

The Bulletin



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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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**In This Issue:
From Recognition to Dominance—
The New York Connecting Railroad
(Continued)
...Page 2**

STATEN ISLAND'S 157-YEAR-OLD RAILROAD (Continued from July, 2017 issue)

Staten Island riders always hoped that the railroad could provide a one-seat ride to Brooklyn and Manhattan. In the previous issue, we reported that a 1921 law ordered the city to build a river tunnel. In this issue we will continue this story of the failed attempt to build the tunnel. On April 14, 1923, Mayor Hylan, who was using a silver pick, started excavating for the Brooklyn shaft at the foot of 68th Street between Shore Road and what is now the Belt Parkway. Construction of the Brooklyn shaft began promptly, but construction of the Staten Island shaft did not begin until July 19, 1923. This shaft was located at the St. George Ferry Terminal near the toll booths between the inbound and outbound ferry lanes. It was filled in when the terminal was rebuilt after the 1946 fire. After construction was completed in 1925, a state law was passed limiting the use of the tunnel to passenger trains. When bids for tunnel construction were opened on May 8, 1925, no contractors bid for the job and work on the shafts stopped. Unfortunately, the city wasted more than \$4.2 million, \$472,568 for the Brooklyn shaft and \$762,715 for the Staten Island shaft.

There was much controversy about this tunnel, which was apparently not intended to connect with BMT. If passenger service had been operated, it would have been a separate railroad whose destination was not specified.

(Editor's Note by Bernard Linder: There were persistent rumors that through service would be operated with BMT, but we are not aware that city officials ever discussed it with BMT officials. At that time, BMT was unable to provide adequate service because the city was slow constructing the 14th Street and Nassau Street Lines. We believe that BMT would have been reluctant

to schedule additional Staten Island trains.)

In 1923, the State Legislature decided to reduce air pollution by passing a law requiring New York City railroads to discontinue steam operation. The company complied and started ordering and installing electrical equipment. Because Staten Island riders always hoped that they could enjoy a one-seat rail ride to Brooklyn and Manhattan, the company ordered electric MU cars that were the same size and operated on the same voltage as the BMT B-Types. Their door and seating arrangement was different. The company also replaced the old track rails with 100-pound rail. Power was supplied by Staten Island Edison's power house through high-voltage transmission lines to substations where the high-voltage alternating current was converted to 600-volt direct current. The third rail and protection board were similar to the BMT installation. The signal system, which was unique to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, consisted of four-aspect color position light signals, largely approach lighted. Because there were white lights above and below the position light signals, twelve different aspects could be displayed.

Electrification proceeded rapidly; the first electric MU car arrived at Staten Island on April 13, 1925. Third rails were installed on portions of the line and it was expected that power would be turned on in the next few days. Clifton Shop was equipped to maintain the new electric cars, which started operating June 5, 1925 on the South Beach Branch. When electric trains started operating July 1, 1925 between St. George and Tottenville, there was a ceremony. The first electric train departed immediately after the ceremony carrying borough and Baltimore & Ohio offi-

(Continued on page 18)

NEXT TRIP: STEAM TRAIN RIDE/PHILLIPSBURG MUSEUM — SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

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

by George Chiasson
(Continued from July, 2017 issue)

Completing the New York Connecting Railroad—Progress in Baby Steps and Evolv- ing Freight Operations

Back on the line toward Brooklyn, work on an 80-foot-wide cut progressed all through 1915 and well into the following year, from a point south of Fillmore (35th) Avenue to the end of Section “C” at Grand Avenue, with a separate contract for construction of the long concrete arch bridge across Queens Boulevard being let on July 14. Just as it had done with the Long Island Rail Road during construction of its “Woodside-Winfield cut-off,” the City of New York worked in partnership with management of the New York Connecting Railroad to guide its design and construction from an aesthetic and public benefit perspective, given that the wide thoroughfare it was to traverse was then being created by widening Thomson Avenue to about four times its original size (including a reservation for the Jamaica trolley of the Manhattan & Queens Traction Company). Whereas the LIRR effort had culminated in a three-section girder span with ornate steel facing, suspended between Beaux-Arts concrete piers that were adorned with arches intended for pedestrian passage, after a number of design proposals the Connecting Railroad’s rendition, as completed during 1916, was composed of three adjoined all-concrete arches featuring Beaux-Arts styling throughout (and with no provision for pedestrians at all). The feature attractions on Section “D” in 1915 were the installation of a temporary overpass at Grand Avenue in Elmhurst and construction of the tunnel beneath Lutheran Cemetery on the edge of Ridgewood. In the first instance a bridge fabricated of large timbers took shape that was crowded with utility lines as part of the structure and also had to carry BRT’s Flushing-Ridgewood trolley over the excavation site. Meanwhile, once ground through the Great Juniper Swamp had been stabilized using a “blanket fill,” piles, and massive quantities of concrete, a contract for that second, and equally critical, undertaking was granted on July 20 with site preparation already underway by August 8. A modified cut-and-cover method of construction was begun on the tunnel in the middle of an otherwise frozen graveyard during February of 1916, lasted through the entire construction season that followed, and was finished in November, when the cemetery Superintendent’s home was shored up after it was slightly dug beneath as part of the intended alignment. The finished excavation measured 518 feet long, 80 feet wide, and about 25 feet deep (all covered by a concrete and steel deck overlaid using tons of soil), with two tracks to be installed and provision for a future expansion to four. Well after the

railway overpasses were completed in the same segment between Calamus Road and Thomson (45th) Avenue, the very last piece of right-of-way to be graded from untamed land was the embankment that crossed the Long Island Rail Road Main Line, Maurice Avenue, the North Side Division, and Queens Boulevard between their respective overpasses. This job was finally started in May of 1917 and finished within weeks, dovetailing well with the laying of track. That final, critical task was completed from Bay Ridge to Fresh Pond in the summer of 1916 and continued on to Bowery Bay Junction through the year 1917, with the line reaching a state of beneficial use by the Yuletide (Christmas).

Initial completion of the lower portion of the New York Connecting Railroad was marked by the activation of manual block signal stations on the LIRR Manhattan Beach Division at “NU” (New Utrecht), “MJ” (Manhattan Beach Junction), “NO” (New Lots), “KN” (Pitkin), and “FN” (Fremont), all across Brooklyn and Queens, on January 17, 1918. At that time the southerly portion became operational for through freight service between Port Morris and Bay Ridge, with the final increment to Bay Ridge itself operated under timetable authority. Actual operations commenced on January 28, at which time the first New Haven freight trains crossed the Hell Gate Bridge and made their way south past Bowery Bay Junction, but strictly to perform interchange with the Long Island Rail Road at the Fresh Pond Junction connection, where a series of sidings were laid on the newly-completed ramp, before returning north. At that time trains traversed varying segments of finished and unfinished track en route, which would remain the case for some time to come, particularly on the multiple-iron Manhattan Beach Division. On April 8 both main freight-oriented tracks of the New York Connecting Railroad were fully completed from their origin as the “new” 5 and 6 at Port Morris in the Bronx, across the Hell Gate Bridge to Bowery Bay Junction, and all the way to their union with the Manhattan Beach Division at Fresh Pond in Queens. Nevertheless a variety of issues (manpower, equipment, yard space and traffic management, for example) had to be worked out before the first through freights were at last able to run on behalf of the Pennsylvania Railroad, both ways between the Bay Ridge car floats in Brooklyn and Cedar Hill Yard near New Haven, Connecticut on May 7, 1918.

A key event to the inauguration of through freight service was the opening of so-called “West Yard” along the LIRR Montauk Division. This was required as a staging

(Continued on page 3)

From Recognition to Dominance

(Continued from page 2)

facility for LIRR at its main point of interchange with the New Haven and was located immediately west of Fresh Pond Junction. Pursuant to the original New York Connecting Railroad operating agreement, the New Haven was granted exclusive governance in the provision of steam engines and crews on all through freights, in addition to the application of operational norms with regard to the movement of traffic on to and off of its overall system. Meanwhile, the Long Island Rail Road was bound by the same compact to handle all local freight and switching operations as component to its own Manhattan Beach Division (as reconfigured), although much of the traffic that it moved was actually heading to or from the New Haven and Pennsylvania Railroads. As a result it was LIRR that actually staffed the multiplicity of yards on the Brooklyn and Queens end of the railroad, not only at the terminal in Bay Ridge but also at Fresh Pond, other existing facilities, and those yards which were added across the route's first decade of existence. Another stubborn issue related to first-stage operations was the lack of turning capability for locomotives at the Bay Ridge terminal. This deficiency forced the power on every eastbound/northbound through trip to be run tender-forward all the way to Oak Point at least, if not even Cedar Hill, given that the only available turntable in the area was located at the Harlem River Terminal. It also must have made work life interesting for the crews of trains rumbling south through the East New York Tunnel, who would have been behind the stacks of their forward-facing units for a half-mile with no means of ventilation. Perhaps for this very reason, retractable cab shrouds were added to the New Haven's road engines in 1923. This remained the situation for several more years after that, as long as steam power was used to haul road trains on the New York Connecting Railroad.

As of August 7, more trackage was opened as part of an emerging scattershot pattern of progress on the southern half of the New York Connecting Railroad. #3 Track, the westernmost iron to pass through the East New York Tunnel, was laid at this juncture from its northerly origin at signal station "FN" as far as "KN" near Pitkin Avenue. This resulted in a three-track railroad from Fremont to Cooper Avenue (arranged as 3, 1, 2 west to east); two separate tracks through the Tunnel (3 and 2, along with the passing siding following the alignment of 1); and two tracks (2 and 3) from East New York to Pitkin Aves. At the other end of the line, a new (southernmost) Track 4 was forged from Avenue H to Brooklyn Avenue then continued into an expanded "MJ" Interlocking at Manhattan Beach Junction. It was joined by a new Track 1 from Brooklyn Avenue to MJ, wherein the original Track 1 (northernmost alignment) was re-designated Track 3 and was combined with the original Track 2 to create a full four-track main line between the same two points. Beyond the switches at MJ Interlocking Tracks 2 and 4 diverged as previous to the Manhattan Beach Branch (there to be re-labeled 1 and 2) and

passed through the Manhattan Beach Junction station beneath Ocean Avenue, which remained as it was reconstructed in 1909. After World War I ended and with it the materials shortages and labor crises (at least in the short term), another piece of the New York Connecting Railroad puzzle was added in April, 1920 with the addition of Track 4 along the eastern edge of the widened alignment from FN (Fremont) to KN (Pitkin Avenue). This filled all four track slots provided during the original construction of the East New York Tunnel (though #1 was still technically a passing siding) and also forced a realignment of the interchange lead that ramped up to the surface-level Atlantic Division right-of-way from #2 track to the new #4. This was followed in 1921 by addition of the "East Yard" at (actually within) Fresh Pond Junction, which is indicative of the rising traffic volumes (i.e. success) the New York Connecting Railroad was experiencing. At the same time Tracks 2 and 4 were completed from New Lots Road to a set of "blocks" situated at Rockaway Avenue, which created two holding tracks of about a half-mile each in lieu of even more yard space.

As operations had evolved over those first few years, about a half-dozen daily road freights were traveling the length of the New York Connecting Railroad each way. These were typical across its several decades of main line operation though their exact times, "work" (pick-up and set-off) routines and symbol identifications were changed frequently. Nevertheless there were some definite patterns established by 1921 (if not before) that are worthy of examination, if only to shed some insight on exactly how the New York Connecting Railroad did its job. All originating trains were assembled by LIRR crews and a fleet of small 0-8-0 steam engines (or vice versa if headed west) at the four Bay Ridge car floats off 65th Street, euphemistically referred to as "Abie," "Benny," "Charlie," and "Davy." Road trains between Bay Ridge (Brooklyn) and Cedar Hill (New Haven) traditionally held "NG" or "GN" symbols (as in "New Haven" and "Greenville") and generally interchanged traffic with the Long Island Rail Road at Fresh Pond. They also distributed or received cars at interceding New Haven yards from Oak Point in the Bronx to Cedar Hill, which in turn had been dispersed (or gathered by) New Haven local freights throughout Westchester County and Connecticut, or perhaps forwarded between Cedar Hill and Hartford or Springfield, Massachusetts.

Another batch of Bay Ridge through freights served Boston, which were also made up off the car floats but conglomerated traffic that was specifically bound for the farthest extreme of the New Haven system. "GB" or "BG" symbols were ultimately destined for (or originated at) the A Street Yard on the South Boston waterfront, which was easily within walking distance of South Station and the traditional version of Downtown Boston. These typically included at least one expedited train of "perishables" (usually fresh produce) that had traffic to be distributed about Boston's fruit, meat, and flower markets as then stacked along the Fort Point Channel,

(Continued on page 6)

STATEN ISLAND RAPID TRANSIT GRADE CROSSING ELIMINATION



Temporary track looking north toward New Dorp, September 6, 1966.
Bernard Linder photograph



Rose Avenue crossing, south of New Dorp, looking east, September 10, 1966.
Bernard Linder photograph



Peter Avenue crossing, south of New Dorp, September 1, 1967.
Bernard Linder photograph



Peter Avenue crossing looking east, September 1, 1967.
Bernard Linder photograph



New Dorp, looking north after grade crossing elimination, September 27, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph



New Dorp, looking north, September 29, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph
(Continued on page 5)

SIRT Grade Crossing Elimination

(Continued from page 4)



Looking north toward Ross Avenue, south of New Dorp station, September 10, 1966.

Bernard Linder photograph



Grant City looking north, August 19, 1961.

Bernard Linder photograph



Grant City looking south, September 6, 1966.

Bernard Linder photograph



Grant City.

Larry Linder photograph



Grant City looking north, September 27, 1968.

Larry Linder photograph



Grant City, September 27, 1968.

Larry Linder photograph

From Recognition to Dominance

(Continued from page 3)

depending on what commodities were in season. Perhaps most notable among these was a train called "FGB-2," which was loaded with fruit and such in Florida and expedited north, probably on the Atlantic Coast Line and RF&P to the Pennsylvania, then whisked in a veil of operational superiority to Greenville Yard, from which it was floated together to Brooklyn, reassembled, and sent on north, in time carrying the internal nickname *The Alligator*. While working northward a typical "GB" symbol freight would change crews and/or motive power at Cedar Hill as well as work at one (and only one) of the major staging yards along the way (Bridgeport, New London, or Providence). Approaching Boston it might have diverted to the New York & New England via Mansfield and Walpole, then dropped some cars at Readville Yard (vice versa heading west) before heading inbound on today's MBTA Dorchester Branch, more traditionally known as the New Haven's "Midland Division," to reach the yard in South Boston. During the era in question (roughly 1918 to 1930, with some aspects ultimately lasting until stymied by Hurricane Dianne in 1955) there was also one set of "Boston" through freights carrying "NE" symbols that utilized the New Haven's "New York & New England" affiliate as its main course of travel. These trains also originated off the car floats from Bay Ridge, followed the New York Connecting Railroad to New Rochelle, and then used the New Haven's main line to reach Devon (on the east side of the Housatonic River), where they diverged to the present-day Metro-North Waterbury Branch. From the latter point they continued through Plainville and New Britain to Hartford, bore east to serve Willimantic and Putnam in Connecticut, and finally crossed the Blackstone River into Eastern Massachusetts before making a direct approach toward Boston through Franklin, Walpole, Readville, and Dorchester. As might be deduced from its symbol, this train also worked at several New Haven yards along its way (though probably not at every yard on every trip) and aided the efficient distribution of interchange traffic from the Pennsylvania and Long Island railroads throughout Southern New England.

A third set of road freights to originate at Bay Ridge were known in time as the *Maine Bullet*, perhaps representing the highest manifestation of the New York Connecting Railroad as conceived so long before its construction. These trains gathered all the interchange traffic coming off the Pennsylvania that was floated across New York Bay collectively and intended for points in Northern New England. After coursing through Brooklyn and Queens, then rumbling across the Hell Gate Bridge to the Bronx, they were expedited to Cedar Hill for the usual change-out of crew and/or power and then followed the New Haven's "Shore Line" route to Groton, Connecticut. At that location they turned north on the "Norwich & Worcester" main line and proceeded to the latter city through the New Haven "hub" of Putnam in Eastern Connecticut. From there they crossed the

famed Boston & Albany main line and entered the ex-Worcester, Nashua & Portland route of the Boston & Maine Railroad next to Union Station in Worcester. They then proceeded to Ayer, Massachusetts, crossed B&M's Fitchburg Division, and made an arc through the southern New Hampshire municipalities of Nashua, Windham, and Rochester before approaching its destination city of Portland, Maine from the west. In their early incarnation these trains were strictly carrying cars to and from the waterfront on Casco Bay; there was no such place as the more well-known Rigby Yard until 1923. Indeed, that new South Portland facility may have come to pass as a direct result of the traffic volumes engendered by the *Bullet*, for by about 1928 the through train from Bay Ridge gravitated to a more conventional course via the New Haven all the way to Fitchburg (by way of Mansfield and Framingham), then a series of contiguous Boston & Maine branches laid along the Merrimack Valley (through Lowell and Lawrence) to the railroad's "Western Route" that linked Portland with Boston. In modified form (now via Worcester and the former Boston & Albany Railroad) this pathway persists to the present day on behalf of Pan Am Railways Corporation, though such trains no longer originate or terminate in Brooklyn. For its part, meanwhile, the old "WN&P" was eventually put up to the Interstate Commerce Commission for abandonment in 1934 and was gone as a through route soon thereafter.

In addition to its family of road freights, the New York Connecting Railroad's southerly portion was home to some Long Island Rail Road "local" freight operations (including one that served the Manhattan Beach Branch), and a small number of 2-8-0 "Consolidation" steam engines so assigned. These jobs were also protected under the original operating agreement between the three participating companies and it was this aspect of the operation that utilized the various sidings and way stations (most especially the three elements of Fresh Pond Yard) and spotted cars wherever necessary to expedite set-offs and pick-ups with quick, randy crews. The Long Island also ran a fleet of trains (an operation essentially unchanged since the days of the New York & Manhattan Beach) which shuttled freight between Bay Ridge, Long Island City, and Holban (Jamaica in the time before that) by way of the Fresh Pond connection. Naturally, the virtual quarantine of so much motive power for these specialized functions also made for a cramped, busy engine servicing terminal at Bay Ridge, one matched in consequence only by the ever-prominent facilities at Sunnyside (PRR), Cedar Hill (NYNH&H), and Morris Park (LIRR). In time more yards were to be added, which eased the switching burden, but as they were external events also demonstrated that rail freight traffic was more sensitive to the increasingly global influences of economy, warfare, and politics than was originally foreseen as compared to passenger travel, with the rapid growth for which the railroad to Bay Ridge was rebuilt stunted from an early date. Somewhat lost in this mix of trains as well in 1921 were the handful

(Continued on page 7)

From Recognition to Dominance

(Continued from page 6)

of surviving, largely seasonal, and steam-powered trips that were made by Long Island Rail Road Manhattan Beach Branch locals out of Long Island City, which passed back and forth amidst a veritable forest of freight train activity between Fresh Pond and Manhattan Beach Junctions. One can now only imagine what sort of delights may have captivated the casual train-watchers of that era as they lingered at any one of the seven LIRR stations situated at various points along the New York Connecting Railroad.

As was continually the case, there were also a number of separate, ongoing changes to the state of Connecting Railroad terminal facilities in general as the New York Bay's assets evolved. Perhaps of the greatest consequence to its operating triumvirate was the commencement of car float operations at the New Haven's Oak Point facility, utilizing a thoroughly modern overhead cable suspension system, in 1908. This addition vastly increased the amount of traffic flowing through the northern portions of the joint venture on behalf of the Pennsy's competitors, and often helped to fill out those through trains which earned their livelihood strictly plying the rails between Bay Ridge and Cedar Hill. To maintain their economic balance, the other railway companies were also quick to upgrade their existing maritime facilities to a par with those at Greenville after it matured with the help of the New York Connecting Railroad, with similar overhead cable suspension car float management systems added by the Erie at Long Dock (Jersey City) in 1911; the Baltimore & Ohio at St. George on Staten Island in 1912; and the West Shore Railroad (New York Central) at Weehawken in 1917. Well after such was accepted as the operational norm throughout the harbor, the Long Island Rail Road at long last followed suit at Bay Ridge when it was finally completed in 1918. There the existing pontoon system was replaced with a group of overhead cable installations to efficiently move cars to and from those first New Haven through trains. Separately, some of the New Jersey-based railroads opened their own, isolated terminal facilities along the Bronx bank of the Harlem River by the earliest years of the 20th century, which brought about even more commercial maritime activity. Perhaps

most notable of these was CNJ's circular freight house, added in 1907, which was tucked in the block dividing the New Haven's Harlem River Terminal and the IRT Third Avenue "L" station at 133rd Street.

There was also much change around the harbor independent of the Connecting Railroad but of equally profound measure. In 1916 BRT conceded the 63rd Street terminal at Bay Ridge to the United States Army, which in the run-up to the First World War (*Note: yes, there was some anticipatory action, and even German-perpetrated sabotage that year as witnessed by the great "Black Tom" explosion of July 30 in Jersey City*) created the massive Brooklyn Army Terminal along its landward side and provided its own massive rail and maritime facility along the attached waterfront. This action also served to close off a significant portion of First Avenue from public travel (including removal of the 1912-built overpass), but was not fully completed until 1919 after the Armistice had already ended the war. A new factor in the mix was the emergence of the Bush Terminal in about 1912, after almost a decade of halting entrepreneurial effort to get that company moving forward had met with limited success. This mixed rail and maritime facility was originally occupied with the movement of commodity traffic from western points to the urbanized Eastern Seaboard. At that time it had at last started to gain a foothold on regular rail car traffic through its pier frontage at the foot of 36th Street in the Sunset Park section of Brooklyn, where it subsumed the former 39th Street Ferry terminal some years after the Long Island Rail Road had discontinued its summer trains to and from Manhattan Beach in 1902. Bush Terminal Railway was the main operator but it was also used by the BRT-controlled South Brooklyn Railway during this time, which may have been one reason there was little resistance to the military appropriation of that company's facility at 63rd Street in Bay Ridge. In any case the ever-enlarging Bush Terminal had suddenly emerged as a player in the movement of carload freight around New York Harbor by float, and presented yet another competitive challenge to the New York Connecting Railroad. In 1918 (again right about as the war itself was ending) the original terminal there was adjoined by a U.S. Naval logistics base coined "Bush Terminal 2," at which point the older waterfront became Bush Terminal 1.

(Continued next issue)

Staten Island's 157-Year-Old Railroad

(Continued from page 1)

cials and committees from the neighborhoods.

The train was draped with flags and carried the band in the first car. It stopped at every station, but did not accept passengers. Crowds lined every station while airplanes flew over the train. At night, 600 people attended a banquet.

The North Shore Branch was the last that was electrified. In September, 1925, 75 percent of the new track

rails were installed from St. George to Elm Park. It was expected that work would be completed in a week. High-voltage cable was installed partly overhead and partly underground from Arlington to St. George. There was no ceremony when the first North Shore electric train departed from St. George at 12:10 PM December 25, 1925. It passed the first electric train from Arlington, whose running time was four minutes less than the steam trains.

Electrification cost \$7 million.

(Continued next issue)

MEMBER RANDY GLUCKSMAN APPOINTED TO MTA BOARD

On June 19, former *Bulletin* News Editor Randy Glucksman (ERA member #3213) received an email from the Governor's Office advising him that the New York State Senate had confirmed his nomination to the MTA Board. Randy has been a member of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC) representing Rockland County since 2009, and in 2013 was elected MNRCC Chair. Two other commuter councils represent New York City Transit subway and bus riders, and Long Island Rail Road riders. The three councils comprise the Permanent Citizen's Advisory Council to the MTA, or PCAC. The Chairmanship rotates among the councils and Randy had recently completed a four-year term as Chair. In June, Randy was elected the First Vice-Chair. The councils select one of their members to sit on the MTA Board, but lack voting power. He attended and participated in his first Board meeting on June 21.

Randy's interest in trains and buses goes back to his childhood days, especially with how subway car groupings were made. He found out about ERA in an article in *The New York Times* reporting that ERA had chartered a train of Lo-Vs for a ride on the Dyre Avenue Line. After filling out an application, he had an interview before a committee at ERA's headquarters at 145 Greenwich Street in lower Manhattan. At this interview, Randy met several members who would become longtime friends including Gary Grahl and the late Roger Arcara, Alan Hannock, and Hal Spielman. Randy joined in April of 1965.

Attending the monthly meetings and going on fan trips in those early years proved to be a form of professional networking for Randy and he met other members who worked for the Transit Authority such as Don Harold,

and others no longer with us, including Raymond Berger, Frank Goldsmith, and Martin Schachne. For over 30 years, and 304 columns, Randy was the editor of the *Commuter and Transit Notes* column in the *Bulletin*, which he created for the New York Division and which has evolved over time.

Randy's career in transit was launched in 1972 when he started as a "B" Division (now Subdivision "B") Conductor. Interestingly, on the same day, the first BART line also opened. After fourteen months, he was promoted to Motorman (Train Operator) and subsequently Train Dispatcher (1980), IND Trainmaster (1983), and Superintendent (1985). He also had a variety of special assignments in those 15 years and worked practically everywhere. Randy's last 10 years at MTA New York City Transit were with the Department of Capital Program Management, where he was responsible for coordinating the track outages (General Orders) and work trains for the capital program. Randy's most recent role was with Systra Consulting for fifteen years as a rail operations analyst.

Despite personal sacrifices with working off-peak, weekends and holidays when he started, Randy remarked that he had a very satisfying 25+-year career at MTA. At the June 21 MTA Board meeting, Vice Chairman Fernando Ferrer, while introducing the new members, stated that he was "returning to the MTA." The skills learned there along with Systra will aid in Randy's ability to offer suggestions for a better commuting experience for customers. (*Editor's Note from Alexander Ivanoff: One of those customers happens to be yours truly, as an infrequent customer of Metro-North's west-of-Hudson services*).

Around New York's Transit System

(Continued from page 20)

Southbound service on the line was restored around 5 PM. (Personal Observation by Ronald Yee: During the morning and midday, with **Q** experiencing major delays in service

due to this derailment, some **W** trains were diverted from their normal terminus of Astoria to 96th Street on the Second Avenue Subway to act as service gap fillers and as attempt to maintain some regularity of service on the Manhattan portion of **Q**.) (WNBC-4 TV News, July 21)

SUBDIVISION "A" CAR ASSIGNMENTS CARS REQUIRED JUNE 25, 2017

LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH	LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH
1	20 R-62, 300 R-62A	20 R-62, 290 R-62A	5	340 R-142	340 R-142
2	340 R-142	320 R-142	6	360 R-62A, 30 R-142A	360 R-62A, 40 R-142A
3	250 R-62	250 R-62	7	33 R-62A, 363 R-188	22 R-62A, 352 R-188
4	220 R-142, 130 R-142A	210 R-142, 120 R-142A	S (42 nd Street)	10 R-62A	10 R-62A

ELECTRIC TRACTION IN THE DEEP SOUTH

By Alexander Ivanoff, with assistance from Ronald Yee
photos as noted

On the first day of July at 7:30 PM, nearly fifty ERA members and guests joined together for the opening of ERA's annual convention at the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Midtown. Opening the convention was Matthew Tankersley, co-author of the comprehensive 2012 publication, *Historic Streetcar Systems in Georgia*. This work was commissioned and funded by the Georgia Department of Transportation and traces the history, development and decline of electric traction in the state of Georgia (prior to MARTA) with specific focus on the Greater Atlanta region, and as a bonus was available as a PDF. The presentation was well-received by the membership and we eagerly awaited our first day of riding.

On July 2 (Sunday), we left a little before 9 AM for MARTA's North Avenue station, just two blocks away from our hotel. All members of the group were given pre-loaded one-day *Breeze* cards and rode from North Avenue to Lindbergh Center, where we were taken by an out-of-service bus to the Armour Yard maintenance facility. The club was given a comprehensive tour of the facility by MARTA shop managers, which included many photo opportunities for the conventioners of both rolling stock in the shop and the machinery and apparatus used in the maintenance of MARTA's car fleet. The group then returned downtown to Peachtree Center, where MARTA's north-south line interchanges with the Atlanta Streetcar, a relatively new addition to that city's rail transit scene.

Opened at the end of 2014, the "Downtown Loop", as the streetcar route is referred to by the locals, is 2.7 miles long with 12 stations and is served by four Siemens S-70 class light rail vehicles. Conventioners were given a green wristband (similar to those issued by theme parks) as their day pass to ride the streetcar as long as they wished. The group boarded at the Peachtree Center MARTA transfer station and many rode the entire loop at least once before stopping off for lunch or photos at locations of their choice. Most of the group stayed very close to the streetcar, but a few did take the opportunity to ride the MARTA system in depth. As no activities were planned for that evening, a group of us went in the evening to the South City Kitchen Midtown, a quick ride from the hotel, but we spent more time waiting for a train to come if anything else!

On July 3 we left the hotel at 9:15 AM for the Southeastern Railway Museum in suburban Duluth, Georgia. The Museum was founded in the 1970s by the Atlanta Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. It is the official transportation history museum of Georgia, with over 90 pieces of rolling stock featuring railroading from across the country. In addition to a quick train ride in the museum's yard, we were given tours of the museum and had ample photo opportunities. I was personally interested in the General Electric 44-ton switcher origi-

nally operated by the New York, Ontario & Western Railway (NYO&W) along with the ex-Northern Pacific slumbercoach. One of the more exotic pieces was the "Superb" private railcar, which was used on President Warren Harding's Voyage of Understanding trip. (*Editor's Note from Alexander Ivanoff: Ironic for it carried a less-than-superb President, whose name recently resurfaced when talk show host John Oliver bought a wax figure of the 29th and other Presidents after a museum closed*). Other highlights included several taxicabs, some retired MARTA equipment, and some stored trolley equipment and other railcars and locomotives.

Our Annual Banquet was held that evening at the hotel. Our featured speaker was MARTA's Chief Operating Officer Richard Krisak, who discussed organization's past, present and future transit plans for the greater Atlanta region. Krisak has been involved with the development of many start-up rail systems, including those in Buffalo and Houston. I was amazed to find out that he had spoken to the ERA on two prior occasions before, and his presentation to the group received praise.

I never thought I would have ever in my life spent the Fourth of July on a train, but I can now say I have. After a painfully early wakeup, we had a quick buffet before boarding our chartered bus bound for the Peachtree station in northwest Atlanta at 6:30 AM in our chartered buses. With the Peachtree Marathon in full swing, the decision to leave earlier was essential in helping us be on time; however, there were some late stragglers who made the train with just minutes to spare! We rode Amtrak's westbound *Crescent*, which departed an hour late but managed to make up some time into New Orleans, arriving about 8 PM. While aboard the train, many of the group opted to take advantage of having lunch and dinner in the heritage dining car (8507) over the offerings of the café car. Much to its credit, Amtrak had contacted ERA President Bob Newhouser to inquire about the anticipated dining habits of the group. The conversation concluded with Amtrak making arrangements to stock the train with additional food so they would not run out of food enroute. A chartered MCI motor coach was waiting for us at Union Passenger Terminal to take us to the Renaissance Pere Marquette Hotel.

For our last day (July 5), we left the hotel at 8:30 AM and walked a block to the St. Charles Streetcar. Each participant was provided an all-day pass to ride all bus and streetcar lines of the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority. We were broken into two groups and took regular service on the historic St. Charles Streetcar to NORTA's Carrollton Barn and Shops near the end of the line. I was blown away by the shop's ability to maintain the ninety-plus-year-old cars, especially the opportunity to meet NORTA's in-house carpenter, whose task is to

(Continued on page 15)

Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 344

by Ronald Yee, James Giovan, and Alexander Ivanoff

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the return of Joseph J. Lhota as the next MTA Chair. The Governor also directed the new Chair to begin a search for a permanent new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), splitting up a position that had been held by one person for years. Lhota returns to the Chair's position after leaving a one-year tenure (2012-3) to run for Mayor of New York City. (*Metro Magazine*, June 26)

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

New schedules were issued effective July 24 making some adjustments to the July 10 train schedules that had been issued for the Penn Station New York rehabilitation work project. Interestingly, they have an expiration date of August 20, which suggests yet a third schedule change during the span of this project. During the AM Peak, to increase the number of opportunities for customers to transfer for Brooklyn-bound service, three trains are adding stops at Jamaica, East New York, and Nostrand Avenue. The 6:57 AM train from Freeport will add stops at Jamaica (arriving at 7:19 AM), East New York (7:29 AM), and Nostrand Avenue (7:34 AM). It will arrive at Atlantic Terminal at 7:39 AM. The 7:29 AM train from Freeport will add stops at Jamaica (arriving at 7:49 AM), East New York (7:58 AM), and Nostrand Avenue (8:03 AM). It will arrive at Atlantic Terminal at 8:08 AM. The 8:10 AM train from Freeport will add stops at Jamaica (arriving at 8:29 AM), East New York (8:37 AM), and Nostrand Avenue (8:42 AM). It will arrive at Atlantic Terminal at 8:48 AM. On the Port Washington Branch, the schedules of three trains are being adjusted to improve performance and reduce congestion in the crowded corridor between Woodside and Penn Station. The 8:08 AM train from Port Washington will depart one minute earlier from Manhasset (at 8:15 AM) and two minutes earlier at Great Neck (at 8:17 AM) and will arrive at Penn Station two minutes earlier, at 8:42 AM. The 8:24 AM train from Great Neck will depart between one and four minutes earlier from Great Neck through Bayside, arriving one minute later at Woodside, and three minutes later into Penn Station, at 9:02 AM. New departure times are: Great Neck at 8:20 AM, Little Neck at 8:24 AM, Douglaston at 8:28 AM, Bayside at 8:32 AM, and Woodside at 8:49 AM. The 8:18 AM train from Port Washington will depart one to two minutes later at Little Neck (it will now depart at 8:33 AM) and Douglaston (8:37 AM) and will arrive at Penn Station three minutes later, at 9:05 AM. On the Babylon Branch, weekday midday schedule changes from 9:30 AM to 3 PM will permit the closure of one of the two tracks on the line to allow crews to accelerate the pace of a 10-mile-long track project between Wantagh and Babylon replacing 7,080 wood ties. The schedules of some Montauk, Speonk, and Patchogue trains have been adjusted to insure that connecting service is maintained during

the project. Service at Amityville, Copiague, Lindenhurst, and Babylon will be reduced to one train per hour from the current two trains per hour. The semi-express trains that depart Penn Station at 9:22 AM, 10:22 AM, 11:22 AM, 12:22 PM, and 1:22 PM will make all usual stops to Wantagh, where they will terminate. (A Freeport stop has been added to these trains). Customers bound for Amityville, Copiague, or Lindenhurst should board the local trains departing Penn Station at 5 minutes past every hour from 9:05 AM until 2:05 PM. During the evening rush hour, selected trains will arrive at their final destinations between one and four minutes later. Train departure times from Penn Station, Atlantic Terminal, or Hunterspoint Avenue are not being adjusted. There are no changes to weekend train schedules. (*Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: As a timetable collector, I picked up several copies of the new July 24 schedules from the timetable rack at the Woodside LIRR station and quickly noticed that NONE of the aforementioned changes are reflected in the new City Terminal Zone, Babylon, or Port Washington Branch printed timetables. The schedules are identical to the July 10 schedule. While the MTA-LIRR website has schedules that do reflect these changes and may be printed by people with access to the Internet, there appears to have been a misprinting of the printed timetables on the timetable racks at stations, making them potential collector's items. As many station information kiosks convey schedule information using public schedule folders, the information conveyed to the public beginning July 24 may be inaccurate.*) (LIRR press release, July 21)

NJ TRANSIT

While reduced NJ Transit operations into and out of Penn Station New York (PSNY) and *Midtown Direct* Morristown Line service diverted to Hoboken have gone mostly well during the Penn Station reconstruction project, the railroad has been experiencing a shortage of train crews to operate its trains, resulting in a few train cancellations each day starting July 17. NJ Transit cited union work rules that permit a train crew person to take up to 48 hours off from work due to operational changes to their jobs. (*Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: MTA Metro-North Railroad has similar work rules. For 10 years, I was one of 3 Managers in charge of the railroad's Crew Dispatching Center. If a train and engine service employee's job is altered by the carrier, either a change in assigned trains worked (even a change to a single train number in the run), an increase or decrease to the length of scheduled break periods, on and/or off duty times, that employee is permitted a 48-hour period of "displacement rights," a seniority-based right to get off the job (that has become undesirable to its incumbent) and "bump" onto any other job their seniority can hold. Consequently, employees who are "bumped" have their own 48-hour period to exercise their displacement rights onto another job. Literally, the railroad can "lose" an employee*

(Continued on page 11)

Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 10)*

for two days, up to four if that person “plays the system right” and bumps onto a job that is about to begin its scheduled rest days. The results of such a cascading series of displaced employees generates artificial and often unexpected crew shortages affecting the railroads ability to operate scheduled service.) (**New York Post**, July 18)

NJ Transit announced plans to replace its 1977-8-vintage Arrow III single-level electric multiple unit (EMU) trains with 113 new multilevel EMUs similar in appearance to its existing fleet of multilevel push-pull coaches. 230 Arrow IIIs (200 pairs and 30 singles) were built by General Electric in 1977-8 and were given a mid-life overhaul by ABB in 1992-5. The rebuild with a.c. traction motors enabled higher horsepower motors to be installed on these cars, enabling the truck under the pantograph on each car so equipped to become non-powered. However, issues with the traction motors eventually led to the cars being limited from their original 100 mph capability down to 90 mph and eventually to 80 mph. The last upgrade for these cars was the 2014 replacement of the original twin-armed Stemmann pantographs with single-armed TransTech pantographs for the 160 cars remaining in service. The new multilevels will feature 2x2 seating, eliminating the dreaded middle seat of the Arrow IIIs. (nj.com, July 7)

AMTRAK

Amtrak’s President and Chief Executive Officer Wick Moorman has issued numerous statements and progress reports that the ongoing emergency trackwork at Penn Station New York is proceeding on schedule and is expected to be completed by the planned September 1 deadline. (**Newsday**, July 21)

Amtrak announced Richard Anderson as its next President and Chief Executive Officer. In an unusual twist, Mr. Anderson comes to Amtrak from not a railroad or transit background, but directly from the airline industry. He most recently served as the Executive Chairman of Delta Airlines and was its Chief Executive Officer from 2007-16 and Chief Executive Officer of Northwest Airlines before it was absorbed by Delta. He has a number of great working relationships with Washington, D.C.’s Congressional establishment, a helpful asset in today’s political and fiscal environment. Anderson got his start in the transportation business in the legal division of Continental Airlines and began his professional career upon graduating from the South Texas College of Law as a county prosecutor in Texas. Interestingly, his father worked for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway and was based in Galveston, Texas. He and Wick Moorman will be co-Chief Executive Officers of Amtrak until December 31 as Anderson transitions into his new position. (**The Washington Post**, June 26)

On that note, Amtrak is now exploring the possibility of increasing the seating capacity of its coaches by taking a page right out of the airline industry, decreasing the legroom or spacing between each row of seats. Touting the fact that Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor (NEC) trains

will never be as cramped as airliner seats on the air shuttles plying the skies between Washington, D.C., New York City, and Boston and never have that dreaded middle seat on most airliners, Wick Moorman stated the need to increase seating and capacity of its Northeast Corridor *Regional* trains and increase its passenger revenue income stream at the lowest possible cost to the railroad. (Reuters News Service, July 12)

Amtrak is operating three round trips out of Albany, New York to Grand Central Terminal. This move reduces the train traffic into and out of Penn Station New York during the reconstruction project that has removed from service up to three of 21 tracks and portions of the interlocking west of the station. The trains are #230, 236, and 242 from Albany to Grand Central Terminal and trains #233, 235, and 239 from Grand Central Terminal to Albany on weekdays. Of interest is how these trains are operated into Grand Central Terminal with Amtrak’s dual-mode P-32-AC-DM locomotives. From a reliable internal source, Amtrak’s shop at Rensselaer has modified three of its P-32-AC-DMs with a new shoe bracket to position the third rail shoe at the correct height and then mounted its usual contact shoes upside down to be able to operate with Metro-North Railroad’s under-running third rail into Grand Central Terminal. (The normal configuration is designed to operate on the over-running LIRR third rail into Penn Station) It also modified three P-42-DCs to operate on the diversion service trains. While they will not operate in diesel mode in the Park Avenue Tunnel, they have been modified to allow them to serve as cab cars. The low-speed back-up switch was replaced by a mode-change switch to enable these locomotives to control the P-32-AC-DM on the opposite end of the train. There apparently were not enough *Capitoliner* (ex-*Metroliner*) cab cars available to press into this temporary service. To eliminate the need for food and beverage servicing (Metro-North no longer has a commissary department in Grand Central Terminal) the three round-trips selected for diversion to Grand Central Terminal do not have any food services aboard. While the trains are arranged so the P-32-AC-DM is on the south end of the consist and the P-42-DC is on the north end, the trains are allowed to operate around the Grand Central Terminal loop track if the need arises. (Ronald Yee, July 23)

An Amtrak *Cascades* utilizing TALGO equipment derailed near the town of Steilacoom, Washington at Chambers Bay southwest of Tacoma around 2:30 PM on Sunday July 2. Train #506 from Eugene-Springfield, Oregon to Vancouver, Canada apparently passed a stop signal on its approach to a bridge on Chambers Bay and was directed off the tracks by a derail protecting it from just such a “runaway train”. Press photos indicate that the train was prevented from reaching the open moveable bridge. The lead locomotive, F-59-PHI 467, derailed and rolled over onto its side and the TALGO transition baggage car and two of the articulated TALGO coaches derailed and were slightly tilted over,

(Continued on page 12)

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

but still within alignment of the mainline track. Fortunately, only a few minor injuries were reported among the 267 passengers. (Foxnews.com, July 2)

Starting this fall, Amtrak will shift its route for the *Cascades* and *Coast Starlight* services between Tacoma and southward to Dupont, Washington from its current route following the eastern shoreline of Puget Sound (the same line where the July 2 *Cascades* derailment occurred) to a new routing called the Point Defiance Bypass route. This will reduce running times by ten minutes and allow two additional round-trips on the *Cascades* service between Seattle and Portland. The route will also have a new station stop in Tacoma at Freighthouse Square. Test trains utilizing Sound Transit commuter rail equipment began operating on July 22 at speeds up to 50 mph over the new route to test out the signals and other systems. (*Trains Magazine* newsletter, July 11)

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority will close down its Lowell rail line for weekend service between August 5 and October 1 for positive train control work, the agency recently announced. MBTA officials say the closure is needed for the installation of all PTC-related infrastructure. During the two-month work shutdown, workers will install trackside technology, communication systems, and on-board technology. Weekday service will not be affected. In early July, the agency began its first PTC project on its Newburyport-Rockport route. The agency must meet the federally mandated PTC deadline of December 31, 2018. While weekday service will stay in place, buses will be operating on weekends along the Lowell Line through early October. The route operates north from Boston to Lowell, Massachusetts, a distance of about 25 miles. It has nine stations and is part of the original Boston & Lowell Railroad that dates back to the 1830s. (*Trains Magazine*, July 18)

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Maryland Transit Administration officials recently announced they plan to partially close the RailLink light rail system for 18 days from July 25 to August 11 for critical maintenance work. The light rail system will be closed between the North Avenue and Camden Yards stations in both directions. Light rail service to Baltimore Penn Station will additionally be halted in order for maintenance crews to be able to replace rail and facilitate other infrastructure improvements. During the service disruption, shuttle buses will provide alternate travel. Baltimore's light rail system spans approximately 30 miles and has over 30 stations. The tracks run through downtown streets and rights-of-way from former Northern Central Railway and Baltimore & Annapolis Railroad lines. (*Trains Magazine*, July 20)

WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority is

looking into ways to increase revenue from advertising. One idea involves selling the naming rights to four Metro rail stations, according to WAMU-FM. The four station names up for grabs include Gallery Place, Navy Yard-Ballpark, Metro Center, and L'Enfant Plaza, according to documents obtained by the radio station. Advertising is anticipated to bring in \$24 million out of the agency's \$1.8 billion budget in 2017. WMATA last proposed selling naming rights in 2012, which was met with criticism from the public. In Colorado, Denver's Regional Transit Authority sold naming rights of the new A Line to the University of Colorado, which is listed as the University of Colorado A Line on the agency's website and other promotional materials. (*Trains Magazine*, July 10)

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority has awarded Kapsch a, \$11.6 million contract to develop, implement, and maintain an account-based mobile ticketing system for use on the city's Metro and buses.

An app and website will allow passengers to purchase tickets and manage accounts, and the project will also roll out validators for smartphone tickets.

Mobile ticketing will be made available across all 38 Metro stations, 565 fixed route buses, and 210 paratransit buses. In the future it could be rolled out to other transport agencies in the region, such as Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, Atlanta Streetcar, Gwinnett County Transit, and CobbLinc. (*Metro Report International*, June 30)

PORTLAND, OREGON

Renovations to the Gresham City Hall station were completed in July. The work had commenced in January and included upgraded station lighting, station shelters, tactile warning strips along the platform edges, and transit information monitors. 14 stations along the 33-mile-long Blue Line between Hillsboro and Gresham via downtown Portland are slated for these upgrades. (*Trains Magazine*, July 12)

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

MUNI has begun testing of its new Siemens LRVs in the MUNI Metro tunnels. Over four weekends from July 22 to August 20, the MUNI subway is closed all day and night to enable testing of the new cars over the tracks to insure compatibility with the underground tunnels' physical clearances, as well as their power systems and cab signaling, speed control, and automatic stop systems. Weeknight testing will close the subway after 9:30 PM. In both cases, bus shuttle service operates along Market Street between Embarcadero and St. Francis Circle, stopping at designated bus shuttle stops marked with a yellow half-moon flag. It should be noted that MUNI Metro service operates out of AT&T Park toward downtown and outbound through the subway for 90 minutes after every Giants baseball game and BART service is not affected. (SFMTA Website, July 18)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LAMTA) marked the beginning of the retirement of its original fleet of 67 P-865 Blue Line light rail

(Continued on page 13)

Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 12)*

vehicles (LRVs) built in 1990 by Nippon-Sharyo for the Los Angeles-Long Beach Line. The first two cars were withdrawn from service in July and the rest of the fleet will be retired at a rate of four per month, replaced by new P-3010 class LRVs being delivered from manufacturer Kinkisharyo. A few of the P-865 cars will be retained by LAMTA for ceremonial displays, with a few others donated to educational institutions for training purposes and the remainder of the fleet stripped for usable parts and then scrapped. (***Progressive Railroad-ing***, June 22)

According to Metro's official ridership estimates, the Expo Line reached an impressive ridership milestone during the month of June. With a daily average of more than 64,000 boardings, Expo is attracting as many riders in 2017 as it was projected to have in 2030. The rail line, which connects Downtown Los Angeles to the Santa Monica Pier, has proven to be a major success with Los Angeles' transit riders, despite complaints about the line's speed and reliability.

Expo has outpaced projections in the past, despite concerns from some quarters about the fitness of rail technology to serve the former Pacific Electric right-of-way. Expo's first phase, which terminated in Culver City, achieved projected 2020 ridership numbers in 2013, seven years early. The Reason Foundation in 2012 had previously said that the projection of 64,000 riders for the full build Expo Line "should be viewed with some skepticism." The light rail line has experienced surging popularity since its six-mile second phase opened, and now has eclipsed that mark in just over a year. (urbanize.la, July 10)

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

A group of transit advocates is pushing for a light rail proposal that would serve Halifax and nearby areas, according to Global News. The Halifax Light Rail Alliance says that this is a good time to invest in light rail transportation while Halifax is facing the challenges of a growing city. The group is recommending that a new light rail line should run from Sackville and loop around the Halifax peninsula to Clayton Park using a mix of pre-existing rails and new infrastructure. Future expansions afterwards could potentially serve the communities of Dartmouth and Spryfield. At this point, a proposal has been shared with two local politicians. Those who support the proposal, including Dalhousie University transportation professor Ahsan Habib, say light rail could help to boost transit-oriented development in the area. The Alliance has started a website explaining the scope of the project. The first phase would include over twenty stations and potential future expansions using existing railway tracks. (***Trains Magazine***, July 21)

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

CRRC Tangshan has been awarded a contract to supply 24 double-deck hauled coaches to operate on commuter services serving Montreal.

The coaches are to be deployed on the Deux Monta-

gnes Line, ahead of the opening of the Réseau Électrique Métropolitain light metro. The coaches are also expected to replace some of the vehicles operating on the Candiac Line starting in 2020.

The contract was awarded by the Agence Métropolitaine de Transport, which as of June 1 has become part of newly created transport agency Réseau de Transport Métropolitain. Responsible for operating bus and commuter rail services in Greater Montreal, RTM also includes the former transport authorities for the North and South Shores. (***Railway Gazette***, June 20)

Montreal commuter trains ran their normal schedules on the July 4 after the city's transit agency said it had resolved a staffing shortage.

The Réseau de Transport Métropolitain (RTM) announced on the afternoon of July 3 that was no longer planning to cancel departures on its Deux Montagnes and Mascouche rail lines on July 4 and 5. RTM cited a joint effort with CN and Bombardier Transport to find the two Conductors necessary to fulfil all its schedule commitments.

But the last-minute solution only came after passengers on the Deux Montagnes and Mascouche Lines saw scheduled departures canceled Monday morning.

Montreal's reorganized transit agency, comprising the commuter rail agency formerly known as AMT — realized it was facing a staffing shortage only days after a contract with Bombardier took effect. As part of the contract, Bombardier agreed to provide Conductors for RTM's commuter trains.

The agency initially warned commuters over the weekend that it would be forced to cancel several departures between Monday and Wednesday, which it did through several media, including social media.

But Monday morning, a number of suburban commuters arrived to find their usual trains cancelled. Several complained, saying it was inconvenient because of the amount of time between trains and because there are not many other public transit options to get into the city. (CBC News, July 3)

LONDON, ENGLAND

Construction contracts worth about \$9 billion have been granted by the British government-owned company constructing a new 220-mph high-speed rail line from London to Birmingham. Construction is anticipated to start this year and the line may enter service around December, 2026. The British plan is similar to both French and German high-speed lines that also use already in place rail lines to access cities that are not directly on the new route. The British line will operate at faster speeds than both the German ICE and the French TGV trains. The new route will extend in a "Y" formation north from Birmingham to both Manchester and Leeds in northern England. It has also been confirmed that it will have direct links to both cities and connections to the existing London to Glasgow, Scotland on the West Coast Main Line, and the London-York-Edinburgh East Coast Lines. Trains on the new network will be able to travel up to 225 miles per hour and up to

(Continued on page 14)

Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 13)*

125 miles per hour on existing routes that connect to it. The first phase of the new high-speed line will be run by Virgin Rail. The long-term contract is currently being considered with all potential operators required to partner with a proven international high-speed rail operator; high speed operators from France, Italy, Germany, and Japan have all announced partnership deals with the various companies bidding. The process of buying a fleet of brand new 220-mph trains is also now beginning. (***Trains Magazine***, July 17)

All-night service on part of the London Overground network will begin in December, Mayor Sadiq Khan announced on July 3.

Service on the East London Line between New Cross Gate and Dalston Junction is to run through the night on Fridays and Saturdays, with all-night service extended to Highbury & Islington starting next year. Stations are to be staffed at all times while trains are running.

Night service will not initially call at Whitechapel, owing to work associated with the Crossrail project. Trains are expected to start calling at Whitechapel in mid-2018, once the Crossrail works have been completed.

Unlike most of the London Overground network, which runs on routes owned by national infrastructure manager Network Rail, the route between New Cross Gate and Highbury & Islington is managed by Transport for London.

Night Tube service is due to be rolled out to parts of the Metropolitan, Circle, District, and Hammersmith & City Lines after the “Four Lines Modernization” program has been completed in 2023. (***Metro Report International***, July 3)

LUXEMBOURG

Test running on the first section of the capital's light rail line was officially launched on July 12, with a ceremony at the new Tramsschapp depot attended by Minister of Infrastructure & Sustainable Development François Bausch, Mayor of Luxembourg Lydie Polfer, and leader of the City Council Sam Tanson.

The start of test running follows the delivery of the first of the 21 CAF-built Urbos trams on February 8. Dynamic trials will initially take place on a section of the reserved track alignment along Avenue John F. Kennedy in Kirchberg between Luxexpo and Coque. The 750 V DC overhead line on this section was energized on July 10. According to project promoter Luxtram, the test program will step up in a series of stages over the next few months in order to verify that both the rolling stock and fixed installations are functioning correctly.

Luxtram expects to be ready to start a period of shadow running in November, operating full service under normal conditions but without passengers. Revenue service on the 8-kilometer (5-mile) Kirchberg section between Luxexpo and Pafendall-Rout Breck stop near Pont Rouge is scheduled to begin on December 10.

Construction is currently in progress on the Limpertsberg section from Pont Rouge to Stareplaz/

Etoile, which will add a further three stops. Completion of the full 16-kilometer (10-mile) route from Luxembourg Airport to Cloche d'Or is now expected around 2021. (***Metro Report International***, July 13)

BREMEN, GERMANY

Bremer Strassenbahn signed a contract with Siemens on June 29 for the supply of 67 Avenio trams, with an option for up to 17 more.

Deliveries are due to begin in early 2019. Designated GT8N-2, the Avenios are to replace Bremen's GT8N trams.

The four-section steel-bodied trams will be 37 meters (121 feet) long and 2,650 millimeters (8.7 feet) wide, with capacity for 259 passengers. They will have multi-functional spaces and an electric ramp at one door. Other features include LED lighting, air-conditioning, and regenerative braking that will feed energy back into the grid or power the HVAC. Maximum speed will be 70 kilometers per hour. (***Metro Report International***, June 29)

Braunschweiger Verkehrs-GmbH has ordered seven Tramino II trams from a joint venture of Stadler Pankow and Solaris. Deliveries are due to begin in 2019, with half of the €18.9 million cost to be met through the Niedersachsen Land transport agency LNVG.

The unidirectional Tramino Braunschweig II is an updated version of Solaris' Tramino vehicle. The 100% low-floor four-section trams will be 35.7 meters (123 feet) long with capacity for 204 passengers, including 79 seated. Unlike the earlier Tramino model, they will have two wheelchair spaces instead of one.

Braunschweig already has 18 Tramino vehicles in service, which were supplied by Solaris under a €33.1 million contract signed in 2012. (***Metro Report International***, June 30)

BEIJING, CHINA

China Railway Corporation's (CRC) new fleet of CRH2E high-speed sleeper trains began passenger service on the Beijing-Shanghai Line on July 1. The 412.8-meter-long 16-car trains, which can hold up to 880 passengers, are initially only being used on one pair of trips that will operate via the main network with a travel time of just under 12 hours. The 250-kilometer-per-hour trains are being built by CRRC Qingdao Sifang Locomotive and Rolling Stock. (***International Railway Journal***, July 10)

CRRC Qingdao Sifang unveiled a new version of its suburban electric multiple-unit family at the UrTran 2017 exhibition in Beijing in late June.

Designed for journeys of 50-100 kilometers (30-60 miles), which are longer than those typically made by metro, the EMU has more powerful traction equipment than a metro train, enabling it to reach speeds of up to 140 kilometers per hour. Like metro trains, it features rapid acceleration and braking. The dual-system unit is capable of drawing power at 25,000 volts/50 Hz and 1,500 volts d.c..

The design is based on CRRC's Type A metro platform, with wide doorways for boarding and alighting.

(Continued on page 15)

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

Added interior features are intended to enhance comfort on longer journeys.

CRRC says that the train forms part of a vision to create a “1 h metropolitan area,” where faster trains could serve outer suburbs and satellite cities that could be reached in an hour from the center of a large city. Several cities are developing such networks, including Beijing, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and Wenzhou. (*Metro Report International*, June 29)

SHENZHEN, CHINA

A tram network in the Longhua district of Shenzhen opened for revenue service on June 29.

The route runs from the northern terminus of metro Line 4 at Qing Hu to Guanlan, which is on the metro line’s northern extension to Niuhu, due to open in 2020. The 9.2-kilometer (5.7-mile) route has 15 stops. A 2.7-kilometer branch with five stops runs east from Huanguan South Road to Xia Wei.

Construction began in December, 2013, although the build-operate-transfer public-private partnership concession was signed between Shenzhen Metro Group and China Railway Construction Investment Group in July, 2015. Construction cost 1.38 billion yuan.

Services are operated with a fleet of 15 four-section trams. The first was delivered to the Hengken depot in March, and dynamic testing started in May. The trams are 36 meters long and 2,650 millimeters (8.7 feet) wide with capacity for 300 passengers. Maximum speed is 70 kilometers per hour. The vehicles are equipped with

supercapacitors supplied by Siemens, which are charged at stops from overhead wires to enable catenary-free running between stops.

Ridership is forecast at 32 million passengers a year. Further tram routes totaling 51 kilometers are planned to be built in Longhua. (*Metro Report International*, July 3)

JAPAN

East Japan Railway has announced its intention to build a further high-speed test train, as part of a program to develop its next generation of Shinkansen trains.

JR East announced on July 4 that it expects to put the 10-car unit into operation in the Spring of 2019. Dubbed ALFA-X (Advanced Labs for Frontline Activity in rail eXperimentation), the roughly 220-mile-per-hour (360-kilometer-per-hour) trainset will build on earlier research undertaken with the Fastech 360S and 360Z test trains. These led to the development of the roughly 200-mile-per-hour (320-kilometer-per-hour) Series E5 and E6 trainsets which currently operate on the Tohoku Shinkansen.

According to JR East President Tetsuro Tomita, the new generation of trainsets will be needed by the end of the 2030 financial year to coincide with completion of the 211.7-kilometer Hokkaido Shinkansen extension to Sapporo. Running at 360 kilometers per hour would be necessary to achieve a journey time of around three hours over the 668-mile (1,075-kilometer) route between Tokyo and Sapporo. Part of the focus of the new trains is to minimize the noise impact along with other enhancements. (*Railway Gazette*, July 7)

Electric Traction in the Deep South*(Continued from page 9)*

assemble and repair the seats found in the streetcars.

After the shop tour, NORTA provided two chartered cars for the group. Due to NORTA policy restrictions, St. Charles cars could only be used in passenger service on the St. Charles Line and were prohibited from carrying passengers (regular or charter) on the other lines. The same applied for the Riverfront, Canal Street, and Loyola-Rampart Line cars, which were not allowed to carry passengers on the St. Charles Line. Hence the need for two cars and Operators for the charter. St. Charles Line car 971 was the chartered car out of the Carrollton Shop and the group transferred to Canal Street car 2007 at Carondelet and Canal Streets downtown. After a tour of the Riverfront Line and midway through our charter, Canal Street car 2007 gave ERA (and NORTA) a bit of a headache when it derailed at Canal Street and Elk Place, the second axle of the lead truck picking the switch of the turnout leading to the Loyola portion of the Loyola-Rampart Line. Fortunately, it was a low-speed (5 mph) derailment and there were no injuries or damage to the streetcar, track, or roadbed, save for a 10-foot-long scrape on the concrete pavement by the flanges of the two wheels of the trail-

ing axle of the lead truck, which had derailed (as it turns out, it is not the first derailment that has happened at that site). The rear truck remained on the rails, albeit misrouted leftward to Loyola. NORTA crews re-railed 2007 within an hour and car 2019 was rolled out of the A. Philip Randolph Operations Facility (and car house) on Canal Street to complete ERA’s chartered streetcar tour of the Cemeteries and City Park portions of the Canal Street Line. According to Ron Yee, car 2007 was back in passenger service two days later.

ERA First Vice-President John Pappas and I took a very unusual way home: Amtrak’s *City of New Orleans* to the *Capitol Limited* to the *Pennsylvanian*. John and I enjoyed several hours in the Windy City and had an opportunity to ride from the Randolph/Wabash “L” station, which is scheduled to be replaced by the Washington/Wabash station later this year. We rode the Brown Line to Kimball and the Skokie Swift, and I was happily given the opportunity to photograph the three abandoned stations on the Congress Branch of the Blue Line. On our second leg, we took the *Capitol Limited* to Pittsburgh and transferred to the *Pennsylvanian*, and was happy to join John on his first trip over Horseshoe Curve.

Despite the challenges leading up to it, the 2017 ERA

(Continued on page 18)

SWITZERLAND IN THE LATE SUMMER

by Jack May
 (Photographs by the author)
 (Continued from July, 2017 issue)

With new equipment on order but not yet delivered, I saw a few of the Swiss Standard cars that are scheduled for retirement, but no Duewags, which may have been already taken out of service. There were plenty of modern 100-percent low-floor Siemens Combinos operating, along with Schindler units that had low-floor cen-

ter sections added. Some 4-axle cars ran in motor-trailer and motor-trailer-trailer lashups. All of Basel's rolling stock is single ended, maximizing the number of seats.

The first four photos show BVB's progression in rolling stock technology.



First we see one of the few Swiss Standard cars still in operation. Four-axle motors like this could be found hauling matching trailers in all the major cities of Switzerland, including Zurich, Bern, and Geneva, since the late 1940s — almost forever. Basel is the last city in the country to operate the iconic units, but not for long, as new Bombardier Flexity 2 low-floor cars are being delivered as I write this. 463 was one of the last such units to come off the assembly line at Schindler in nearby Pratteln, back in 1967, 50 years ago. The location is the same one as previously shown last month, along the Schifflande loop between Spiegelgasse and Marktplatz, used as the terminal of Route 16. This standard has just finished its layover as its follower approaches the same position, which it will occupy for the next 10 minutes.



In 1972 the company ordered a fleet of 6-axle Duewag articulateds (not shown), finally getting their feet wet with proven (and modern for their time) German high-capacity units. But when it came to their next order, it was "back to the future" with 4-axle units — clearly a conservative move and possibly reflecting some unhappiness with the performance of the articulateds. The new Schindler-built motor-trailer sets, with far more modern-looking stylized bodies than the standards, arrived in 1986 and 1987. Here 489 pulls two trailers into the Muttenz Dorf station on a Route 14 trip from Pratteln (the loop, not the factory). Thus the earlier Swiss Standards from 1967 (in the first view) certainly outlasted the Duewag articulated cars from 1972 — perhaps a parallel with the situation in Toronto, where its CLRVs (some manufactured in Switzerland) will outlive TTC's newer articulated units.

(Continued on page 17)

SUBDIVISION "B" CAR ASSIGNMENTS

CARS REQUIRED JUNE 25, 2017

LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH	LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH
A	10 R-32, 296 R-46	20 R-32, 296 R-46, 8 R-68A	L	168 R-143, 24 R-160	168 R-143, 24 R-160
B	40 R-68, 160 R-68A	32 R-68, 152 R-68A	M*	168 R-160	160 R-160
C	48 R-32, 96 R-160	40 R-32, 96 R-160	N/W	24 R-68, 300 R-160	24 R-68, 300 R-160
D	232 R-68	216 R-68	Q	210 R-160	210 R-160
E	260 R-160	260 R-160	R	240 R-46	240 R-46
F	56 R-46, 370 R-160	56 R-46, 370 R-160	S (Rockaway)	12 R-46	12 R-46
G	52 R-68	52 R-68	S (Franklin)	4 R-68	4 R-68
J/Z	96 R-32, 16 R-42, 48 R-160	96 R-32, 16 R-42, 48 R-160			

*Service operates between Forest Hills/71st Avenue and Broadway Junction during Phase I of the Myrtle Viaduct reconstruction project

Switzerland in the Late Summer

(Continued from page 16)



BVB took the articulated plunge again in 1990, having Schindler produce 6-axle units with a similar front end treatment to the previous 4-axle cars. The articulateds were lengthened in 1998 with the addition of a low-floor center section, as per this photo of the Schifflande layover track between Spiegelgasse and Marktplatz.



Finally, in 2001, BVB departed from its older designs and ordered off-the-shelf modern Siemens Combino cars. One of these 100-percent low-floor units is shown on the Mittlere Brücke, an auto-free bridge that crosses the Rhein carrying four tram lines. These cars are now being supplemented with Bombardier Flexity 2 units (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flexity_2).



A 4-axle Schindler motor and two matching trailers on the perfectly groomed Route 14 speedway between Pratteln and Muttenz Dorf.

In the late afternoon I rode the long Route 14 to the suburb of Pratteln, and then walked to the SBB station. I took an M.U. out one stop to Liestal, the endpoint of the Waldenburgerbahn. The WB is an interesting 8-mile long interurban that was built to a gauge of 750 millimeters. It started out as a steam railway, but was electrified at 1,500 volts d.c. in 1953. With 9 intermediate stops, it is mostly single track with passing sidings, and operates every half hour, which is improved to 15 minutes during weekday rush hours. Its roster consists of 7 motors and 10 trailers built to a common design with other properties (Tram 2000) from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s.

On a previous trip I had seen and photographed the original (1953) electric rolling stock.

Clouds started to form as I got there, but I managed to ride out to the way stations of Bubendorf and Lampenburg before I lost the sun. I then headed back to Liestal and a quick (12-minute) SBB ride back to the Basel Bahnhof. Clare was already in the apartment when I reached it via a No. 1 tram at about 18:30. Because I was tired we decided to go back to the same Italian restaurant, but I stayed away from the Marsala and suffered no consequences from dinner. Clare and I both had fruitful days.

(Continued on page 18)

Switzerland in the Late Summer

(Continued from page 17)



The southernmost platform of the SBB Liestal station serves the Waldenburgerbahn's 750-mm-gauge interurban cars.



Two views of Tram 2000s on the Waldenburgerbahn near the Bad Bubendorf station, first at the grade crossing on the outbound side of the handsome clock tower-equipped facility and then of an inbound train just about to leave the stop.

(Continued next issue)

Electric Traction in the Deep South

(Continued from page 15)

Convention was overwhelmingly received. Even before our departure from New Orleans, and especially after getting home, I was receiving comments from members

about how enjoyable the trip truly was, so the planning that the Board made was well worth the effort. The amount of work required to enable the New Orleans portion of the trip to even happen was a near-monumental effort along with high monetary cost to the club for the chartered cars. *(Continued on page 19)*



Electric Traction in the Deep South

(Continued from page 18)



MARTA CQ310 190 southbound at Dunwoody.
Ronald Yee photograph



Atlanta Streetcar at Olympic Centennial Park.
Ronald Yee photograph



New York, Ontario & Western Railway General Electric 44-ton switcher 104 at the Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth, Georgia. It is interesting that a locomotive that for many years operated in upstate New York is now a fixture at this museum.
Alexander Ivanoff photograph



NORTA St. Charles streetcar 906 at Walnut Street near Loyola University.
Ronald Yee photograph



NORTA Riverfront car 462 at Toulouse Street near JAX Brewery.
Ronald Yee photograph



NORTA Canal Street car 2012 nearing Salcedo Street outbound.
Ronald Yee photograph

Around New York's Transit System

Ⓐ Train Derails

A southbound Ⓐ train made up of eight R-46 cars (consist unknown) derailed around 9:45 AM Tuesday, June 27 just north of the 125th Street station, injuring 34 passengers and totally disrupting the morning commute. While the derailed cars left the tracks and slid against a retaining wall in the tunnel, fortunately, the derailment occurred close enough to the 125th Street station that the front car slid to a stop in the station, enabling NYCT and emergency responders to evacuate the train by walking the uninjured passengers through the darkened cars and directly onto the station platform. Service was suspended on Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ until the evening rush, when limited local service was restored in both directions using Ⓐ and Ⓓ trains. Ⓑ and Ⓒ service was suspended for the rest of the day. Subsequent investigation revealed that a 15-foot section of spare running rail that was improperly secured for storage within the gauge of the track became dislodged from its resting place and shifted from the vibrations caused by passing trains. Eventually, the rail shifted far enough to come into contact with the wheels of a passing train, derailing it. While it is common practice to leave spare rails within the gauge of active tracks, sections shorter than 20 feet are required to be secured (spiked) in place to guard against the possibility of such an accident. A 48-hour inspection and securing blitz was conducted system-wide to secure all loose rail, several instances observed and reported by the various news teams assigned to cover the story. (*New York Daily News, Metro Magazine*, June 27 and 29)

New South Ferry Station Reopens

After an almost five-year rebuilding, the two track, stub-end ① terminal at South Ferry reopened on Tuesday, June 27. The original IRT loop track station with a five-car platform located in the middle of a sharp curve was simultaneously withdrawn from passenger service. However, it will remain in active status to accommodate non-revenue and work train moves. The \$545 million station, which opened in 2009 was returned to service at a cost of \$369 million after being completely flooded to the depth of 80 feet by 15 million gallons of seawater as a result of historic storm surge flooding from Superstorm Sandy in October, 2012. With exception of the concrete structural shell and tunnels leading to it, the concrete platform, and the roadbed, virtually everything in the station had to be replaced. (*Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: While newly appointed MTA Chairman Joseph J. Lhota was scheduled to preside over an official ceremony marking the reopening of this station, the festivities were abruptly cancelled when an Ⓐ train derailed uptown just before the ceremony was to begin, sending him northward to address that emergency — see item above.*) (*New York Post*, June 27)

R-68 Cars with Monitoring Equipment

R-68 consist 2864-5-7-6 has been equipped with car

monitoring devices related to public address, intercom, electronic signs and displays, and CCTV. Equipment was mounted in the #2 cab of each car of this consist so as to not interfere in any manner with crew operations of this trainset. The equipment was supplied by ST Electronics (Shanghai). Due to the specialized nature of this equipment, Yardmasters and other operating department personnel have been instructed not to couple these cars to any other cars in the system. This consist will also be limited to passenger service on Ⓔ. The #2 cab of car 2866 contains most of the LCD display controls for this experimental informational system, which are not to be operated in any way by NYCT personnel. (NYCT bulletin, July 7)

Trash Fire at 145th Street Prompts Call for Eating Ban

A trash fire on the tracks near the 145th Street station reported at 7:24 AM Monday, July 17 snarled the morning commute for riders on Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ. Ⓐ and Ⓓ service was partially suspended and Ⓑ and Ⓒ service was totally suspended as riders scrambled for alternative means of transport. Video footage posted on social media and relayed by the TV news showed dangerously overcrowded conditions on the platforms and overpasses at 168th Street on ① as diverted Ⓐ passengers sought alternate service to travel south. Service was restored around two hours after the first alarms went out but with extensive delays. Subsequent to this latest fire-related disruption of service, new MTA Chairman Joseph J. Lhota called for a ban on eating and drinking in the subways citing the flammability of accumulated trash that accumulates on the tracks and roadbed at a rate with which cleaning crews cannot keep up. He also cited the Washington Metro as an example of the effectiveness of a food and drink ban. NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio immediately countered that proposal, supporting the ability of straphangers to eat and drink while traveling in the subway, launching a now, on-going "food fight" among City Hall, MTA, and Albany. (WPIX-11 TV News, July 17)

ⓐ Train Derailment

On Friday July 21, shortly before 9 AM, a ⓐ train of ten R-160s derailed the rear truck of the second car as it departed southbound out of the Sheepshead Bay station bound for Brighton Beach on its way to Coney Island-Stillwell Avenue. Aerial news footage showed the "B" end of car 9166 derailed and slightly misaligned on its tracks near where the line passes over the Belt Parkway. One passenger was taken to the hospital for examination of possible back injuries. No other injuries were reported. Shortly after the passengers were evacuated via a rescue train that pulled up to the derailed train and enabled everyone to be "walked off," northbound ⓐ service was resumed, albeit with significant delays.

(Continued on page 8)