

The Bulletin



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For general inquiries, or Bulletin submissions, 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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SECOND AVENUE SUBWAY PLANS (CONTINUED FROM APRIL, 2017 ISSUE)

City officials, who had been searching for funds to build the subway, thought that they succeeded when the \$500 million bond issue was approved in 1951. But they were disappointed when the money was diverted elsewhere. In 1967, they were lucky; the State Legislature appropriated \$600 million for subway construction. This money was part of the \$2.5 billion bond issue approved by the voters in a referendum. Instead of extending from the Battery to the Bronx, the new route would have been a high-speed route built between 34th Street and the Bronx, where it would have coordinated with the Lexington Avenue, Pelham, and Dyre Avenue Lines in the south Bronx and E. 180th Street. To avoid disturbing surface traffic, the subway would have been constructed by the deep tunneling method.

City officials estimated that the shortened portion of the subway would cost \$400 million, with \$2.5 million from the state and the rest from the city. Construction was expected to take five to ten years.

The Lexington Avenue Subway has always been overcrowded in the rush hour, but it became intolerable after the Third Avenue "L" ceased operating in 1955. Riding was expected to increase by 15,000 to 20,000 after Co-Op City's opening in the late 1960s.

Construction on a double-deck four-track 63rd Street Tunnel was expected to provide relief for Queens riders and slight relief for Lexington Avenue riders. The upper level tracks would have connected to the Second Avenue Subway and also extend under 63rd Street to the existing subway stations under Sixth Avenue (F) and Seventh Avenue (NQRW). Under construction are the lower level tracks and a new terminal under Metro-

North's Grand Central Terminal.

A year later, the city approved construction of eleven new subway routes, including the Second Avenue in three sections — Battery to 34th Street, 34th Street to 125th Street, and 125th Street to the Bronx. Included were the 63rd Street (Manhattan) crosstown where F and Q trains are operating, and the Archer Avenue Line with connections to E, J, Z.

Also approved were several other lines that were never built. Tracks from the existing Second Avenue middle (F) and south of Canal Street (E) would have been extended via separate river tunnels to a junction under S. 4th Street in Brooklyn. After extending under Beaver Street and Bushwick Avenue, it would have diverged again with one branch continuing under Myrtle Avenue, 99th Street (Queens), and alongside the Long Island Rail Road to Far Rockaway and Rockaway Park. Also planned was the Utica Avenue Line from Myrtle Avenue via Stuyvesant Avenue, Utica Avenue, Avenue S, and Nostrand Avenue to Voorhies Avenue and the Nostrand Avenue Extension from Flatbush Avenue to Avenue S. A year later, the eleven routes, some of which were described above, were reduced to seven due to cost escalation.

On October 27, 1972, ground was broken at E. 103rd Street and Second Avenue for the first section of the Second Avenue Subway. On July 25, 1974, city and state officials appeared at Second Avenue and E. 9th Street, where they broke ground for the fourth section, which extended from E. 2nd to E. 9th Street. Construction on the remaining routes was adversely affected by the city's 1975 financial crisis. A year later, seven new

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FROM RECOGNITION TO DOMINANCE: THE NEW YORK CONNECTING RAILROAD (BRIDGING THE BAY AND CONNECTING THE PIECES)

by George Chiasson
(Continued from April, 2017 issue)

This second progression of steel catenary supports along the Harlem River Branch was virtually identical to those of the 1907 Stamford installation with but one noticeable difference: a piece of somewhat ornate-looking reinforcement where the three main members (each lattice upright and cross-truss) intersected. The catenary itself was also a bit simpler in function and appearance, having just one messenger wire instead of two, which required a much less ostentatious bracing system than had the original “triangular” type. It also incorporated a long steel anchor bar, tethered to the overhead on either side of the towers through insulators, to maintain vertical position. Utilizing seven substations provided at Pelham Bay (near Baychester), Westchester, Van Nest, West Farms, Oak Point, Bungay (E. 149th) Street, and Harlem River Terminal itself, local New Haven passenger operations were electrified on the Harlem River Branch effective July 29, 1911, with train service concurrently being extended at its northerly end from New Rochelle as far as Stamford. Ten bi-directional rush hour expresses were also offered between Harlem River Terminal and New Rochelle which generally skipped all the stops south of Van Nest en route, or simply made no stops at all between the terminals. Nominally the New Haven’s fleet of EP-1s were employed to provide the motive power for all of this service, in company with the same coaches used previously. Also now in operation was the Van Nest Electric Shop, which by this time was performing all types of maintenance and repair on NYNH&H MUs and EP-1 locomotives. The landscape was continuing to grow *around* the railroad as well; between the Pelham Bay Draw and Eastchester Avenue, the new catenary towers had to be threaded to allow the addition of a hefty street overpass that carried the new “Bronx and Pelham Park Way” (Pelham Parkway in its original form) across the Harlem River Branch.

In the meanwhile, creation of the New York, Westchester & Boston Railway proceeded apace through 1910 and 1911, considering that the vast majority of its north-northeastward right-of-way had to be laid through undeveloped real estate acquired virtually on-the-spot and constructed from scratch. As finally installed, this system consisted of three basic elements: 1) a wholly-new, six-mile, four-track main line from West Farms Junction, where its trackage fed into the existing Harlem River Branch near E. 174th Street, across the Bronx on an almost arrow-straight survey to Columbus Avenue Junction in the Westchester suburb of Mount Vernon (a site inside the present Wilson Woods Park); 2) a 9-mile, two-track branch to Westchester Avenue in

White Plains that in part paralleled the future paths of both the Hutchinson River Parkway and New York State Route 125; and 3) a 1½-mile, two-track branch eastward from Columbus Ave. Junction in Mount Vernon to North Avenue in New Rochelle, which was about ⅓-mile short of the New Haven’s four-track main line. Executed under the supervision of J.P. Morgan himself (though managed through designees), development of the New York, Westchester & Boston was opulent to say the least. There were level grades and no grade crossings; it had 18 substantially-built stations done in several architectural styles that typically employed cut stone, brick, steel, and concrete, complete with full-length high platforms. The system also had few but easy curves and there was a sizeable steel viaduct across the Hutchinson River Valley that physically crossed the New Haven’s main line to Grand Central between the Mount Vernon and Pelham stations, just south of the system’s major junction point at “CA” Tower. As a result, two sets of platforms were built at Columbus Ave. station (NYW&B above and NYNH&H below) to provide a direct connection between the two routes. The system was also completely electrified, employing the same cutting-edge “autotransformer” technology as did the New Haven’s Harlem River Branch. In fact, NYW&B was to be provided with its power by the Cos Cob generating station, which dispatched raw voltage to a pair of substations that were several miles apart, one at Columbus Avenue and another near the terminal in White Plains.

The “Westchester’s” initial rolling stock was equally advanced for the time, representing a compromise between the rapid transit and multiple-unit commuter rail cars that were then emerging. Designed by Louis B. Stillwell and his engineering team, cars 101-128 were built by Pressed Steel Car Company of Butler, Pennsylvania. They employed fully-enclosed, all-steel bodies with lines reminiscent of the Hudson & Manhattan’s recently-produced equipment, and had distinctive “porthole” end windows in the same profile as the Long Island Rail Road MP-54s. The NYW&B cars also had pneumatic, platform level end and center doors as on a rapid transit car, with steps and traps in the vestibules to enable low-platform loading while on the Harlem River Branch. Each NYW&B unit weighed approximately 120,000 pounds, was 70 feet 4 inches long, 9 feet 7¾ inches wide, 13 feet 3½ inches high, and had a “monitor” type roof outfitted with two pantographs that

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was accented by a large headlight and a long, insulated electrical cable. The cars seated 78 on 39 reversible, two-by-two transverse seats, were equipped with a pair of Westinghouse "409" motors that produced 175 horsepower each, and had an automatic "AB" control group, using standard MCB couplers and train lines to operate in multiple-unit. By 1929 there were some 95 such cars in NYW&B's standardized fleet, provided by both Pressed Steel and Osgood-Bradley through the intervening years, with virtually all of them staying in operation until the company terminated service. At various times NYW&B was also granted the use of a handful of New Haven M.U. cars while its own equipment was in repair at Van Nest Shops.

On May 29, 1912, New York, Westchester & Boston passenger service commenced between E. 180th Street in the Bronx (where the company's headquarters was located) and the station at North Avenue in New Rochelle. Beyond that point a considerable amount of unused track was laid to provide for a future extension onto the New Haven main line at "New Rochelle Junction," as had been originally planned in 1904. At that time it was an isolated operation that met only a Third Avenue trolley line outside its doors (that is, with no ready transfer point to the Interborough Rapid Transit system), though somewhat like the Harlem River Branch it was possible to walk a short distance to the 180th Street-Bronx Park "subway" (actually elevated) terminal for a "Bronx Express." The New York, Westchester & Boston finally did attain strong connectivity with IRT when service was instituted on its White Plains Road extension in 1917, which included a companion station at E. 180th Street.

Alternative service on the White Plains Branch was added as far as Mamaroneck Avenue starting on July 5, then on August 3 NYW&B was finally extended on New Haven rails through West Farms Junction all the way to the Harlem River Terminal. On the New Haven, all locals and rush hour express trains were again starting and ending at New Rochelle by this time, and continued to terminate at Harlem River where they were joined by the virtual cacophony of intervals from NYW&B. Such service intensity was in concession to the rapid transit-like quality that the newer company was forced to maintain from the start in compliance with its (New York City) franchise requirements. A 10-minute combined headway was established to both White Plains and New Rochelle (it had actually started on July 5), which in turn were alternated as Local or Express trains. This permitted each pair of northward trips to exchange passengers headed between the two branches at the E. 3rd Street station in Mount Vernon, or southbound passengers from either branch to access both local and express trains into the Bronx. NYW&B trains shared all four tracks with those of the New Haven (3-4 for locals

and 1-2 for expresses) from newly-opened Signal Station 8 (West Farms Junction, located south of Tremont Ave., now E. 177th Street) into the Harlem River Terminal. They also jointly used the New Haven's low-platform stations at West Farms, Westchester Avenue, Hunts Point, Casanova, and Port Morris. At the terminal itself, trains from both railroads were required to use the outer (low level) platforms on either side of the middle (high platform), where IRT's "Willis Ave. Shuttle" from 129th Street continued to come and go. A week later, on August 10, NYW&B finally extended operations on its White Plains Branch into the terminal at Westchester Avenue, and so its system would remain for nearly a decade.

Ultimately, after the "autotransformer" system had proved itself to be a success, the New Haven implemented its second (and as fate had it, *final*) phase of main line electrification, with steel support towers, wire, and transmission facilities being installed from Stamford to New Haven during the next two years. Eight new "substations" were added across the 60 track miles from Woodlawn to New Haven, plus six more overhead circuit breaker arrays, for 14 installations in all. The seven on the original portion to Stamford were all cut in through the execution of an overnight "packaged" transformation on January 25, 1914, which did away with its direct 11,000 volt feed into the catenary all at once. The balance of the newer electrification was placed in service across all lines, passenger and freight, local and express, effective on June 22, with the wires reaching their farthest point to the Cedar Hill freight yard during 1915. As on the Harlem River Branch this extension of facilities was provided with a raw feed of 11,000-22,000 volts by Cos Cob, but once past the Devon power station of Connecticut Light & Power (in Stratford on the east bank of the Housatonic River) the line could also obtain its feed commercially if necessary through a reserve set of frequency converters. This transformation also engendered the acquisition of a whole new generation of 40 New Haven multiple-unit cars. Again comprised of a mix of 13 motors (4028-40), 22 trailers (4216-37), and four trailer combines (4652-5) they were built by Standard Steel Corporation and re-engineered with fully-enclosed, all-steel bodies that measured 71 feet 11 inches in length that were equipped with pneumatic doors. Even so, like their predecessors they were mostly used on local schedules to Stamford and seen in off-peak periods to New Haven, but were also irregularly employed on the New Haven's Harlem River Branch for as long as it endured. The "40th" car in this group was a single, supplementary motor (4010) that looked and functioned like the rest but lacked the necessary transformers and third rail collection devices for use to Grand Central, which made it suitable only for use on the New Canaan Branch. In turn 4010 was joined by four sister units in 1915 (4060-3) that were immediately assigned to service on the Harlem River Branch, be-

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SECOND AVENUE “L” SCENES



Upper level of City Hall station, looking south, December 10, 1953.
Bernard Linder photograph



Upper level of City Hall station, looking north, December 10, 1953.
Bernard Linder photograph



Three-car Freeman Street Express at Chatham Square on a Saturday afternoon in 1940.
Bernard Linder collection



Willets Point Express at Chatham Square, July, 1940.
Bernard Linder collection



Grand Street station looking west.
Bernard Linder collection



First Street station, 1937.
Bernard Linder collection

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Second Avenue "L" Scenes

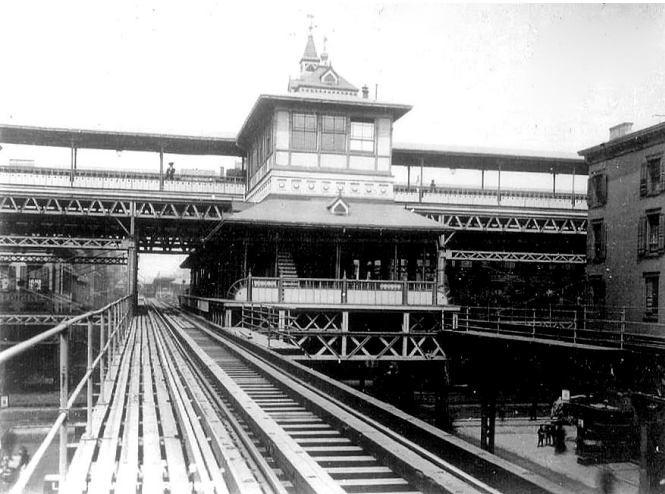
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Three-car Freeman Street Express near 34th Street, 1940.
Bernard Linder collection



Seven-car World's Fair Express approaching 34th Street, July, 1940.
Bernard Linder collection



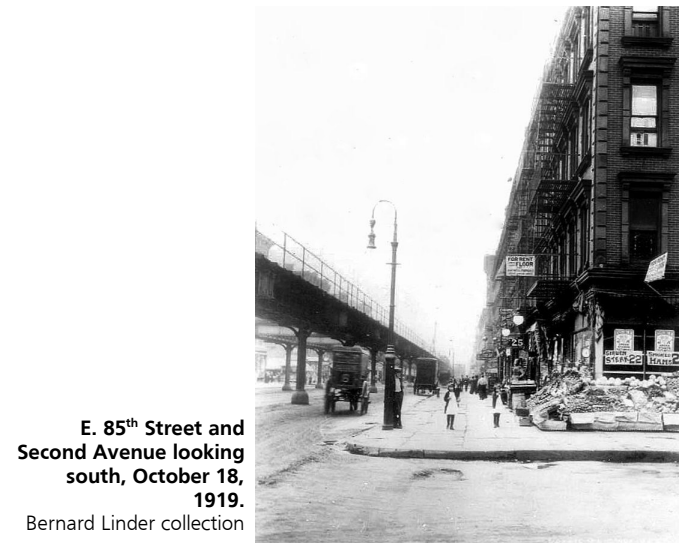
34th Street Branch at Second Avenue, looking west, April 19, 1908.
Bernard Linder collection



34th Street Branch at Second Avenue, looking west.
Bernard Linder collection



E. 64th Street and Second Avenue, October 19, 1916.
Bernard Linder collection



E. 85th Street and Second Avenue looking south, October 18, 1919.
Bernard Linder collection

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coming the only such equipment used in that specific manner until service ceased to run a number of years later. Ultimately, 182 of these cars were delivered through 1930, those first 50 from Standard Steel plus 132 from the Osgood-Bradley works of Worcester, Massachusetts, with some of them lasting almost 60 years before entering a richly-deserved retirement.

Checking on the stable of through passenger trains that were continually being relayed between the New Haven and Pennsylvania Railroads through that period, two daily Boston-Washington round trips remained solidly in place as its “headliners,” the *Colonial Express* and the *Federal Express*. For the latter, only one alteration occurred in the period before it began running through Pennsylvania Station instead of being floated around Manhattan. In that instance, it was rerouted via the New York Bay Railroad and started using car floats at the Pennsy’s still-new Greenville Yard to reach its berth on the *Maryland* (instead of transferring at Exchange Place itself) on November 26, 1911. Subsequent to that, the *Colonial Express* was hurriedly diverted to a termination point at Penn Station (with bus connection to further service between Grand Central and South Station) when its relay via ferry to the South Bronx was suddenly voided on October 17, 1912. It then lasted only as such until all service was suspended on November 23, and thus it would remain until the future availability of the Hell Gate Bridge could ensure safe, all-rail passage between New Jersey and New England. Whether the April 15, 1912 disaster which befell the *RMS Titanic* in the North Atlantic had any direct bearing on the durability of the Pennsylvania-New Haven car transfer operation is a matter of conjecture, but such hypotheses have been forwarded from time to time and so closed one of the more interesting chapters in early U.S. railroading.

For its part, the *Federal Express* had a much more adventurous story after the aged Pennsylvania steam ferry *Maryland* and its companions were retired out from under it, eschewing the relay-by-steamer from Exchange Place entirely on October 19, 1912. At that time it was routed between Jersey City and New Haven via the Erie main line between Marion Junction and Greycourt, New York and then the Lehigh & Hudson River Railroad directly into the New Haven’s Maybrook terminal, all after passing through such points as Paterson, New Jersey and Suffern, New York. Upon rumbling across the famous Poughkeepsie (High) Bridge, the train then forded the Hudson River Valley, passed through Danbury, and went over the southern shank of the Berkshires at Hawleyville before finally reaching New Haven. From there it resumed its “nominal” journey to Boston via the more traditional Shore Line route through New London and Providence. Despite the time and geographic (and in all probability financial) chal-

lenges presented by this all-rail alternative, it appears to have survived quite well for several years. Mother Nature finally intervened with a major Nor’easter on January 9, 1916 that sufficiently blocked the train’s path to postpone its operation, after which there appears to be some hesitation toward its restoration. Service finally did resume on July 21 as a once-per-week night train, but was dropped again on October 1, at which time the *Federal Express* apparently entered hibernation until Pennsylvania Station would be able to receive it. (Note: *Evidently, the value of viewing fall foliage by the wayside as part of a given excursion was not yet a major economic consideration in 1916!*)

BAY RIDGE IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETE: THE EAST NEW YORK TUNNEL

Work on Section 4, the fifth and final (and perhaps most important) portion of the endeavor collectively known as the Bay Ridge Improvements, at last got underway in June of 1912. Its primary undertaking was to lower the Manhattan Beach Division into an arrow-straight, 3,530-foot four-track tunnel between East New York and Furman Avenues, enabling the elimination of some 13 contiguous grade crossings, two trolley crossings, and the delay-inducing diamond crossing of the LIRR Atlantic Division at “NO” Tower. It would also serve to remove a mild set of opposing curves between Bushwick and Atlantic Avenues as well as make the existing grade level right-of-way, which was on the surface of Vesta (later Van Sinderen) Avenue for several blocks, available for redevelopment in common with the surrounding street grid. More than a decade later, a small portion of the same abandoned grade would be used as a basis for BMT’s 14th Street-Eastern subway line (now MTA New York City Transit’s ①) as it passed through the Bushwick Avenue-Aberdeen Street station and approached Broadway Junction on a ramp. Most of the tunnel’s excavation work was carried out by cut and cover without disturbance to existing railroad operations, though a number of households were displaced of necessity (and now are largely succeeded by modest commercial properties), but by 1913 a temporary incline was in place to allow trains to reach Vesta Avenue from the track already lowered into the open cut portion of Section 3, which then remained in place to preserve freight access between the Manhattan Beach and Atlantic Division main lines until the 1930s.

One new station was included within the construction of the East New York Tunnel, consisting of a rapid transit-like, full-length, high concrete platform placed between Tracks 2 and 4 and proximate to East New York Avenue and Fulton Street, from which it drew its name. This was to replace the combined stop at Atlantic Avenue called “East New York,” earlier known as Manhattan Beach Junction, but was not directly connected to the existing (1902) Atlantic Division station in any way, which required a two-block walk were one attempting a transfer between the two Long Island Rail Road lines.

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The other station on the original New York & Manhattan Beach alignment at Bushwick Avenue was simply abandoned outright as the East New York Tunnel opened, as was the final grade crossing at Furman Avenue. It is worthy of note that when the East New York tunneling project was in progress (May, 1913), “peak” seasonal summer service on the Manhattan Beach Branch was cut to just four trains a day, which gave little impetus for the railroad to be concerned with such trivialities as ease of transfer. As constructed, the ½-mile tunnel contained sufficient space for four tracks (arranged as 3-1-2-4) within, but only one (Track 2) was actually installed at the time, which spread to two (1 and 2) at Cooper Avenue at the north end and two (2 and 3) near Liberty Avenue at the south. Rail, ties, and ballast were also installed on the alignment provided through the Tunnel for Track 1, which actually formed a passing siding between Pitkin and Cooper Avenues. Consisting in large part of freight moves, westbound trains began using the East New York Tunnel to great fanfare on November 6, 1915, followed by eastbound train traffic on November 24. The new station at “Fulton Street” (a relative term) was concurrently opened for what passengers there were on each date, to patrons who must have been “thrilled” to experience the external results of a raging steam locomotive passing through under power in a confined space. Nevertheless, its completion signaled a successful end to the Brooklyn Grade Crossing Commission’s work, with the Pennsylvania Railroad now ready to go further and finally create the ease of access to New England that it had coveted for so long. This action also served to eliminate what by then were the last of BRT’s surviving streetcar crossings with the Manhattan Beach Division in Brooklyn, at Broadway and Fulton Street.

PIECES CONNECTED: THE HELL GATE BRIDGE

When firm planning for the New York Connecting Railroad was complete by 1911, its project scope was divided into two “divisions” encompassing five sections from north to south, in a manner similar to the Bay Ridge Improvements.

- Section “A” of the East River Bridge Division was the most critical, containing as it did the five bridges and viaduct structures which would bring about amalgamation of the Bronx and Queens by rail. It started at about E. 142nd Street in the South Bronx, where the existing Harlem River Branch overpass of the New York Central’s Port Morris Branch had been built in the previous (1905-8) reconstruction, and stretched a total of 3.1 track miles. After climbing onto the high concrete and steel “Bronx Viaduct,” from which a height of about 300 feet above mean water level would ultimately be attained by the time this structure reached the main span across the Hell Gate Channel itself, the four tracks

on this section first proceeded across the Bronx Kill Bridge, Randall’s Island Viaduct, Little Hell Gate Bridge, and the Ward’s Island Viaduct. They then crossed the Hell Gate Bridge before entering the “Long Island” Viaduct, on which the section would end at Stemler (44th) Street in Astoria. In 2017 this location is about 200 feet south of the Grand Central Parkway as it descends off the Robert F. Kennedy (Triborough) Bridge, just east of the point where the New York Connecting Railroad now passes over the highway on a high steel viaduct. (Note: the Astoria IRT/BRT elevated line at DeBevoise Ave. (31st Street) was added after its construction.)

- Section “B,” which marked the start of the Southern Division, would continue about a half-mile farther on a gradually-descending two-track embankment to “Bowery Bay (Sunnyside) Junction,” where the New York Connecting Railroad divided west toward Sunnyside Yard and south-southeast toward its rendezvous with the LIRR Manhattan Beach Division. It was to include six railway overpasses located at Stemler (44th), Luyster (45th), and Titus (46th) Streets; Oakley Street & Wilson Avenue (47th Street & 25th Avenue); and Baldwin (48th) and Cabinet (49th) Streets, plus Old Bowery Bay Road (50th Street).
- Section “C” was approximately 2½ miles long and continued the gradually descending embankment of Section “B” from Bowery Bay Junction as far as Grand Avenue on the westerly edge of Elmhurst. It was built for two tracks above nominal grade as far as Fillmore (35th) Avenue including five concrete arch overpasses at Patterson (31st), Burnside (32nd) and Jackson Avenues (Northern Boulevard) along with Hayes (34th) and Fillmore (35th) Aves. From there the line was graded to accommodate four tracks for the remainder of its distance, including seven underpasses (street bridges) at Broadway & Anderson (37th) Avenue and Roosevelt, Fairbanks (41st), Woodside, Sinclair (43rd), and Metz (44th) Avenues as well as Laurel Hill Boulevard (45th Ave.), each of which were completed for the passage of two tracks but had provision for later expansion. The street overpass at Woodside Avenue was also used by the Corona trolley line of the NY & Queens County Railway Company, while that at Roosevelt Avenue was being added in concert with the street itself and would also carry the IRT elevated line to Corona by the time it was finished in 1917. On the remainder of this section five additional two-track steel and concrete railway overpasses were constructed to carry the line over Queens Boulevard, the LIRR North Side Division, Maurice (51st) Avenue, the LIRR Main Line, and Calamus Road (Avenue). The first was to be a lengthy structure across a new road whose sculpted concrete façades required approval from the New York City Arts Commission.

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NYC SUBWAY CAR UPDATE

Subdivision “A” News

By late January, 2017 an inherent defect was noted on the suspension systems of NYC Transit’s fleet of R-142A, R-142S, and recently-converted R-142(C) (R-188) equipment, which could result in the improper contact of steel surfaces as the cars gyrated along their way. To rectify this, manufacturer Kawasaki agreed to pay for an immediate “fix,” to be installed on all 600 of the cars at 207th Street Shop. Interestingly, the problem especially came to light on the 380 converted cars roaming 7, where they had by then been operating back and forth from the same ends for up to three years (this because the “R-188” fleet is only equipped with H-2C coupler adaptors at one end). By contrast, the cars that have been running on 6 since their 2000 introduction are (by nature) routinely turned in the loop at Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall on each trip, which serves to even the wear pattern on suspension components at each end of every 5-car unit. Evidently those same buffers on the 7 cars had become less effective as time went on, after their operational nature was transformed upon their reassignment to Queens.

In any case, as those repairs got underway through the Winter of 2017, there was a separate pair of mystifying rear-end derailments on two consecutive days at a key switch next to the Mets-Willets Point station on 7 (the weekend of January 28-29). While it is not known whether these events were directly related to the suspension system problem, the next week it was noted that the R-188(C) and R-188(N) trains on 7 were being “flipped,” which put the ends containing the H2C coupler adaptors in the middle of each train. Further, it was still necessary to maintain positioning of the 5-car set in each consist at the Manhattan (south) end, so as to hold the Conductors’ cabs in their customary spot at the “boards.” The two trains involved in the January incidents (one each an R-188(C) and R-188(N)) were relatively undamaged otherwise and not expected to be sidelined for a significant length of time.

As these suspension repairs proceeded, 7 found itself vulnerable to further equipment shortages (given that the separate installation of complete CBTC-related hardware also continues), and as a result some of the former Corona R-62As that had long since been relocated to 6 were repatriated to Queens. First to appear was unitized set 2146-50 on February 1, followed by grouped single units 1921-5 and 1961-5 on February 6. Three days after that R-62As 2461-70 (from 1) were noted in service on 6, they being joined by 2471-5 on February 13. This early 2017 windmill of car shifting was completed by the addition of 1306-10 to 1 from 3 that same date (which results in the presence of two full regularly-assigned R-62 trains to 1, plus whatever rush hour extras may also appear) and the diversion of single units 1916-20 from 6 back to 7 for good measure on February 22. As a result of these transfers, the Flushing Line is once again seeing up to four trains of

R-62As on a given weekday (a quantity not attained since late last Spring), while the 6 fleet now hosts 25 “visitors” from the Broadway side, which toil in company with its own. All three sets of R-62s moored at 240th Street (1406-10, 1431-4 plus 38 and 1456-60) were briefly cycled through their home shop at Livonia (3) in early February, then returned right away to their adoptive facility in Riverdale.

In the advent of CBTC, the last four single-unit World’s Fair R-33’s assigned to Corona Yard were deemed surplus to MTA NYCT’s Work Train needs on their erstwhile “home” 7, so when a 10-car Museum “Train of Many Colors” was moved in to cover the Mets’ April 3 home opener on the night of Thursday, March 30, all were brought up to 207th Street Shops in exchange, marking the series’ apparent finale in its historic assignment. There they will join the other long-retired World’s Fair R-33s based at that facility for various utility duties, though it remains unclear how far into the future that overall group will continue in this role as they pass through their sixth decade of existence. Whatever the case, it truly was the end of an era for these four venerable work cars, which represented the very last call from Flushing for the one-time 430-car fleet of native World’s Fair R-33s and (former) R-36s after 53½ years: September 26, 1963 to March 30, 2017. As witnessed (and photographed) at 61st Street-Woodside by ERA News Editor Ron Yee, the museum train was composed of cars N-9206-7/9017-6/9587-6/9069-8/9010-1-S, while the “funeral” consist was S-9310-9308-9307-9343-N.

Subdivision “B” News

The ten Phase I R-32s that were moved from East New York to 207th Street in early November have been kept together as a single consist for use on A, where it appears they are testing a transponder system related to MTA’s effort to install “countdown clocks” on lines which do not enjoy centralized (remote) dispatching. *(Editor’s Note: This is a fine and quite rare example of how the system’s oldest rolling stock can be adapted to use its newest technology.)* Two more Phase I R-32s (3476-7) were temporarily sidelined during 2015 and remain so through early 2017, which presently brings the overall fleet of active Phase I R-32s down to 216 — 100 at East New York and 116 at 207th Street. Again, there is ostensibly roster space for all 222 cars in this group projected well into the next decade as part of NYC Transit’s longer-term Subdivision “B” equipment needs, which call for an overall enlargement in support of ongoing construction projects and future service enhancements. In the end, it may be that the arrival of 300 new R-179s, whenever that occurs, will have little to no effect on the 222 Phase I R-32s and 50 Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s that were retained seven years ago, in trade for an “early” retirement of the R-44s.

The existing range of car assignment exceptions droned on from weekday to weekday through the Winter months of 2017. Those are: designated R-32s and R-68/68As on A, R-46s and Coney Island R-160s on F,

Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 341

by Ronald Yee, James Giovan, and Alexander Ivanoff

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

Due to an Amtrak/NJ Transit derailment and sideswipe at Penn Station around 9 AM on Friday, March 25, LIRR was forced to suspend service to and from Penn Station and divert its customers from terminated trains to NYC Transit subway stations at Jamaica, Atlantic Terminal, Hunterspoint Avenue, and Woodside, where LIRR tickets were cross-honored on NYC Transit subway lines to reach Manhattan. Service was restored with a reduced peak period schedule wherein 29 peak period trains were canceled due to a lack of available track and platform space in Penn Station. Normally, LIRR is able to utilize nine tracks (Tracks 13-21) during the peak hours, but it was limited to just four tracks (18-21) that evening per the agreement among Amtrak, NJ Transit, and LIRR regarding the sharing of the station tracks in the event some tracks become unavailable. In short, Amtrak, NJ Transit, and LIRR are bound by agreement to share Penn Station and “spread the pain” among all of the railroads there during emergency situations. The result was over a 50% reduction in track availability to LIRR. By late Friday evening, LIRR was operating all trains close to their normal weekday schedules and a normal weekend schedule was operated the following day. (CBS2, NBC4, and ABC7 News, March 25)

LIRR completed the Environmental Impact Statement process that will allow the railroad to move forward with its plans to construct a 9.8-mile third track on its Main Line between Floral Park and Hicksville and eliminate all seven grade crossings, all to be accomplished within current railroad right-of-way, with no need to acquire any adjacent private property. New switches, signals, and power infrastructure will enable improved rush hour capacity as well as the ability to operate reverse peak service throughout the peak periods. Sound barrier and retaining walls and vibration-absorbing rail fasteners will reduce train-related noise and vibration to the surrounding communities and properties. Station improvements will include new platforms, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and additional parking. (MTA press release, April 15)

Effective with the May 22 schedule change, LIRR will inaugurate a very early morning Summer-only train to Greenport leaving Ronkonkoma at 3:49 AM and arriving at Greenport at 5:04 AM. The train, nicknamed “The Fisherman’s Train,” is timed to meet the demands of early morning fishermen who want to make the pre-dawn sailings of the Greenport fishing fleet. This new service is the first step toward the fruition of discussions and plans between the railroad and community officials toward a permanent improvement of rail service on the North and South Forks of Long Island, both of which are poorly served by the current schedules. Weekday service increases with as many as four round trips between Greenport and Ronkonkoma could provide North Fork

riders with a midday arrival at Penn Station, a vast improvement over the current earliest arrival time of 3:33 PM. It would be made possible by taking a current train that operates from Deer Park to Riverhead and operating it out of Ronkonkoma to Greenport and turning around to become that morning train. Weekend service could also be enhanced to permit day trips from Penn Station. On weekday evenings, a new train could originate in Yaphank, stop at Medford, and connect with electric train service at Ronkonkoma. When the double-tracking project on the Main Line to Ronkonkoma is completed, this will enable LIRR to offer a reverse peak commuter type of service option for North Fork customers. South Fork service improvements are focused around the provision of a one-seat ride from the Hamptons to Penn Station during the weekday morning peak period as well as intra-island services which would increase the mobility of those traveling within the South Fork between Montauk and Speonk in the form of six shuttle trains that will be scheduled independently of service west toward New York City. The goal is to offer people east of Speonk a transportation alternative to the congested Highway 27, notorious for traffic delays year-round but especially during the Summer months. These service improvements would require the completion of an ongoing project installing a signal system between Speonk and Montauk. It will be at least 2018 before such service improvements could be made. (LIRR press release, April 12)

NJ TRANSIT

Following a sideswipe accident between an Amtrak *Acela* and NJ Transit Boonton/Montclair train at around 9 AM March 25 that resulted in the suspension of all service into and out of New York Penn Station for the remainder of the morning and much of the day. North-east Corridor service was terminated at Newark, New Jersey and in some cases Secaucus, while *Midtown Direct* Morris & Essex service was diverted to Hoboken. Limited outbound service from New York Penn Station was restored around 4 PM and hourly service inbound from New Jersey to New York in time for the evening peak period. All *Midtown Direct* train service continued to be diverted to Hoboken. With many of the platform tracks it normally utilizes cut off by the two wrecked trains fouling the interlocking plant west of the station leading to the Hudson River Tunnels, NJ Transit was forced to share the remaining tracks with Amtrak and LIRR, forcing its customers to endure long delays and severe crowding on the reduced schedule operated. To offer a travel alternative to stranded passengers and relieve the crowds at New York Penn Station, NJ Transit tickets were cross-honored at the Newark Penn Station, Hoboken, and 33rd Street PATH stations. (ABC7 News, Lohud.com, March 25)

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A second derailment at New York's Penn Station around 9 AM on Monday, April 3 involved NJ Transit Train #3926 from Trenton as it entered Track 9. Deteriorated rail ties caused the middle three cars to leave the track. Five people were slightly injured and passengers in the rear four cars were forced to walk on the tracks as they were evacuated to the nearest platform. Limited service was not restored until that afternoon. The derailment tore up dozens of feet of track and switches and also damaged several hard-to-replace switching machines that control the movement of the switch points. Subsequent investigation of the derailment revealed that the tie conditions were known to be poor and while maintenance was scheduled by Summer, trains were allowed to continue operating over them until one finally derailed. Because several tracks were rendered inaccessible while repairs were made, Amtrak, NJ Transit, and LIRR were all forced to curtail operations as they had to share the remaining tracks. Normal operations at Penn Station were not restored until after the Friday morning rush hour on April 7. (*Metro*, April 4)

AMTRAK

Amtrak's *Acela* Train #2151 originating in Boston and departing around 9 AM for Washington, D.C., derailed as it pulled away from the platform at New York Penn Station on March 25. As one of the cars of the train slid out of the gauge of its track, it "fouled" an adjacent track where a Montclair/Boonton Line NJ Transit train was arriving. The result was a sideswipe impact where the corner post of the derailed *Acela* train raked across the side of the NJ Transit Bombardier-built multilevel coach as it passed the derailed train, dislodging some of the windows on the lower level and causing 3-5 minor injuries. Train #2151 had 248 passengers aboard and since part of the train was still in the station, they were all evacuated by walking them back to the rear cars that were still adjacent to the platform. For much of the day, the wrecked trains sat on Tracks 6 and 7 and blocked all train movements on Tracks 1 through at least 8, totally cutting access to and from the Empire Corridor connection tunnel. Initially, Empire Corridor trains were terminated at Yonkers and Croton-Harmon and passengers were transferred onto MTA Metro-North Railroad trains to New York City, but later that day, Amtrak did assemble a 10 car Amfleet consist with a P32ACDM dual-mode locomotive at each end and operated it as a combined train from Albany to Grand Central Terminal. A railfan videoed this train at Grand Central Terminal and as it passed Harlem-125th Street on its way back to Albany, providing a record of the locomotive numbers (704 north and 708 bringing up the rear on the south end) and posted it on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wl28vJAurY8>. *Keystone* trains were terminated at Newark and passengers transferred to *Northeast Regional* trains to New York. An examination of a press photo from CBS New York of the

misaligned cars, reportedly between passenger cars 2 and 3, indicates that the derailed car slid about two feet off to the side, not enough to dislodge or tear apart the flexible corridor connection between cars, just twist it to an extreme. (CBS NY News, Lohud.com, March 25)

Effective April 8, Amtrak added one additional *Acela* round trip on Sundays between Boston and New York, increasing the number of trains arriving in Boston from six to seven on Sundays. The number of *Acela* trains to Boston on Saturdays will remain at three. (Amtrak press release, March 29)

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued its final report of a \$61 million environmental impact study that identifies the preferred routing of the new tunnel which will replace the 144-year-old, 1.4-mile-long Baltimore & Potomac (B&P) tunnels that have long been a slow-speed, low-capacity bottleneck for both Amtrak and MARC trains on the Northeast Corridor in Baltimore. It will follow an alignment from the West Baltimore MARC station that will follow a 3.67-mile-long, gently curving semi-circle that will allow for higher speeds and cover an arc over 2,000 feet north of the old B&P tunnels. The new alignment, estimated to cost \$4.5 billion, will consist of four parallel, two-mile-long tunnels that will lead right to where the B&P tunnels end south of the existing Baltimore Amtrak/MARC station. Plans call for two ventilation and emergency access points in the new tunnels. While this project could be completed by 2025, no funding has yet to be identified. (Al Holtz, April 6)

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS MONTPELIER, VERMONT

In spite of a state report that downplayed the feasibility of commuter rail service in northern Vermont, a private company announced during the first week of April the purchase of 12 Budd Rail Diesel Cars with the intent to use them for commuter service between Montpelier, Burlington, and St. Albans. AllEarth Renewables, a Williston-based manufacturer of solar panels and associated systems, formed an affiliate company, AllEarth Rail LLC, which bought the 1950s-built self-powered coaches from Dallas Area Rapid Transit. The RDCs were used in the Trinity Railway Express commuter service between Dallas and Fort Worth from 1996 to 2012 and were previously owned by VIA Rail Canada, which also bid to buy them back from DART but lost out to AllEarth.

AllEarth paid a total of about \$4 million: \$300,000 per car, plus parts and other related inventory valued at \$400,000. DART says it decided to dispose of the RDCs due to the expense of finding parts for and otherwise maintaining the average 63-year-old cars. New trainsets for the service would cost as much as \$350 million.

Though AllEarth would be the only privately owned and operated commuter rail service in the United States, it would need state assistance. Demonstration service would begin as early as the fall, with full service to start at a later date.

AllEarth Rail has just begun negotiations with the two regional freight railroads that would host the service, the

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independent Vermont Rail System and the New England Central Railroad, a Genesee & Wyoming subsidiary. AllEarth Rail Chief Executive Officer David Blittersdorf said the company was looking to connect Essex Junction (6.1 miles east of Burlington, currently served by Amtrak) to Montpelier first. The service would use the existing Amtrak stations at Essex Junction and Waterbury and an under-construction transit center in downtown Montpelier, but new station platforms would be needed at Middlesex and Richmond. (*Trains Magazine* via Al Holtz, April 10) (*Editor's Note from Alexander Ivanoff: Once again, this proposal defies reality. I wish AllEarth a lot of luck in this venture, because commuter rail has been tried before in Vermont (the short-lived Champlain Flyer in the early 2000s) along with the economic infeasibility of upgrading the RDCs for Positive Train Control, which is in part why TRE mothballed them.*)

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) exercised an option with China Railroad Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC), signing a \$277 million contract on April 5 for an additional 134 cars for the Red Line. This is in addition to the \$566 million contract let in Fall, 2014 for 152 Orange Line and 132 Red Line cars. It was determined that it would cost \$310,000 less per car to simply replace rather than rebuild the 86-car fleet of 1800-series cars built by Bombardier in 1993-4. The additional cars will also enable MBTA to increase the number of trains on the Red Line from 13 to 20 per hour once all cars are delivered. Final assembly of all of the new cars will be performed at CRRC's new manufacturing plant in Springfield, Massachusetts scheduled to be completed in September, with production of MBTA subway cars commencing in April, 2018 and all contracted cars delivered by 2025. (WBUR, *Metro Report International*, April 10)

MBTA is looking to rebuild twelve of its older commuter locomotives after dealing with constant equipment shortages and failures, according to the *Boston Globe*. Chief Operating Officer Jeffrey Gonneville told the newspaper that the agency hopes to rebuild the engines for a cost of about \$30 million and that a large portion of MBTA's fleet is "past due for major overhauls." MBTA's operator, Keolis Commuter Services, is responsible for having 67 locomotives in service and available at all times but it has struggled to keep up with maintenance in recent months, causing major delays on the railroad. In recent weeks, only 66 locomotives have been available for service and workers are putting in extra hours to try to catch up. According to Gonneville, progress is being made but more has to be done in order for regular and reliable service to be provided. (*Trains Magazine*, April 12)

On April 5, 2017, four morning peak period commuter trains were cancelled by MBTA's contract operator Keolis Commuter Services due to locomotive shortages. Only 27 of the 40 new Motive Power MP-36-PH-3C lo-

comotives were in service with 8 of the 13 non-available engines in the process of having their turbochargers replaced due to a design defect affecting all of the new engines. These on-going issues with the \$222 million order delivered between May, 2014 and December, 2015 have affected the ability of Keolis to reliably operate its MBTA commuter trains, on-time performance falling from 94% in 2016 to 82% this year. On Tuesday, April 4, it dipped to 76%. In addition to replacing the turbochargers on all 40 units, Motive Power is also addressing three other factory and/or design defects including the replacement of the battery chargers. Older engines are also being put through a refurbishment program in an effort to meet the daily locomotive requirement to reliably operate scheduled service. (*Boston Globe*, April 3 and 6)

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) awarded a \$137.5 million contract to China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC) for 45 double-deck push-pull commuter railcars slated for delivery commencing in 2019. There is a \$23.5 million option for 10 additional cars should SEPTA exercise it. Each car will seat 130 passengers. CRRC contracted in late 2015 with Boston's MBTA for 404 rapid transit and light rail cars and won contracts with Chicago's CTA and Los Angeles' MTA for rapid transit cars in late 2016. While the car bodies will be constructed in China, assembly work with U.S. components to satisfy Buy America regulations for federally funded purchases will be performed at CRRC's new \$95 million plant currently being constructed in Springfield, Massachusetts. (*Boston Globe*, March 24)

SEPTA launched its new Key farecard on its Airport regional rail line on April 17. *Quicktrip* cards sold at ticket vending machines at the airport stations will be valid for the payment of fares throughout all SEPTA modes of transport. The cards can be replenished at fare kiosks found at most stations and can also be reloaded automatically from customer's bank accounts. (SEPTA press release, April 6)

CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND

A federal judge agreed to make a ruling in a lawsuit over whether federal approval to fund the Purple Line will go forward by April 28, the last business day in the month. (The *Bulletin* went to press before the ruling was made.)

At issue is the concern raised by residents in the Chevy Chase area over the project, who presented a lawsuit against the effort just days before a federal approval of the project was to be signed.

And then, a decision was delayed because of the judge's concern over Metro's possible negative impact on the viability of the Purple Line.

The government is worried that by further delaying the approval of the project, it risks missing out on roughly a billion dollars in funding from the federal government. (*Mass Transit Magazine* via WTOP-TV, April 3)

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WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority will not resume automatic train operation for Metrorail trains, which the system was originally designed for, at any time in the near future, the agency decided on April 6. WMATA officials cited the need to focus on numerous rebuilding projects and other safety priorities, in spite of having spent about \$106 million to replace over 1,700 track circuits needed for enabling automatic train operation, according to local NPR affiliate WAMU. The failure of the automatic system to detect the presence of a stopped train on the Red Line between the Fort Totten and Takoma stations caused a deadly rear-end collision between two trains in June, 2009. Since then, all trains have been operated manually except for a few exceptions in 2014 when automation was tested on the Red Line. "WMATA leadership determined it prudent to focus limited resources on more pressing safety matters, such as track and power cables and execution of SafeTrack," the agency said in response to WAMU's request to interview top officials, declining to grant any interviews. WMATA added that it would be unsafe to run automated trains at a time when many contractors and inspectors are working on the tracks.

Some of the drawbacks of operating trains in manual mode in a system designed around ATO are "jerkier" train operation, slower running times, more time spent positioning trains properly at platforms, and the constant possibility of Operator error, especially with regard to signal violations. *(Editor's Note by Ron Yee: The issue of stopping trains at the proper locations on a station platform should be a relatively easy one to resolve. One solution would be to simply have all trains stop with the head car at the end of the platform. A more flexible solution allowing trains to stop where they would be "centered" on a platform would be for WMATA to place soft, bendable plastic vertical stanchions marked "6 car" or "8 car" near the platform edge where the Operator would stop the train with the cab window aligned with the post matching the length of the train. The numbered stanchion markers would offer better reference points for precise stopping than numbered car marker placards mounted on the roadbed in the gauge of the tracks or under the platform edge, which can be harder to judge to within a two-foot range.)* (**Trains Magazine**, April 10; WAMU 88.5 Radio News, April 6)

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MARTA ridership immediately increased by 25% following the March 30 collapse of an overpass on I-85 just north of downtown Atlanta that links the city with its northern suburbs. There was an 80% increase in Breeze farecard sales as well. Ridership data showed a 76% increase in ridership at the Brookhaven station and a 55% increase at Buckhead. A homeless person started a major fire that led to the collapse of the overpass that carries up to 250,000 vehicles per day. As the replacement of this highway overpass is expected to take several months, MARTA has increased service frequen-

cies to a 7-8-minute headway on its rail lines to accommodate the increased ridership and offer an attractive transportation alternative to drivers who would otherwise be trapped in gridlocked traffic jams. (CBS46TV News, AJC.com, April 5)

MIAMI, FLORIDA

The sale of the Florida East Coast Railway (FECR) to Grupo Mexico, which owns FerroMex, will not affect the *Brightline* passenger rail service that is slated to open this summer between Miami and West Palm Beach. The Fortress Investment Group, which owns Florida East Coast Industries, parent company of All Aboard Florida, which is developing the *Brightline* service, has an existing agreement with the Florida East Coast Railway giving it dual ownership of the rail corridor and the right to operate passenger train service, regardless of who owns FECR. (**Miami Herald**, March 28)

The first pair of a 136 car order for the Miami Metrorail rapid transit line departed the Hitachi plant located in Medley, Florida, northwest of Miami, to the Metrorail maintenance facility for further acceptance testing. Four other cars already produced have been undergoing extensive testing on the grounds of the Hitachi plant to verify propulsion, braking, lighting, doors, and HVAC functionality. The initial pair of cars will undergo testing on specialized test tracks and eventually on the mainline during nights and weekends. A second and third pair of cars will be delivered by Hitachi in mid-June and July to expand the testing program. (**International Railway Journal**, March 29)

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The last 15 cash-only ticket vending machines were removed on April 30 from the former Illinois Central (now Metra Electric) Line. With the introduction of the *Ventra* mobile app in late 2015, cash-only ticket sales have plummeted from 35.9% to just 14.4%, a level where Metra will save \$534,000 in maintenance, servicing, and stocking costs by phasing out the cash vending machines. (Metra press release, April 12)

The Metra Board of Directors on April 19 authorized the agency to move forward with requests for proposals (RFPs) for the design and production of new railcars and locomotives to begin to replace its aging fleet.

The railcar RFP, which was to be published the next week, will provide for at least 25 new railcars plus as many more railcars above that amount as possible. The exact number will depend on the responses to the RFP, the amount of funding available, and whether Metra can use financing alternatives, such as leasing, to maximize its funding. Likewise, the locomotive RFP, which will be published during the third quarter of 2017, will provide for a base order of 10 locomotives plus as many more as possible.

Metra's 2014 modernization plan called for the purchase of 367 railcars and 52 locomotives. That plan, however, counted on Metra receiving \$1.3 billion in new funding, primarily from a new state bond program. Because anticipated funding did not come through, Metra

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is now attempting to acquire as many cars and engines as possible with existing funding.

Metra expects to award the contract for new railcars in the first quarter of 2018. Delivery of the first cars will be part of the negotiations and dependent upon the manufacturer's capacity to build. The last time Metra received new railcars for lines other than the Metra Electric was in 2006.

Metra would expect to award the contract for new locomotives later in 2018, with delivery of the first locomotive in 2020. New locomotives will allow Metra to begin to replace outdated diesel locomotives serving Chicago Union Station with modern, cleaner-burning engines, significantly improving air quality for the 120,000 passengers who travel through the station each day.

The Board also authorized a settlement agreement with Sumitomo Corporation of America to deliver seven railcars to Metra in exchange for releasing the company from the option Metra recently acquired from Virginia Railway Express (VRE) to purchase 21 railcars and for Nippon Sharyo's delays in delivering Metra's order of new cars for the Metra Electric Line. The first of those seven railcars is expected to be delivered in mid-2019. While Metra and Sumitomo have negotiated in good faith since the option was made available in late 2016, both parties have agreed to move forward with the settlement. (Metra press release, April 19)

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

In contrast to Indiana, which has fought rail-based public transportation, Nevada senators are green-lighting a bill that would provide the permission necessary to build high-capacity rail network in Las Vegas.

Senate Bill 149 would lay the groundwork to implement a multibillion-dollar light rail plan being considered to link McCarran International Airport with the Las Vegas Strip.

For two years, members of the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada have been drawing blueprints for the light rail as well as makeovers for pedestrian walkways.

They are also considering transit options to connect residential neighborhoods, college campuses, Sunrise Hospital, and shopping hubs.

The bill would give local officials new authority to seek tax hikes or federal grants to finance developments and explore the use of self-driving cars.

State Senators voted 20-1 to pass it to the Assembly. (**Las Vegas Sun** via the Associated Press, April 18) *(Editor's Note from Alexander Ivanoff: Despite reports, I could not find a legitimate news outlet that reported on XpressWest's plan to start construction on the Las Vegas-Palmdale, California line. If construction truly does start later this year (or when there is an official press release), I will provide an update to the Bulletin readers.)*

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

The long-awaited and much-delayed extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Fremont Line 5.4 miles

to the south to Warm Springs opened Saturday morning, March 25. This line extension has opened at the same time as development of the South Bay region is beginning a renaissance as the Fremont Innovation District, which will bring in 20,000 jobs and 3,000 housing units. The new station will have an immense park-and-ride lot with almost 2,100 spaces (including 42 spaces with electric vehicle charging ports) and is expected to attract up to 7,000 passengers. This station is 55 minutes and a \$6.60 fare from Powell Street in downtown San Francisco. A ten-mile, two-station extension farther to the south and west to Milpitas and the Berryessa region in east San Jose is being built by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and may be ready to open as early as December, three months earlier than expected. However, the acceptance testing process for the pilot ten-car consist has uncovered a number of issues that have led to the delay of further deliveries of cars until the problems are resolved. Most of the issues are software-related involving propulsion and braking, lighting, and HVAC systems. The cars are also 1,000-1,500 pounds over original empty weight specifications which may require some weight-reducing measures such as the elimination of armrests, thinner seat cushions, and lighter-weight window frames. The original schedule called for a total of 35 cars to be delivered by Bombardier to BART by the end of 2017. The extension requires a fleet expansion of 30-40 cars and unless the issues are resolved quickly, BART will not have enough cars to fully serve this extension. Bombardier is confident that the mostly software-related control issues identified during testing will be resolved by June and its factory in Plattsburgh, NY can go to full production. (SFGate, March 24; **San Francisco Chronicle**, April 4)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority has partnered with the popular navigation app Waze to offer grade crossing alerts for drivers. Users will receive alerts at specific intersections along the Blue, Gold, and Expo rail lines. The particular intersections chosen were identified as having a high rate of traffic violations, according to the agency's blog. Examples of these safety alerts include, "Watch for trains when you turn" and "Heads up; watch for trains." The initiative is part of a safety campaign that started in March and will end in June. The campaign also includes ads aimed at reducing the number of rail accidents involving cars and pedestrians. (**Progressive Railroad-ing**, April 10)

The Los Angeles County MTA contracted with China Railway Rolling Corporation (CRR) to build 64 rapid transit cars for \$178 million. Designated as class HR4000, 34 of the new cars are earmarked for the four-mile extension of the Purple Line from Mid-Wilshire to Beverly Hills due to open in 2023. The other 30 cars will enable MTA to begin replacing the existing fleet of subway cars that have been operating on the Red and Purple Lines since they opened. The car body shells will be

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constructed at CRRC's factory in Changchun, China, sub-components including propulsion, braking, HVAC, and lighting will be manufactured in the Los Angeles region, and final assembly will be performed at CRRC's new factory in Springfield, Massachusetts. The pilot railcars are expected to be ready by Spring, 2020 and completed by September, 2021, well in time for the Purple Line extension. In this contract, there are five options that could be exercised to increase the order size to a maximum of 282 cars valued at \$647 million. (The Source.Metro.net, April 17)

SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO, CANADA

With the Scarborough subway extension moving forward, Mayor John Tory is now firmly setting his sights on the Downtown Relief Line. But he said it will not happen without help from the Province of Ontario.

Standing on the crowded southbound platform of Yonge Station during the Monday morning rush on April 3, Tory said the Downtown Relief Line is a top transit priority.

Approximately 700,000 people ride Line 1 and 500,000 people ride the Line 2 every day. Of those, 400,000 riders get on or off trains at the Yonge-Bloor station every day.

The Mayor said the downtown relief line will take pressure off both major subway lines and ease congestion at Yonge-Bloor.

TTC Chief Executive Officer Andy Byford insists that the relief line, over all other TTC projects, is the highest priority.

The Mayor said the only way the project will push forward is for the provincial government to pay up — especially after denying Toronto the permission to install road tolls on the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway. The money from those tolls was to go directly to transit funding.

Tory said the faster the funding from all three governments is approved, the quicker the relief line can be built.

In response, Ontario Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca was quick to point out that the province is already ponying up \$150 million to Metrolinx for the project.

Del Duca added that the current administration "has done more to invest in transit" both in Toronto and across Ontario than any previous government — including the investment of billions of dollars in other transit projects such as Tory's SmartTrack plan, the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, and the Scarborough Subway. The last estimate for the downtown relief line was \$6.8 billion.

However, Tory noted that the estimated cost is only in the early planning stages. (*CityNews*, April 3)

LONDON, ENGLAND

The first-ever United Kingdom export train destined for China has begun its journey (as of April 12) just about three months after a train first made the reverse journey into the U.K. The 7,500-mile, three-week-long journey

started at DP World London Gateway's South Essex rail terminal and ends at Yiwu in the Zhe Jiang province in eastern China. Items on board the export train include soft drinks, vitamins, baby products, and pharmaceuticals. While the journey is more expensive than ocean transport, it is also much faster than the typical 6-8-week sailing of a cargo ship, and still cheaper than an air freight move. "This new rail link with China is another boost for Global Britain, following the ancient Silk Road trade route to carry British products around the world. It shows the huge global demand for quality U.K. goods," says Greg Hands, Minister of State in the Department for International Trade. The service is part of China's One Belt, One Road program and is expected to be operated once every two weeks, with an increasing frequency planned later in the year. (*Trains Magazine*, April 12)

NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND

One-hundred-mile-per-hour steam train service has returned to Britain's railways for a very special and fleeting moment. A newly-built steam locomotive known as the *Tornado* undertook a 100-mph trial run on April 11 and 12 on the East Coast Main Line route between Newcastle and Doncaster, England. The purpose of the run was to ensure that that train would meet certification for regular operation at 90 mph for charter and excursion trips. United Kingdom certification rules require trains to be able to travel slightly above their normal operating speeds to demonstrate that safety and other systems work properly. The locomotive reached 101 miles per hour near Thirsk, north of York, England, on a southbound trip from Newcastle during the early hours of April 12. One-hundred-mile-per-hour steam trains have not run in the U.K. since the 1960s, on a route from London to Bournemouth, England. (*Trains Magazine*, April 12)

BERLIN, GERMANY

Germany's Siemens and Canada's Bombardier rail companies are working out a merger of their rail equipment divisions in a move that would create one of the world's largest rail producers, according to Reuters. Numerous unnamed sources tell Reuters that the possible merger is an attempt by the two companies to take on China's state-supported CRRC Corporation. This is the third time in recent years that Siemens and Bombardier have discussed the idea of combining their rail divisions. The news that the two companies were in talks to merge sent both of their stocks surging recently, with Siemens gaining a record of more than \$137 per share and Bombardier shares rising 6.7 percent to about \$1.78. (ft.com, April 12)

SAARLAND, GERMANY

Bombardier Transportation is working with Vlexx, a German passenger rail operator, on building 21 Talent 3 trainsets for passenger rail operations in Saarland. The three-car electric multiple units will be used on the Saar region's electrified rail system beginning in December, 2019.

The three-car trains will accommodate 160 seats, room

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THE ORACLE OF THE ERA

by Alexander Ivanoff

The entire ERA membership should be familiar with Bernard Linder (ERA #2668), by now, as he is the 99-year-old Editor-in-Chief of the **Bulletin** and has been for the past 37 years. However, fewer people are familiar with his background. Born on March 31, 1918, Bernie grew up in the Bronx and became interested in electric traction through his parents. His father was a newspaper stand vendor in the subway and he would go with his mother to help out. From an early age Bernie has been collecting news stories on transit and traction events, as far as collecting car rosters at the age of 13.

Just before graduating James Monroe High School, his cousin, who was the Assistant Principal at Erasmus High School, advised Bernie to study electrical engineering in college. After working in the naval shipyard during the Second World War, Bernie was looking for work, and in a chance offer, was hired pretty much on the spot to become an Electrical Engineer for the New York City Board of Transportation. Bernie retired from New York

City Transit in 1980 after a good career.

Bernie's start with the ERA was surprisingly late, and in fact he did not hear about the ERA until a chance

encounter with Martin Schachne (ERA #1137), and he became a member in 1961. Since 1963, Bernie has been involved in some capacity with what started out as the New York Division-ERA **Bulletin** (now simply the **Bulletin**). Bernie was asked by Arthur Lonto to become the **Bulletin** editor in 1980, and since 1980 has had his name on well over 400 monthly issues, even to this day writing new and exciting pieces on early electrification schemes. Originally mimeographed, the **Bulletin** has grown from three to eight to most issues a twenty-page professionally done publication. Bernie's influence is still widely felt in the MTA, and many of his hand-drawn diagrams can still be found on MTA property. A very happy (belated) birthday, Bernie!

(Special thanks to Larry Linder, Eric Oszustowicz, and Jack May.)



Bernard Linder in the 1950s.
Eric Oszustowicz collection



Bernard Linder (left) and his son, Larry.
Eric Oszustowicz photograph

Commuter and Transit Notes

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for two wheelchairs, and nine bicycles per car. The vehicles will also be equipped with sliding steps to help bridge the gap between station platforms and the train during boarding.

The Talent series debuted in 1995 by railcar builder Waggonfabrik Talbot. Bombardier later bought the com-

pany. The company has built approximately 1,400 Talent trainsets for service in Europe and Canada. In Germany, there are about 400 Talent 2 trainsets in use.

Vlexx provides passenger rail service in the regions of Rhine-Hesse, Nahe, Westpfalz, and Saarland, and the Rhine-Main metropolitan area. The company operates about 3.9 million train miles per year. The new Saar-region contract includes about 1.4 million train miles per

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SWITZERLAND IN THE LATE SUMMER

by Jack May

(Photographs by the author)

(Continued from April, 2017 issue)

I still had a little time before my tight schedule demanded my departure, so I walked to Cornaux, where I got some photos of 4003 with the lake in the background.



View of Lac Leman. I suspect that photos can be constructed with a train in the foreground with this view in back, but I had too little time to set that up.

A few moments later I hurried aboard the handsome blue-and-cream unit (at 12:39) for the ride to the other end of the line at Chamby. 4003 arrived at the junction with the MOB at 12:45, where I detrained. Chamby is the location of the museum's track connection with the Swiss meter-gauge network, and where it mans a second ticket office. After observing the interurban (which appeared to be very much at home in this setting) depart at 12:49, I saw the 12:55 *Goldenpass Classic* train from Zweissimmen to Montreux make a scheduled stop, with a locomotive pulling vintage coaches painted in the Belle Epoch style of old-time European varnish.

Now, as I hurriedly left Chamby, the clouds began to vanish. According to the timetable diagram the rolling stock in the parade was scheduled to make additional trips, but I had to forgo the opportunity for further riding and photography of the historic collection. My plan was to walk from Chamby to Sonzier, the next station on the curving MOB line, where hourly MVR suburban trains from Montreux turn back and lay over. Interestingly, this service runs every half hour on Mondays through Saturdays as far as Fontanivent, two stations short of Sonzier, but today was Sunday. With my trusty Google map in hand I negotiated the exceedingly steep pavement. And that is not an overstatement. One sign warned motorists that an intersecting street had a grade of 34 percent! I reached Sonzier just as the train from Montreux pulled in, and had a more than ample 4 minutes to photograph it with the shelter in the foreground and the lake in the background. I could have ridden the Classic to Sonzier, which would have taken only 3 minutes, but I thought walking would be more interesting (it was). Morning sun at this location would have been better, but

beggars cannot be choosers, and besides, I had photographed outbound trains climbing the grade with the city of Montreux in the background about a decade earlier when Clare and I rode the *Super Panoramic Express* in the glassed forward viewing area below the Motorman's cab (just like the Romance trains of Japan's Odakyu railway).

The local's rolling stock was an articulated Stadler GTW unit, the electric version of the cars that run on NJ Transit's diesel-powered *RiverLine*, and exactly the same as the Vevey-Blonay train I rode a few hours earlier. (Like Alstom Citadis trams, the Stadlers come in different body styles and I would ride the same kind of car again during the following week.) Akin to our experience in Andermatt the previous day, and aboard the just -mentioned *Super Panoramic*, our train descended under the 900-volt overhead into Montreux, with the town and lake appearing larger and larger at each turn, like the view seen from an airplane as it approaches its destination, but in slow motion. The car left Sonzier at 13:29 with only a handful of passengers aboard and arrived in Montreux on time at 13:41, giving me time for some photography before my 13:53 train to Vevey. With some of the Stadler cars in plain view at the MOB terminal, I noticed that MVR's traditional cream and blue color scheme is being replaced with a new livery of white and brown with a solid tan front. For the ex-CEV in Vevey, that would be a second change, as its previous colors were red and white.

In contrast to Aigle, which is served only hourly by regional trains, Montreux and Vevey, much larger cities, card four SBB trains per hour in each direction, so when

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Switzerland in the Late Summer

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I boarded the 13:53 I felt I would not be losing much time by getting off and retrieving our bags from where I stowed them a few hours earlier. However, serendipity



struck, and when my train pulled into Vevey at 13:58, the door at which I was waiting was directly opposite the locker. As a result I was able to fetch the luggage and dart back onto the same train a few seconds before its 13:59 scheduled departure.



Two views of MOB 4003 at Cornaux. It waited there just long enough for me to board, saving me the walk to Chamby.



The museum's ticket booth on the platform of the MOB's Chamby station. The tracks on the right head for Zweissimmen, while the interurban at left will head back to the museum.



MOB's Goldenpass Classic train to Montreux pauses at Chamby. Its rolling stock is based on a Wagon-Lits Pullman train that plied the meter-gauge rails over this route for only a single season — 1931. It competes with several panoramic trains with excellent sight lines on the basis of luxurious fittings — and dining service with the availability of a full meal.

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Second Avenue Subway Plans

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routes were reduced to four and Second Avenue con-

struction was deferred.

Construction was eventually resumed and revenue Second Avenue service began January 1, 2017.

Around New York's Transit System

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Yankee Stadium through the gap in the right field bleachers. The train departed 161st Street at 1:15 PM and returned to E. 180th Street Shop.

April 21, 2017 marked the centennial of subway and

elevated from Grand Central across the East River via the Steinway Tunnel (a former trolley tunnel converted to IRT clearance standards) to 103rd-Street Corona Plaza (formerly known as Alburtis Avenue). On April 21, a transit advocacy group, accessqueens.com, working with the New York Transit Museum, celebrated the 100th birthday of this first portion of the line that has been later

Switzerland in the Late Summer

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Two views of Sonzier with and without the Stadler electric MU train that provides suburban service out of Montreux, the attractive resort city on Lake Lemman as shown in the background.



Two views at the Montreux terminal of the MOB/MVR adjacent to the CFF mainline station. A Stadler electric MU car is shown sporting the new color scheme, which recognizes that the line that climbs the mountain is part of the *Golden Pass* route. In the right view, a similar car in the old livery is shown at left, as well as a locomotive-hauled through train from Montreux to Zweissimmen. The large sign above the Stadler unit advertises MVR's cog railway line that climbs from the lake for over a mile to Rochers-de-Naye, a resort area at an altitude of over 6,400 feet, where there is lots of winter skiing and other activities (see <http://www.goldenpass.ch/en/goldenpass/offer/view?id=12>).

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Around New York's Transit System

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extended eastward to Main Street-Flushing and westward to Times Square and eventually 34th Street-Hudson Yards to become the 7 Flushing Line. Festivities at the west end of the Grand Central 7 platform included several speeches and a visual pictorial presentation from the museum archives by Transit Museum staff and transit historians, birthday balloons, and a cake with a purple 7 on it. At the last minute, NYCT provided an added treat to the festivities, the Train of Many Colors (TOMC), made up of 10 vintage IRT SMEE subway cars dating back to 1963-6. The special train departed Grand Central just after 2 PM, a couple of minutes after the first train departed Grand Central

100 years ago, and operated as an extra local train carrying the general public as well as the celebrants to 103rd Street, where the official party disembarked for some added centennial observances. The TOMC continued in service onward to Main Street, where it discharged all passengers and returned to Corona Yard. Later that evening, it departed Corona Yard and returned to its home base at 207th Street Yard. The TOMC consist for this occasion was N-9587-6/9069-8/9010-1/9016-7/9207-6-S.

To commemorate the veterans of World War I and in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the oldest pair of cars on the Transit Museum's four-car Lo-V consist, the train will operate on a Transit Museum trip over 1 to Van Cortlandt Park on Saturday, May 6.

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Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 15)*

year. (*Trains Magazine* via Al Holtz, April 3)

BAVARIA, GERMANY

Alstom has been awarded two contracts from Deutsche Bahn Regio AG to supply 53 Coradia Continental electric multiple units (EMUs) for a total amount of over €300 million (\$319.89 million). The trains are scheduled to enter into service between 2019 and 2020 in the states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Bavaria. All vehicles will be built in Salzgitter, Alstom's largest production site worldwide.

These orders are part of a frame contract concluded between the Deutsche Bahn and Alstom in 2012 for the delivery of up to 400 Coradia Continental trains. The first 28 vehicles of this contract have already been in successful service since 2014.

The two orders include 27 four-car trains that will operate in the suburban network of Nuremberg from December, 2018 and 26 three- and five-car trains that will take up service in North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate.

Running at maximum speed of 160 kilometers per hour, the Coradia Continental trains are characterized by excellent acceleration properties, as well as a particularly smooth and quiet running. The three-car trainsets are fitted with 155 seats, the four-car ones with up to 230 seats and the five-car trains with 266 seats.

Coradia Continental meets the latest European standards in terms of fire protection, accessibility,

and emission values. Special attention was placed on passenger comfort: multi-purpose areas provide sufficient space for wheelchairs, bicycles, and prams. The traction equipment is located on the roof to allow for more spacious interior. Access at platform height, movable steps, gap bridging and continuous low-floor areas allow barrier-free travel. The vehicles are equipped with repeaters for an improved mobile communication, as well as with sockets, video cameras, and a real-time passenger information system displaying current train connection data. (Alstom press release via *Mass Transit Magazine*, April 2)

NANNING, CHINA

China Railway Corporation's Nanning Railway Bureau has ordered 40 CRH1A-A high speed train cars from Bombardier Sifang (Qingdao) Transportation Ltd.

Bombardier says that the order is intended to support the ongoing integration of Guangxi's regional high-speed routes into the national network of Passenger-Dedicated Lines. The 543 million yuan contract covers five eight-car trainsets. It follows a separate contract for 144 CRH1A-A cars placed by CRC in March.

Designated Zefiro 250NG by the manufacturer, the aluminum-bodied design was developed by BST as a successor to the steel-bodied CRH1, which had itself been derived from Bombardier's Regina EMU used in Sweden. The first CRH1A-A trainsets entered service on Hainan Island in November last year. (*Railway Gazette*, April 25)

Around New York's Transit System*(Continued from page 18)***Morgan Avenue Headhouse Restoration Completed**

The restoration of the 1928-vintage Morgan Avenue station headhouse on the **L** Canarsie Line was declared completed on April 12. The 2,400-square-foot façade and 400-square-foot brick-and-limestone façade were restored to their original architectural form. Roof repairs, new transom windows, exterior LED lighting, and exterior signage were installed. Interior improvements included the replacement of several steel beams, wall tiles, and a restoration of the waterproofing.

MTA Board Approves Capital Items

The MTA Board approved three major budget items aimed at improving subway service and amenities for subway customers. The repair of the Canarsie Tunnel was officially awarded to Judlau Contracting and TC Electric. They will perform the work under an expedited schedule where the total closure of the Canarsie Tunnel under the East River has been reduced from 18 months to 15 months. Judlau is the same contractor that repaired the Montague Street Tunnel in 2013. Judlau and TC also have an incentive to complete their work on time — the penalty for each day past the 15-month mark is \$410,000. Included in the scope of work are improvements to the Bedford Avenue and First Avenue

stations as well as a new power substation that will allow more trains to operate through the tunnel.

The second major item was the start of the process toward commencing construction of Phase Two of the Second Avenue Subway, extending the line from its current terminus at 96th Street and Second Avenue to Lexington Avenue and 125th Street where the line will share a transfer station with the Lexington Avenue Line (**4 5 6**) as well as a connection to the Metro-North station at 125th Street-Park Avenue. There will be two intermediate stations under Second Avenue, 106th Street and 116th Street. Included in this approval is \$7.3 million for a new Community Information Center to be located at 69 E. 125th Street that is slated for opening this Spring.

Finally, a design-build contract was awarded to a single company to totally rebuild four stations (Broadway and 30th, 36th, and 39th Avenues) on the Astoria elevated line at an expedited schedule with reduced costs. This is Phase Two of a station renewal program that will see 30 stations totally rebuilt by 2020. These four stations will receive countdown clocks, new platforms and stairs, granite flooring on the mezzanine level, a redesigned fare control area, new and enhanced lighting, artwork, and improved signage, all while taking into consideration the architecturally historic aspects of each station.

Around New York's Transit System

Station Rebuilding Program

MTA New York City Transit embarked on a new program initiated by NY Governor Andrew Cuomo by which over 30 outdated stations will be totally rebuilt and modernized. Three stations under Fourth Avenue in Brooklyn served by **R** trains, Prospect Avenue, Bay Ridge Avenue, and 53rd Street, are the first to undergo the transformation from mid-late 20th century motif and technology to 2017 transportation hub and station standards which will include LED lighting, new signage, granite platform flooring, transparent barriers around the fare control areas replacing the ironwork bars currently in use, wi-fi, internet connectivity, USB recharging stations, and customer information systems such as countdown clocks to the next train. Rather than address each station's issues piecemeal, the \$72 million overhaul will be achieved by completely closing these three stations for a period of around 6 months to enable crews to more effectively and efficiently perform the work and return them to service. 53rd Street was the first to close on March 27, followed by Bay Ridge Avenue on April 29 and Prospect Avenue on June 5, 2017. The second phase of this station renewal program will involve four stations on the Astoria line served by **N** and **W** trains. The estimated completion date for the overhaul of all 30 stations is 2020.

Single-Unit R-33s Leave Flushing Line

At around 11 PM March 30, four R-33 World's Fair cars built in 1963 by St. Louis Car Company (S-9310-9308-9307-9343-N) departed the **7** Flushing Line, their home for 53½ years. Based at Corona Yard and assigned to work train status since their retirement from

passenger service in late 2003, they represented the last of the steel-bodied World's Fair fleet (later known as Redbirds) that once numbered 430 cars on **7** for the 1964-5 New York World's Fair. With the advent of CBTC on **7** later this year, these cars were deemed unsuitable for continued use on the "new" **7** and were being sent elsewhere in the NYCT system where they will roll out their final miles. This was truly the end of an era on **7**.

Museum Trains Operate for Various Events

The Train of Many Colors (TOMC) arrived late Thursday night March 30 in preparation for its run commemorating the New York Mets baseball team's Opening Day at Citi Field on Monday, April 3. The ten-car consist was: N-9206-7 (MTA colors)/9017-6 (1950s red)/9587-6 (part of the last R-36 train to operate in passenger service in November, 2003)/9069-8 (Redbird-Greenbird pair)/9010-1 (MTA colors)-S. The train laid up in Corona Yard over that weekend and on April 3 departed the yard at 10 AM and ran light to 34th Street-Hudson Yards. It departed there at 11:30 AM for a one-way trip to Mets-Willets Point and onward to Main Street-Flushing. There, it discharged all passengers and ran light back to 207th Street Yard via the Astoria Line.

The four-car former IRT Lo-V consist operated non-stop from 42nd Street-Grand Central to Yankees-161st Street. It deadheaded out of its current base at E. 180th Street Shop around 9:30 AM and left Grand Central at 11:30 AM. After making a turn at 167th Street and returning south, it did its usual pose on the middle track positioned so that one of the cars could be seen from inside

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NYC Subway Car Update

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R-68s on **G**, R-143s on **J**, R-160s on **R**, and R-68/68As on **N** and **W**. From its January 1 inception through March 31, there was still no known instance of older Coney Island-assigned R-68/68A equipment being used on **O**, which would permit it to sneak on to the still-new Second Avenue Subway, but this will probably change in due course over the longer term. As for the R-179 itself, the second "pilot" set of four cars (3054-7) was delivered via 207th Street Shop on January 25-26, with all eight cars performing their first road tests in tandem by mid-February. The two trains (10-car and 8-car) were actually spotted on their return to Pitkin Shop during the middle of March as a one long 18-car train. When out and about (most typically on weekdays), the R-179s tend to wander between Pitkin and the "Rockaway Flats" (near Broad Channel) as time permits between regular **A** and/or **S**/Rockaway Park Shuttle runs. Reports of numerous and varied defects with the

new cars continue to abound, and officially there has been little progress reported, so at present no reliable assessment can be made as to when the new cars will begin carrying passengers or how they will be deployed. Elsewhere, periodic overhaul of both the Staten Island R-44 and Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42 fleets have been ongoing at Coney Island Shops for some months and now seem to be winding down. The replacement of both (as well as the R-32s and R-46s) continue to be central elements in planning for the future R-211 contract or even subsequent acquisitions as the R-68/68As (and IRT R-62/R-62As) pass 30 years of age. On that note, R-143 link 8269-72 was noted floating around Subdivision "B" during late March and early April, outfitted with sensor arrays between 8270 and 8271 that observed, measured, and recorded the vertical and horizontal variances in threshold elevation as the train rocked about. This information in turn can be used in the design of future "open gangway" sets, of which some are to be incorporated into the R-211 contract.