Flushing and 74th Street-Broadway. Service along the entire line, albeit only operating local, was restored in time for Tuesday morning's rush hour.

⑥ Train Derailment in Bronx

Around 7:30 AM on Tuesday, February 24, a train derailed on the middle track near the Longwood Avenue station, affecting ⑥ service in Manhattan and the Bronx and ⑤ service in Manhattan for several hours. The train that derailed had been towing a train that was stuck after being laid up underground overnight due to the cold weather. As a result of this derailment, ⑥ express service in the Bronx was suspended and some ⑤ trains operated local in Manhattan. In addition, scheduled Fastrack work that night was suspended while repairs were made; shuttle buses operated between 125th Street and Hunts Point Avenue from Tuesday night to Wednesday morning.

The Genesis of “Dashing Dan”

(Continued from page 6)

ance of the original Main Line to accommodate both enhanced operations and the ongoing urban growth that was consuming areas abutting the railroad like a raging fire. In the spring of 1911 expansion was begun on the “Forest Hills” piece of railroad between the Glendale cut-off (Herrick Avenue) and the Maple Grove Relocation (Ascan Avenue), which at the time was laid across what remained of the once-large and private estates that had historically signified the area (some dating back to Colonial times) and were now being carved up

for redevelopment. There were no grade crossings to deal with as a result and only a minimal change in “footprint” was necessary to match the sought-after increase in width. A new station house, built by the same company handling nearby residential development, was placed in service at Forest Hills on August 5, 1911 while the accompanying Main Line expansion to four electrified tracks was slow to progress. As a result the new high-platform station associated with this widening project, including its now-trademark Tudor style shelters, was not opened until January 17, 1912, by which time the whole undertaking was virtually complete.

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