The Bulletin

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The Bulletin

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

The City of New York has been subsidizing the railroad since it was allowed to abandon the North Shore and South Beach Branches in 1953.

On January 1, 1970, the lease by the city of the St. George-Tottenville Line was terminated and the city reimbursed the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad for the deficit. In a May 29, 1970 agreement, the city contracted to buy the St. George-Tottenville Line for one dollar to take over the line from C&O. It also paid C&O $3.5 million for real estate, rolling stock, repair facilities, and air rights. On July 1, 1971, MTA took over operations. A new MTA subsidiary, the Staten Island Rapid Transit Operating Authority (SIRTOA) was formed to operate the railroad under lease from the city. The (CSX) Staten Island Railroad Corporation discontinued rail service over SIRTOA trackage in the latter part of 1984 or early 1985. But the (Delaware Otsego) Staten Island Railway never operated on Staten Island tracks. Although it was allowed to operate there, it was not interested.

Because SIRTOA was just as anxious to discontinue freight operations, it filed for abandonment. On June 2, 1986, the Interstate Commerce Commission authorized the abandonment of SIRTOA's right-of-way for purposes of the transportation of interstate freight, thereby removing SIRTOA from federal jurisdiction.

When SIRTOA started operating, it did not carry any freight. Instead freight service was continued by the Chesapeake & Ohio and the CSX Corporation via trackage rights for several years. On November 1, 1971, a new CSX subsidiary, Staten Island Railroad Corporation, was authorized to carry freight on Staten Island. In April, 1985, Delaware Otsego Corporation of Cooperstown, New York agreed to assume operation of Staten Island Railroad Corporation, whose name was changed to Staten Island Railway Corporation. The new corporation owned the rail improvements, tracks, and bridges. The Staten Island Railroad Corporation still owned the underlying real estate right-of-way.

Because SIRTOA no longer carried freight, the Staten Island Railway track between John Street and St. George was taken out of service on October 25, 1989. About the same time, Monsanto, the largest customer, ceased manufacturing on Staten Island on October 30, 1989, after which Staten Island freight service was reduced to three times a week. The last train to Monsanto ran on April 13, 1991. Meanwhile Proctor and Gamble also closed its Staten Island plant and freight traffic declined until it was on a one day a week basis in January, 1992. Because Staten Island Railroad and Railway lost $1.7 million in the past three years, Delaware Otsego planned to shut down both railroads by late February, 1992 and it filed for abandonment. On January 21, 1992, the Interstate Commerce Commission authorized abandonment effective in 30 days, ending a century of rail freight service on Staten Island starting July, 1887, when work began on the original bridge to New Jersey despite opposition from the Pennsylvania and Lehigh Valley Railroads, which had coal traffic to New York City. At that time this 495-foot single-track rim-bearing swing bridge was the largest bridge of its type to be built. Track was extended from the bridge to Cranford, New Jersey with a track connection to the Central Railroad of New Jersey. This bridge was the

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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 October, 2017 issue)

The electrification of the entire freight side of the New York Connecting Railroad from Port Morris to Bay Ridge was already underway by the time these tasks had been performed, with excavation for the catenary supports an uppermost priority to beat the winter's anticipated freeze. Several different types of steel uprights and cross-beams were again applied, some as lattice and almost identical to those found in the Bronx, others an assemblage of lattice with solid I-beams for cross-members. Whichever the case, the upper portion of this second electrification phase was installed under the guidance and supervision of New Haven personnel, just as was done with the stringing of wire to Sunnyside. The previously incomplete catenary over Track 5 was thus finished to Fresh Pond (actually FN Interlocking) and onward toward Brooklyn, being joined by electric wiring over the entirety of Track 6 to the same distance, all in a method identical to that previously employed on the New Haven's Harlem River Branch. From Fresh Pond southward, the electrification system was truly a joint endeavor, with construction contractors, New Haven supervisors, and Pennsylvania Railroad representatives all collaborating across corporate lines to create one final product that ultimately stretched a total of 11 track miles from Bay Ridge on the Brooklyn waterfront to Fresh Pond in the middle of Queens. This fusion of methodology was particularly noticeable as the line proceeded farther southward into the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, at which point the catenary supports had largely attained a distinctly ("no-nonsense") Pennsylvania look, fabricated as a union of three simple steel beams in the form of an overhead bridge. For its part, the Pennsy had accomplished a handful of its own a.c. electrifications by 1926, employing such technology in a manner similar to, but improved upon, that of the New Haven to power three local lines around Philadelphia (Paoli, Chestnut Hill, and White Marsh) between 1915 and 1924, with much, much more to come.

25 Hz, 11,000/22,000-volt a.c. power for the extended electrification was generated at the Sherman Creek station (in parallel with Cos Cob) and relayed through the existing autotransformer substations at West Farms and Bungay Street in the Bronx, as well as through that at Bowery Bay in Queens. A new substation was added by "FN" Interlocking (Fremont) in Fresh Pond, with the overhead continuing over all four tracks from there into the East New York Tunnel. Affixed inside that installation, roughly midway between Bushwick Avenue and Broadway, was a frequency changer marking the boundary between the New Haven and the Long Island Rail Road, each of which fed the line separately. This installation took a wholly different 25 Hz, 3-phase, 11,000/22,000-volt supply of electricity from the Pennsylvania Tunnel & Terminal powerhouse in Long Island City (as relayed along the LIRR Atlantic Division) and converted it to single-phase for the catenary continuing south from the New Haven's circuit toward Bay Ridge. Though they functioned independently, these two systems were also designed to blend smoothly with each other so as not to hamper operations in any way. There was also an autotransformer at "East New York" near the tunnel and adjacent to the frequency changer, along with three more across the line's remaining distance at "NO" (E. 92nd Street, near New Lots Interlocking), "MJ" (Kenmore Place, near Manhattan Beach Junction Interlocking), and "BR" (between 4th and 5th Avenues in Bay Ridge).

The initial segment of the extended electrification on the New York Connecting Railroad was at last placed in service as far as "NO" interlocking on March 15, 1927, being used by some New Haven road freights powered by multiples of EF-1 units (073-0111, built by Baldwin-Westinghouse in 1912-3 with a rating of 1,336 horsepower) which were based at, and kept westward of, Cedar Hill Yard near New Haven. Electrification was also applied on both the east and west legs of the ramping wye at "FN," which connected the Bay Ridge Division and LIRR Montauk Division main line as well as above the siding tracks next to its westerly portion, where cars to and from the New Haven were interchanged, and that was as far as an a.c.-powered unit was ever to travel. In such instances during the interim before completion of the catenary system, crews from the Long Island Rail Road (perhaps using heavyweight Pennsylvania Railroad locomotion at least some of the time) re-powered the pre-assembled road trains to and from New Haven, Boston, or even Northern New England and ferried them between "NO" and the Bay Ridge terminal, though more often than not the New Haven simply continued to run through with its existing steam engines on the otherwise electrified trackage. The need to run frequent LIRR transfers was abolished when electrification was finally extended to the Bay Ridge terminal sometime in June, but due to an ongoing lack of electric motive power and/or qualified personnel, the New Haven continued to use steam locomotives for power on an intermittent basis until September of 1930. This was despite the recent arrival of five brand-new "EF-2" electrics (0112-6, built by General Electric-Alco), which were up and running by the middle of 1927. Effective that July 8, the New York Connecting Railroad (and LIRR Bay Ridge Divi-

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From Recognition to Dominance

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sion) a.c. electrification was completed in full for freight operation, including yard tracks at Bay Ridge itself, and (as far as is known) the auxiliary facilities at New Lots, Blake Avenue, and Pitkin Avenue. To equip its local operations in this new environment, the Long Island Rail Road based BB-3 series electric switching locomotives at the New Lots and Bay Ridge yards. These 14 diminutive units (324-337) were a "home brew" product of the Pennsylvania Railroad, being supplied in 1926 by its Altoona Shops in a "cabin on wheels" configuration. Its box cab was supported by a lone, heavyweight "0-C" truck which contained traction motors yielding 1,710 horsepower, but in operation each set of BB-3s was paired to create a combined 3,420 horsepower. This was a beefy capability indeed for machines whose stated purpose was "pulling, dropping, and loading."

THE NEW YORK CONNECTING RAILROAD REACHES ITS ZENITH

As traffic increased through the 1920s to levels close to those originally foreseen for the New York Connecting Railroad, in response to a restored state of overall American prosperity, action was taken to improve the fluidity of operations across its vital and strategic middle portion. Perhaps most imperative in this regard was the activation of automatic block signals on all four tracks from "FN" (Fremont) to "NO" (New Lots) effective September 30, 1927. This system subscribed to the directional flow that was already in place — southbound/westbound on Tracks 3 and 1; eastbound/northbound on Tracks 2 and 4 — and employed Pennsylvania Railroad-type electric position lights, which were also used at interlocking points along the New York Connecting Railroad from Bay Ridge as far as Bungay Street in the South Bronx. In addition, a series of manned towers were added to oversee the progression of interlockings on the line's busiest increment, starting with (and most prominently) that at "FN" (Fremont) itself on September 10, which was joined by others at "NU" (New Utrecht), out at the Bay Ridge end, on September 30 and "NO" (New Lots) on October 19. Altogether these interlockings maximized the line's operational flexibility for the expeditious movement of freight to serve both New Haven and Long Island Rail Road interests simultaneously; switching moves were able to hold tracks they needed for headroom and road freights were (at least theoretically) able to keep moving around them in both directions, at the same time if necessary. Concurrent with the opening of each new manned tower, the manual block stations they replaced were eliminated one by one, with that at "KN" (Pitkin Avenue) also following suit as its function was assumed remotely from "NO." And so the freight side of the New York Connecting Railroad remained as the heady 1920s gradually turned into the lackluster 1930s. The very last event of any consequence to occur on the Bay Ridge Division in this period (and probably not to much notice at the time) went back to the elevation of the former Section 2 (Avenue G to New Lots Road) that had long since been taken care of by the Brooklyn Grade Crossing Commission. Though it was begun in 1912 the city's "thoroughfare initiative" had had a long and fruitful existence in all five boroughs by the late 1920s, just as it was about to give way to a "parkway initiative" of similar nature which produced many of the highways and boulevards which still survive in 2017. In the early 1930s this effort manifested itself through the physical extension of New York State Route 27 (which was actually the inward component of Sunrise Highway) from Ozone Park, Queens, to Downtown Brooklyn, for which the survey of Hegeman Avenue was used, in part, to create Linden Boulevard. The original road had not been included as part of the myriad of railway overpasses that were completed in that area between 1907 and 1910, but in about 1932 an entirely new 100 foot-wide overpass was added to the LIRR elevation (but utilizing concrete wing walls atypical of the Pennsylvania Railroad) for this enhanced, newly-created 8-lane through street between Powell and Williams Avenues. From that point, and to this day (2017), Linden Boulevard and New York Route 27 continue an eastward lunge to South Conduit Avenue, a link that was originally completed in December, 1934. From there it merges into the Belt Parkway and heads toward suburban areas of southeast Queens and Nassau County on highways completed in the early 1960s.

WHILE NYW&B MATURES, NEW HAVEN LOCAL PASSENGER SERVICE SLIPS AWAY

The next incremental extension of New York, Westchester & Boston service was opened as far as the Mamaroneck New Haven station on March 26, 1926, with another intervening stop called Larchmont Gardens (located across from the former Lake Sheldrake (which was filled in for creation of the New England Thruway), the only surviving landmark of its existence is Blossom Terrace). This required that the original Mamaroneck depot be relocated several yards north to make space for the new "rapid transit" alignment. A construction contract for furtherance of the line to "Hamilton" (evidently another name for Port Chester) was then granted to Dwight F. Robinson Company that June, while things were going so well in general that overnight service between the Mott Haven terminal and White Plains was started at 20-minute intervals on July 1. Actual work on the extension toward Port Chester began immediately, but became intermittent over the following winter and it was spring before the next section was finally taking shape. This was placed in service to the New Haven depot at Harrison, New York on July 3, 1927 with yet another intervening station at West Street in Mamaroneck, a location that has changed little to 2017 but for the now-missing NYW&B tracks and high wooden platform (along with its access stairways). As construction crews pushed eastward, more difficulty was again evident that was related to "third party" replacement of the depot and relocation of the New Haven main line at the Rye station to create space for the new line to pass through.

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Staten Island's 157-Year-Old Railroad

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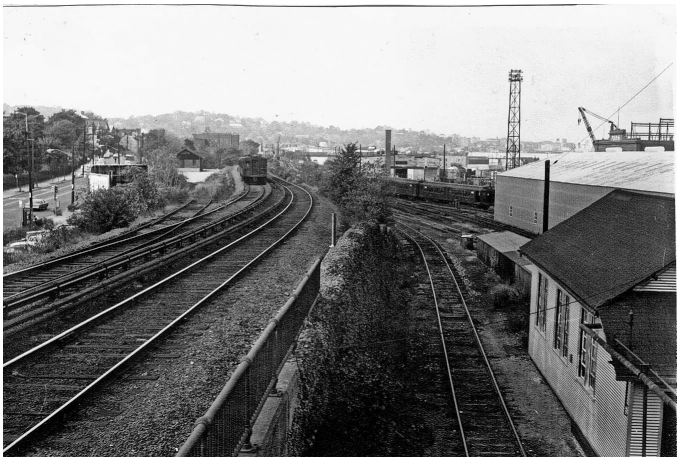
Tompkinsville station, looking north, October, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph

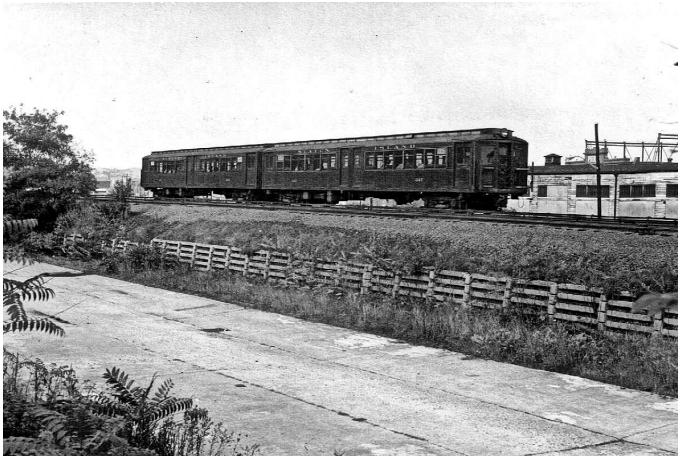
Tompkinsville station, looking south, October, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph

Looking south from Tompkinsville station, October, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph

Stapleton station, October, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph



North of Clifton, October, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph



Looking north from Clifton, October, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph

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Staten Island's 157-Year-Old Railroad

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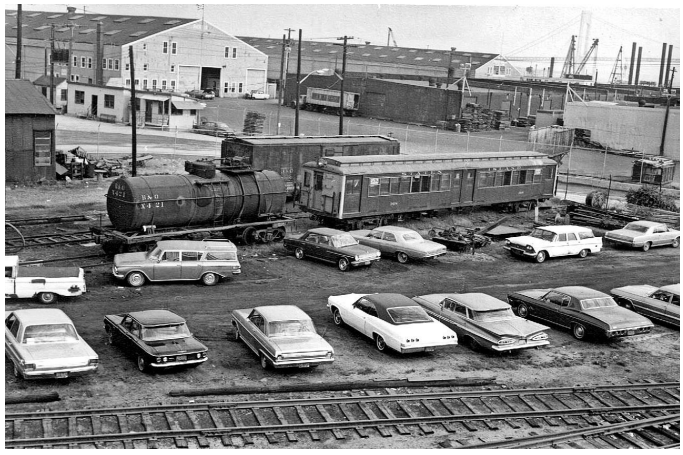
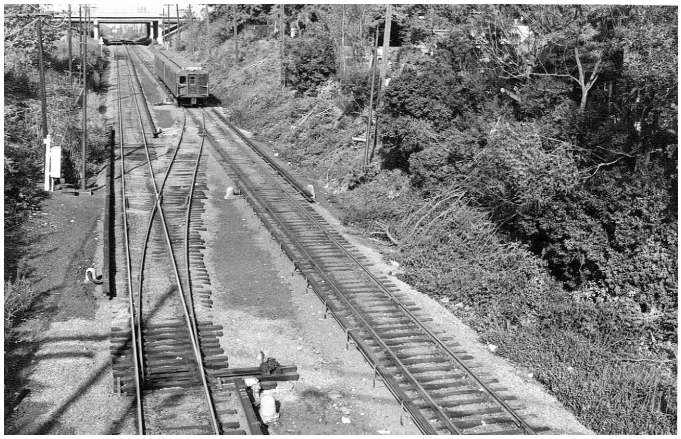
Clifton station, looking south, October, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph



Clifton Yard.
Larry Linder photograph

Clifton station, looking north, October, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph

Grasmere station, looking south, October 18, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph



Looking north from Grasmere, October 18, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph

Looking north toward Grasmere, October 18, 1968.
Larry Linder photograph

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CORRECTION

The article on ERA's trip to Phillipsburg, New Jersey on page 13 of the October, 2017 issue indicated that the Phillipsburg station is owned by Phillipsburg Railroad Historians. While that outfit owns the building where car 2651 is housed, the station is actually owned by Friends of the New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center, Incorporated.

Thanks to David Phrater for the correction.

From Recognition to Dominance

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For a time after NYW&B. operations were extended to that point around August of 1928, the two railroads had a temporary grade crossing west of the station site and the rapid transit line terminated at a platform on the south side of the New Haven about where Station Plaza is in 2017. After another year of on-and-off construction, this situation and all others were rectified by final completion of the line to its permanent terminus at Port Chester, as usual adjacent to the New Haven station, on December 8, 1929. And so the New York, Westchester & Boston would remain for several subsequent years.

As of December 1, 1926 the New Haven was still maintaining five local round-trips on the Harlem River Branch between Hunts Point Avenue in the South Bronx and New Rochelle, plus two on Sundays, employing its four custom-built a.c.-only M.U. cars (when available), a.c.-d.c. multiple-unit cars, and/or coach trains powered by electric locomotives, most likely of the EP-1 and EP-2 variety. As demonstrated above its through patrons were essentially expected to use the Interborough Rapid Transit Company's Pelham local subway line to conclude their trips into Manhattan, where re-transfers were available to a wide range of final destinations. This left the New York, Westchester & Boston to itself on the Branch's local tracks (1 and 2) from Hunts Point Avenue to the Mott Haven Terminal (including three of its stations), with a 1923 profile estimating that 65% of NYW&B's ridership base rode through to the extreme southern end of the line. Copious quantities of freight traffic were also present on the Harlem River Branch at that time, independent of that carried along the New York Connecting Railroad as the cars to and from railroads other than the Pennsylvania was interchanged with the New Haven system via the Harlem River and Oak Point yards, with many of these runs also using electrified locomotives (EF-1 or perhaps EF-2 types, presumably) south of Cedar Hill. Naturally (just as LIRR did on the Bay Ridge Division) the New Haven employed steam locomotives on its local and switching operations in the Bronx and Westchester, which as typical of just about any railroad were oriented into a "zone" system based on the nearest available yard facility to any given customer. To streamline operations even more the New Haven had largely phased out its use of the Van Nest and Westchester freight yards as inbound and outbound classification facilities by the mid-1920s, with virtually all but local traffic being pre-sorted ("blocked") for travel straight between the Harlem River or Oak Point yards and Cedar Hill itself, which was significantly expanded around 1926.

The separation of tracks that was inherent to the Harlem River Branch's 6-track main line thus created an operational symphony blending the passenger locals, passenger through trains (when the intermediate-sized quantity of through New Haven-Pennsylvania passenger trains using the Hell Gate Bridge was factored in), and day-to-day freight operations. As time progressed into the late 1920s though, it was clear that the Bronx-New Rochelle local service was outstripping its usefulness. This may have been an after-effect of its rather skeletal schedule as still compared with main line service to Grand Central, or even NYW&B with its consistent, combined headways of 10 minutes. Either way, there was no doubt that it's utilization was also being compromised by the early presence of "motorways," in particular the crude, broken "Pelham-Port Chester Parkway" (a distant predecessor to the New England Thruway) that dodged along the New Haven here and there after 1928, funneling personal drivers onto the Hutchinson River Parkway and through the Bronx for an extended one-seat journey to any Manhattan destination. This irretrievable, irreversible momentum toward the creation of a comprehensive highway system was just as evident within city limits; the original Bronx and Pelham Parkway overpass of the Harlem River Branch was doubled in width to a total of 12 traffic lanes in about 1927, while between 1930 and 1932 Eastern (Bruckner) Boulevard was created by widening the existing alignment of Whitlock Avenue from Whittier to Bungay Streets. This forced removal of the street overpass at Ludlow Avenue and the modification of other overpasses at Longfellow Avenue and Bryant Avenue. By December 1, 1929 New Haven local service had been trimmed even further to just three round-trips between Monday and Saturday (and no trains on Sunday at all), with usage then continuing to decline even further.

Much like its contemporary on the Long Island Rail Road end of the New York Connecting Railroad, the Manhattan Beach Branch, the New Haven finally, belatedly took action to stem its losses and local commuter trains ceased to exist on the Harlem River Branch between New Rochelle and Hunts Point Avenue in the Bronx at the end of service, Friday, July 25, 1930. Its four a.c.-only M.U. cars were eventually rebuilt with transformer units in 1940 and 1941 and then forgotten to the general pool of equipment run to and from Grand Central for several more decades, while its unused stations (Woodside, Pelham Manor, City Island, Baychester, Westchester, Morris Park, Van Nest, and West Farms) were left to the elements and gradually degenerated with the passage of time. Those at Woodside, Pelham Manor, and Baychester were ultimately demolished to make way for that which was intended to replace many railroad tickets: the New England Thruway, most familiarly known in 2017 as Interstate 95. Even more ironic, the skeletal ruins of some other stations were being used as trash "dumps" or ersatz playgrounds by area youths into the 1970s as they peeked out from layers of wild vegetation and graffiti. The Bronx in general had become a negative symbol for urban America by that time, being occasionally excoriated in popular culture during the next decade as something resembling "Fort Apache." Subsequent development patterns began to reverse this tide in the late 1990s and

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From Recognition to Dominance

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that positive trend continued in 2017, with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority now advanced in a proposal to restore a form of local passenger service within the next several years as part of its broader "East Side Access" strategy. This would make the Harlem River Branch (now known as Amtrak's "Hell Gate Line") a combination by-pass and alternate route between New Rochelle and Penn Station, a role it never performed previously in its first century-and-a-half of existence.

NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR UPDATE

Subdivision "A" News

Related to the NYC Subway Action Plan that was publicly announced by MTA Chairman Lhota on July 25, a large fleet redistribution was carried out on 2 4 5 6 by September 24, one which may not yet be fully complete as of October 10. 55 of the 65 R-142As that had remained on 6 since the last of the 380 "converted" cars were shipped to Kawasaki for reconfiguration as "R-188Cs" in March of 2016 (cars 7591-5, 7606-55) were shifted to 4, thereby releasing R-142s 7086-7115 for transfer from 4 to 5 and finally, in turn, R-142s 6686-95 from 5 to 2. This should ease the way for service on 2 4 5 to be added where required, though available equipment for 6 is likely on the tight side. In this vein, it was noted that some of the newly-relocated R-142As were roaming back to 6 on occasion during the last week of September, and still appeared to be returning to their former Westchester home for inspections and maintenance. Actually, some of these moves began as far back as August 28, by which time R-62As 2456-60 had been imported from 1 to 6. Perhaps as small compensation, R-62A link 2146-50 was returned from Corona (7) to Westchester (6) by September 29, yielding an even total of 400 R-62As on the Lexington Avenue Local as of October 10.

Also by September 29, grouped, single-unit R-62As 1921-5 had been broken up, with 1921 and 1925 (which have had full-width cabs at one end since their assignment to Westchester) as well as "regular" single units 1922 and 1939 being moved to new quarters at Livonia Yard, where they ostensibly joined the reigning fleet of 20 cars used on S/Grand Central Shuttle. Originally in that transfer was also single unit 1959, but that particular unit had found its way back to Queens within the week, though it was still not being used in revenue service on 7. None of the newly-arrived cars had as yet actually been used on the Shuttle during the following week, lending credence to a sentiment that they might be best suited to at least a temporary stationing in work service. This seems particularly true given the partially-unitized and often consumer advertising-oriented nature of the 10 cars that have now been used on S for the past several years.

Speaking of which…with autumn leaf season in the offing, R-33 "Gel" car 8885 was recently observed to be primed and ready for Dyre Avenue Line action at E. 180th Street, with retired R-36 set 9584-5 in position to provide it with propulsion. Also OK'd for continued utility duty from the Bronx were R-33S cars 9309, 9322, 9323, and 9325.

Subdivision "B" News

A second 8-car set of R-179s (unclear if it is considered to be "pilot" or "production") was delivered to NYCT during the height of spring, 2017 with 3058-61 arriving at 207th Street on April 5-6 and 3062-5 following on April 19-20. All 26 of the R-179s have been spotted at many Subdivision "B" locations on almost a daily basis ever since, with the 8-car sets most notably running in a simulated C service through most of the summer. The 10-car set was (elusively) electrically tested on the Brighton Line express tracks, usually accompanied by a run-of-the-mill Coney Island-assigned R-160 train for comparative purposes. Their now-renowned less-than-desirable performance still stymied any evident progress toward their entry into revenue service evaluation through October 10, and in fact MTA's overall disenchantment with Bombardier may have spurred the agency to disqualify it and erstwhile partner China Rail Car Corporation as a potential bidder on the "huge" R-211 contract, which could be awarded by late 2017.

The latter has come into much better focus since our last Update, with the base acquisition plus possible options now totaling up to 1,695 cars (including 75 "R-211S" models tailored for Staten Island Railway that will be delivered last). One prototype 10-car "R-211T" train set will be included in the primary agreement designating it as an "open gangway" type, with as many as 64 additional such trains possible if and when all options are exercised. The remainder of the order (450 "R-211A" plus an option for another 520) will be configured as standard 5-car units, to be nominally made up for use as 10-car consists, and all R-211s will most likely be concentrated on lines presently operated out of Pitkin, 207th Street and Jamaica Yards (i.e. A C E F R), where they will replace the surviving (post-R-179) Phase I R-32s, as well as any R-46 cars used on those lines. Less apparent is just whom MTA will attract as a builder, given the very recent consolidation of car building leviathans Siemens and Alstom (whose plant remains active in Hornell), with some rumbling that their two-way union may later become a tripartite that would assume the assets of Bombardier as well. The very size of the R-211 order seems to indicate that a collaboration of multiple car builders (such as those between Kawasaki and Bombardier for the R-142/142A, and Kawasaki along with Alstom for the R-160) may be in order, but so far there has been no

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New York City Subway Car Update

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known indication that the once-proposed union of Alstom and Kawasaki (coined "Alskaw"), which failed in its bid to land the R-179 contract, could be in the offing. *As a matter of opinion, it seems clear that Kawasaki is the only qualified candidate that remains as a desired bidder from MTA's standpoint, but the question is, would it be independently up to the R-211's formidable contract challenges of innovation, timeliness, and reliability?*

Riders haven't had to wait very long to reap some of the future design benefits of the R-211 in any case, as the first three 5-car sets of R-160s modified on behalf of the Chairman's "Action Plan" (9158-62 from Coney Island and 9558-62 and 9733-7 from Jamaica) premiered on Ⓔ on October 1. These most prominently feature blue-and-gold "State of New York" color branding inside and out and a floor plan modified to accommodate additional standees and wheelchairs at the ends of each car through the removal of some seats. The three were said to represent the first 15 of some 100 cars to come, with R-160s 8325-8 (East New York), 9133-7 (Coney Island), and 9563-7 and 9688-92 (Jamaica) also committed to the same effort, which is being performed at Coney Island, in early October. In addition to their modified interior ends, the reconfigured cars will also receive at least one fold-up, auto lock-type longitudinal seat that will produce even more standee space during rush hours. R-160As 9468-72 and 9478-82 were traded from Jamaica to Coney Island to make up for the loss of two of its 5-car sets as part of this initiative. During the summer there was also revealed an otherwise unseen R-211 mock-up so configured in an unused mezzanine space at the 34th Street-Hudson Yards terminal of Ⓖ in midtown Manhattan.

Further advancing MTA's resurgent orientation toward improved customer service, the long-awaited use of platform "countdown clocks" was initiated on Ⓒ (and partially on Ⓐ) July 28, then also on Ⓔ and Ⓖ on August 31. These utilize Bluetooth and wayside receptor technology that was installed on assigned R-32, R-46, and R-160 equipment over the past year (and was noted as testing on the pilot Phase I R-32 train in the last Update). They join the ⓃⓆⓇ Manhattan stations in being so equipped, with installation of this information system at 269 Subdivision "B" stops being the agency's immediate goal. As for enhancement of the "onboard experience" in some quarters, NYCT is also revenue testing no less than five different prototype automated announcement systems on several sets of R-68s that are based at Coney Island. Solely used as 4-car links on Ⓖ, they have been identified as 2844-7 (Mitsubishi Electric); 2860-3 (previously noted, this contains a unit provided by China Rail Car Corporation); 2864-7 (STE Industrial Solutions); 2892-5 (SEPSA North America); and 2908-11 (Hasler Corporation, formerly a unit of Pitney-Bowes).

The overhaul of Phase I R-32s (including pairs previously out of service over the past few years, but not the 10 designated work cars) has continued at Coney Island Shops, along with now-constant renewal of the R-44SI fleet. Meanwhile, it looks like the last of the 50 Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s was finally completed by late spring. 24 of these cars (4788-9, 4800-5, 4814-7, 4820-1, 4828-9, and 4834-9) were "permanently" stationed at Fresh Pond Yard on June 28 in anticipation of their use in 6-car trains on the Ⓜ Myrtle Avenue Shuttle between Metropolitan and Myrtle-Wyckoff Avenues. They all then spent the summer waiting in the sun until this service commenced on September 3, and will be so sequestered until the "Myrtle Viaduct" reconstruction is completed by early 2018. Not included in this effort were previously-retired R-32 work motors 3786-7 and ex-NYCT Staten Island "B" car 399, both of which were set aside for eventual disposition. The latter's departure reduces the Staten Island Railway's maximum quantity of cars to 62.

On June 27, R-46 consist S-6038-9-41-40/6150-1-3-2-N was involved in a serious, highly-publicized derailment near the 125th Street station while on Ⓐ during the morning rush hour. The third and fourth cars (6041-0) were the most heavily damaged and all eight remained at the 207th Street facility as of September 30, with their future as yet unknown. Nevertheless, the other 4-car unit involved (6150-3) was being used as a model for an R-46 version of the altered seating and New York State "branding" that was being undertaken for Ⓔ by early October.

On August 22, CBTC-equipped R-160As 8313-7 and 8377-80, which had been used as prototypes for the internal advancement of that signal technology, were observed to be back in revenue operation — the former on ⒿⓏⓁⓂ, the latter only on ⒿⓏⓂ (pending compatibility with the CBTC employed on Ⓛ).

On August 12, video was widely disseminated of R-143 "crash train" 8277-80 being test operated around 207th Street Shop. This was the 4-car set that received significant damage in a derailment at Rockaway Park Yard in 2006 and has long been in repair, part of which was the export of 8277 to the Kawasaki plant in Yonkers for structural remediation. On October 11, the unit was moved to East New York, but it had not entered service as of press time. When it does, the R-143 order will be restored to its full complement of 212 cars.

Finally, member Bill Zucker noted a noticeable uptick in the presence of Phase I R-32s on Ⓐ during September and October, covering both the Far Rockaway and Lefferts Boulevard branches.

ERA WEEKEND TRIP TO WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
by Ronald Yee

Over the weekend of October 14-16, the Electric Railroaders' Association (ERA) conducted its annual autumn weekend trip out of New York City. This year, the club went to western Pennsylvania, visiting the Rockhill Trolley Museum and the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum at Arden as well as a two-night stay in Pittsburgh, during which the attendees visited the South Hills Village Maintenance Facility for Pittsburgh's Port of Allegheny Transit (PAT) light rail system and were given time to ride the PAT light rail system and some of the other attractions in Pittsburgh such as the Monongahela and Duquesne inclines as well as the PAT Busway lines.

Prior to arriving in Pittsburgh for our two-night stay there, our Coach Tours chartered bus stopped for a two hour visit to the Rockhill Trolley Museum, where the group was given a ride on its former San Diego MTS Duewag U-2 light rail vehicle 1019. ERA Treasurer Mike Glikin was given the honor of operating the car as he operated such cars for San Diego MTS over 30 years ago. The group also had opportunities to ride the other trolleys out on the line that day, including former NJ Transit PCC 6, which operated on the Newark City Subway until 2001, and cars 311 and 163. Inside the car house were Chicago Aurora & Elgin Railway interurban 315 and open-sided trolley 1875.

PAT LRV 4213 at South Hills Junction station.
Ronald Yee photograph.

The next day, ERA chartered a 1957 Model TDH-4801 motorbus to take the group to the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum at Arden, where we were given free run of the car house, touring portions normally closed off to the public. The museum has an extensive collection of trolleys, streetcars, interurbans, and even a subway car, 606, a 1960-vintage Budd-built car that operated on SEPTA's Market-Frankford Line until 1999. In the collection are two cars built by the J.G. Brill Company, Norristown High-Speed Line Bullet car 209, built in 1931, and a 1932 Type 80 car that operated over the tracks of the Philadelphia & Western Traction Company, now known as the Media and Sharon Hill Lines. Other cars included Philadelphia Suburban Car 14, built by St. Louis Car in 1949, Philadelphia Transportation Company PCC 2711, Pittsburgh Railway Company cars 4398 and 3487, Johnstown Traction Company car 350 (built 1926 by St. Louis Car) and, from farther-away locations, New Orleans Streetcar 832 (built by Perley Thomas in 1932) and Rio de Janiero Tramways car 1758, built in 1911. Afterward, the ERA group was driven back to Pittsburgh on the vintage bus and dropped off at the Library terminus of the Blue Line of the PAT light rail system, giving the group a chance to ride the system back to downtown. Many in the group bought PAT day passes and toured the system during the afternoon, the rainy weather holding off until 6:30 that evening. As it was a Sunday, the Red Line operated on a 15-minute headway from Northside to Castle Shannon (actually Overbrook Junction, where one could transfer to the Blue Line) and the Blue Line operated on a 15-minute headway between Northside and Washington Junction, the line's southern portion splitting at that location to the South Hills Village and the Library Branches, giving each branch a 30-minute headway. Some of the group rode the Duquesne Incline funicular near dusk on Sunday and enjoyed dinner at a restaurant overlooking the Three Rivers section of Pittsburgh. PAT light rail operates two types of light rail vehicles (LRVs), 1983-4-vintage Siemens built LRVs numbered in the 4200-series and 4300s built by CAF. At a glance, the major difference between the two car types is that the headlights of the CAF cars are at the lower corners of the face of the car body below the Operator's window and the Siemens cars have their headlights mounted close together and centered below the Operator's windscreen. The destination sign on the 4200s is in a separate window above the windshield while the 4300s' destination sign takes up the top portion of the one-piece front window. A visit to the control center adjacent to the maintenance shop was included as part of the shop tour, as was a ride around the yard and through the car wash. The "model board" on the wall in the control center showing the entire LRT system uses projection screen technology. Our hosts stated that PAT is looking to replace it with a LED-LCD display system. Lastly, on the way back to New York City, a stop was made at the Shady Maple Smorgasbord in eastern Pennsylvania for a sumptuous dinner.

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by Ronald Yee, James Giovan, and Alexander Ivanoff

MTA Long Island Rail Road

As part of the Long Island Rail Road's efforts to improve infrastructure to ensure safety and increase on-time performance, LIRR crews this fall are replacing wood ties with concrete ties on the Babylon Branch between Freeport and Merrick.

During the weekends of September 30-October 1, October 7-8, October 14-15, November 4-5, and November 11-12, one of two main tracks will be out of service between Rockville Centre and Wantagh. Between 12:37 AM on Saturdays and 2:19 AM on Mondays, trains on the Babylon Branch will continue to operate in both directions, but will run on an hourly basis, reduced from every half hour, with stopping patterns revised on remaining trains.

Other changes on these weekends include some eastbound trains on the Huntington Branch that will stop at Forest Hills and Kew Gardens. Some Patchogue, Speonk, and Montauk Branch trains will be running on adjusted schedules and have alternate connections at Jamaica or Babylon. Some eastbound Oyster Bay connections from Penn Station, Kew Gardens, and Forest Hills will also change; trains will depart three minutes earlier at Penn Station and five minutes earlier at Kew Gardens and Forest Hills. (MTA press release, September 22)

MTA Metro-North Railroad

Member Randy Glucksman observed a 7-car consist of M-8 equipment normally assigned to New Haven Line service operating on the Hudson Line as an Irvington-Greystone zone semi-express on Thursday, October 19. The consist was: S-9209-9208-9564-9677-9676-9349-9348-N. (9564 is one of the 25 non-powered single M-8 coaches designed to be inserted between pairs to create odd-numbered consist lengths where ridership calls for one additional car to be added to an overcrowded train, not two). *(Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: While not a programmed equipment assignment, this M-8 set was likely a late equipment substitution out of Grand Central Terminal, likely due to a last-minute equipment failure during a tight equipment turn with no spare M-3A or M-7A consists to substitute.* (Randy Glucksman, October 19)

Metro-North announced new schedules on September 26 that were effective in October. The schedules take into account of the 125th Street Station Stair Replacement Project that started on September 11 and will last through January and the use of bridge plates on the inbound (southbound) tracks at the Scarborough and Philipse Manor station platforms until further notice due to Superstorm Sandy-related signal work (MTA via Randy Glucksman, September 26)

NJ Transit

NJ Transit trains are back to running on the Gladstone Branch after two trains struck a retaining wall near Summit the night of September 19 and again on the morning of September 20, NJ.com reports. NJ Transit officials confirm rail service was restored the afternoon of Thursday, September 21 after crews made emergency repairs to a concrete retaining wall near the Summit station on the Morris & Essex Lines. The emergency repair work was in response to a Gladstone-bound train scraping a concrete retaining wall near Summit. A similar incident took place during the September 20 commute. Railroad officials confirmed debris and concrete had shifted in an area with only one-foot clearance. No injuries were reported to passengers; however, one passenger car sustained damage to its rubber window seals and debris scraped a second car. It is unclear what caused the retaining wall to shift, but railroad officials spent much of the afternoon of September 20 repairing the retaining wall. (Al Holtz via ***Trains Magazine*** via NJ.com, September 22)

Amtrak

Baseball fans at the New York Mets' home, CitiField, were among the to feel the difference Amtrak's Amfleet Refurbishment Program is expected to make after the passenger railroad placed business-class seats in the ballpark. The seats and re-designed seat cushions debuted before the Mets hosted the Washington Nationals September 22 and were made available to rail media over the weekend. Baseball fans were able to visit the seats for four more ball games against the Atlanta Braves through September 27, when Amtrak reclaimed them. Mets fans chosen by the team had the opportunity to try them out.

The business class seats along with the coach seats will be available on trains including ones used on the *Empire, Northeast Regional, Hiawatha*, and Illinois and Michigan services in 2018. The routes all rely on 1970s-era Amfleet I cars. The seats will be the most noticeable improvements to the cars that include new carpeting, LED reading lights, updated bathroom flooring, and redesigned cafe car galleys. The upgrade process is expected to take up to nine months. *(Editor's Note by Alexander Ivanoff: ERA Second Vice President and my co-Editor, Ronald Yee, had some less than flattering words to describe the partnership, but sees the logic in having Mets fans, noting that the arrangement is a perfect way to allow overweight sports fans who are somewhat sloppy with their food and drinks to see how the materials used in the overhauled seats stand up. The article did neglect to mention that an Amfleet-equipped* Pacific Surfliner *trainset is in use in California.)* (***Trains Magazine*** via Al Holtz, September 25)

On October 2, Amtrak unveiled its "Ready to Build" campaign, which includes a series of short films showcasing five critical investments that are vital to the realization of a renewed, modern passenger rail system.

The campaign emphasizes needed investments at the carrier's major stations, including in Chicago Union Sta-

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tion, as well as in infrastructure along the busy Northeast Corridor (NEC), where the majority of Amtrak-owned assets are located. The NEC carries 260 million intercity and commuter customers each year and growing. However, demand for passenger rail service continues to outpace investment, resulting in a backlog of more than $38 billion of deferred capital investments.

Amtrak and its state and federal partners have started the planning and regulatory reviews required for these complex, multi-year projects. Once funding is identified and obtained, Amtrak and its partners are ready to finalize design and begin construction for several critical investments, including the Gateway Project (Amtrak broke the tunnel and Portal Bridge into different segments), the Susquehanna River Bridge Project and Baltimore & Potomac tunnel projects in Maryland, and station projects across the Northeast and Chicago. (Amtrak press release, October 2)

Beginning on December 18 and just in time for the year-end holidays, the Washington State Department of Transportation is starting two additional Amtrak *Cascades* daily round-trips between Seattle and Portland

This permanent change to the Amtrak *Cascades* schedule, the Department said, will cut travel time by 10 minutes to 3 hours 20 minutes per the rerouting of trains between Tacoma and Olympia and the upgrading of tracks and signal systems. The new route takes trains on an inland corridor parallel to Interstate 5 through Tacoma, Lakewood, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and DuPont. It eliminates a major chokepoint for passenger trains near Point Defiance in Tacoma and separates them from freight trains that will continue to use the old (but scenic) waterfront route. WSDOT received invested nearly $800 million in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants to offer these new schedules.

The new schedule will see trains, pulled by WSDOT's new Siemens SC-44 Charger locomotives, leaving both Portland and Seattle every two to three hours. The first trains will depart Seattle at 6 AM and Portland at 6:20 AM. The latest trains will leave at 7:25 PM from Portland and 7:45 PM from Seattle. Station stops between the two include Tukwila, Tacoma, Olympia/Lacey, Centralia, Kelso, and Vancouver, Washington.

Cascades also will continue to run daily trips to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and Eugene, Oregon, serving 18 cities on the corridor. Schedule changes along the entire corridor will benefit connecting passengers. (***Railway Age*** via Al Holtz, October 4)

Industry

Alstom and Siemens announced on the evening of September 26 that they had signed a memorandum of understanding for a merger of Siemens' Mobility business with Alstom.

The transaction is expected to close at the end of 2018. Siemens would contribute its Mobility business, including its rail traction drives activities, in return for newly issued shares representing 50% of Alstom's share capital on a fully-diluted basis.

The companies said the two businesses were "largely complementary in terms of activities and geographies," and the deal would bring together "two innovative players" in the rail market "with unique customer value and operational potential."

The combined group is to be called Siemens Alstom. Its global headquarters and the management team for rolling stock would be in the Paris area, and the combined entity would remain listed in France. The headquarters of the Mobility Solutions business (which includes signaling and automation) would be in Berlin. *(Editor's Note by Alexander Ivanoff: So who is going to save Bombardier now? I was assuming that Alstom was going to purchase the BBD Transportation Division. Hopefully this will not end up like Penn Central, as both companies have excellent track records.)* (***Railway Gazette***, September 26)

Other Transit Systems

Boston, Massachusetts

China's CRRC Changchun Railway Vehicles Company recently rolled out the first of four pilot train cars for testing on Boston's Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The ceremony, attended by CRRC, as well as government and MBTA officials at the builder's Changchun, China manufacturing facility marked the occasion of the first Chinese railcar builder to enter the U.S. rail car manufacturing market. Officials took a ceremonial ride on one of the four pilot cars, which is to be sent to Boston for testing on November 18th. "These state-of-the-art vehicles provide improved passenger comfort," said Vice President of CRRC MA, Jia Bo, "and incorporate technology including solid state microprocessors, LCD passenger information displays, CCTV cameras, platform gap mitigation, automatic passenger counting and computer-based training simulators." CRRC is designing and building 404 subway vehicles for the MBTA, including 152 new Orange Line train cars and 252 new Red Line train cars. CRRC is also creating a $95-million, 204,000-square foot railcar manufacturing facility; a 2,240-foot dynamic test track, and a staging/storing area in Springfield, Mass., where assembly of the MBTA's subway cars will take place. The company was also recently awarded contracts for the Los Angeles Metro and Philadelphia's SEPTA. (***Railway Age***, October 19)

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is moving forward with improvements at the Wollaston Red Line station.

The MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board approved the beginning of new construction earlier this summer. Work includes major accessibility improvements, state-of-the-art safety features, and additional parking. Currently the only non-ADA-accessible station on the Red Line, Wollaston will be transformed into a modern, fully accessible facility, making the entirety of the Red Line 100-percent accessible. New features and upgrades to the station include new elevators, additional customer paths, upgraded stairways, new bathrooms,

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and additional lighting. New electrical, fire protection, security, flooding mitigation, and site utility upgrades will also occur to support the accessible improvements. The estimated construction value of the Wollaston station improvements is $33 million.

The Wollaston station will temporarily close for approximately twenty months beginning in late December with an anticipated re-opening in August, 2019. Red Line trains will bypass Wollaston during the closure with dedicated bus service between Wollaston and North Quincy. (***RT&S***, September 25)

Lake Placid, New York

On September 27, acting State Supreme Court Judge Robert Main Jr issued a ruling that overturned New York's controversial plan to create a new rail-trail in the Adirondacks linking Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, and Lake Placid. The ruling was made after the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society (ARPS, the non-profit that operates the Adirondack Scenic Railroad) sued last year, challenging the State's decision to rip up 34 miles of the historic rail line. In his ruling the Judge found the rail-trail plan violated State law and failed to protect the rail corridor's historic features.

In a statement, the Adirondack Scenic Railroad praised the decision. It said it will begin reaching out to local communities. This decision was a body blow to the Adirondack Recreation Trail Advocates (ARTA), a group that pushed for years for the new trail to be built. A spokesman for New York's Conservation Department issued a statement saying that the Cuomo administration is reviewing the decision. Governor Cuomo's administration had committed to spend $8 million on the rail-trail project, with construction planned for as early as this fall. *(Editor's Note by Alexander Ivanoff: I am not going to hide the fact that I have been very supportive of ARPS' move to fight the state on what possibly could have been a damaging ruling for the not only the railroad, but for rail in general. An unfavorable ruling in my eyes could have been the equivalent of a watershed moment for the NIMBY movement and would have had the potential to damage other projects across both New York State and the nation. As to the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, the organization has spent years improving operations, purchasing or accepting donated equipment, and appointing Bethan Maher as Executive Director. Ridership since 2010 has doubled and there are many occasions where the trains, just like Amtrak, are sold out.)* (North Country Public Radio, September 28)

Memphis, Tennessee

New trolleys the Memphis Area Transit Authority hopes to have back on the Main Street tracks by the end of this year may sneak up on Main Street Mall pedestrians.

The new trolley car 799 that MATA officials took on a two-block test drive recently sounded much quieter than the fleet of trolleys that came off the tracks more than three years ago. They were taken out of service when two trolleys caught fire and new leadership at MATA discovered there were few maintenance records, no maintenance program, and very little training for the upkeep of the system.

Seven people wearing hard hats, safety goggles, and yellow safety vests followed on foot as the blue and white trolley pulled out of the trolley barn on North Main Street Thursday, September 21, passed the intersection of Main and Mill Avenue, and stopped at Main and A.W. Willis Avenue. Some made notes on clipboards and did the same as the Trolley Operator pushed a button and the electronic pantograph that makes contract with the overhead wire and its 600 volts was automatically switched to go in the opposite direction on the tracks. That is another change from the previous system in which Trolley Operators had to manually make the change.

All electric trolley service on the system of rails on Main, the Riverfront Loop, and Madison Avenue was stopped in June, 2014. The fleet of trolleys were old and well-used when they were restored in the early 1990s for the start of the modern trolley line. One of the restored cars from Australia was 100 years old.

The trolley tested was purchased new and is a "replica style" car. The test was not only for the car, but the track and the electrical system – the first 500 feet of that – with every part of the line to undergo similar testing as it is re-powered.

Then there is what is called "pre-revenue service."

And all of those systems that are tested were basically created from the ground up when the trolley system was shut down in 2014.

The 3.2 miles that is the Main Street trolley line will be the first to come back on line. The Riverfront loop will be next, followed by the Madison Avenue Line. (***Memphis Daily News***, September 25)

Atlanta, Georgia

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on September 29 released a Tier I combined Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD) for the High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) project that will ultimately connect Atlanta to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The FEIS/ROD marks the completion of the Tier I environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and documents FRA's identification of a preferred corridor. The HSGT project would run approximately 120 miles along Interstate 75 and provide a competitive and more reliable transportation choice for people traveling between Atlanta and Chattanooga. The chosen corridor includes eight rail stations and is estimated to take 88 minutes of travel time from the first to last station along the corridor. The route would begin on the east side of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA) at the proposed HJAIA/Southern Crescent station and end at a proposed downtown Chattanooga station. (FRA via Al Holtz, September 29)

The Atlanta City Council approved a statute on September 19 transferring all assets and operations of Atlanta Streetcar to the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit

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Authority (MARTA).

The 2.7-mile Downtown Loop line opened in December, 2014 and travel was provided free-of-charge until January, 2016, when a $1 one-way fare and $3 day pass were introduced. However, following the introduction of fares ridership fell 58% and fare evasion has been a persistent problem.

Management of the line has also been an issue. In September, 2015 the Federal Transit Administration sent a letter to the City Council and MARTA expressing "continuing concerns with the safety and operation of the system." This was followed in January, 2016 by a highly critical report by the Georgia Department of Transportation, which found nearly half of safety-critical positions were unfilled as well as inadequate training of staff, failure to implement random drug and alcohol tests, and failure to properly report accidents.

Responsibility for all functions will pass from the City of Atlanta to MARTA over the next year. (***International Railway Journal*** via Randy Glucksman, September 20)

Miami, Florida

In time for the delivery of the fifth Brightline trainset (and basketball season), the Miami Heat named Brightline the official train service of the basketball team. The U.S.-assembled trainset was delivered by Siemens USA from its Sacramento facility to Brightline's Workshop "b" in West Palm Beach.

BrightRed joins BrightBlue, BrightOrange, BrightPink, and BrightGreen on the roster of integrated trainsets comprising two Siemens Charger diesel-electric locomotives (one at each end) and four stainless-steel coaches.

Brightline parent AllAboardFlorida, a unit of Florida East Coast Industries, was planning to begin service this year between Miami and West Palm Beach, but has not made a date to launch service or fares. The MiamiLink for Tri-Rail was also expected to open but has not. Service on the initial operating segment (IOS) is expected to begin at the end of the year. (***Railway Age***, October 6)

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Broward County Commissioners on September 14 authorized spending $31.4 million to buy five Siemens S70 streetcar-length LRVs for the Wave project, a 2.8-mile downtown streetcar route running from Sistrunk Boulevard south to Southwest 17th Street near Andrews Avenue. It is expected to begin operation in 2021.

The total Wave project cost is now put at $195.3 million, funded by a combination of federal, state, county, and city governments, and by property owners along the route. The Florida Department of Transportation is managing the project, while Broward County has agreed to run the system at a cost of about $6.4 million a year. The county cites the Siemens order on the basis of a cost-savings by piggy-backing onto a streetcar contract the company signed last year with the city of Charlotte, North Carolina, which includes volume-discount pricing.

In addition to the base price and upgrades for each streetcar, the agreement includes $1.4 million for Wave-required technical changes, $1.7 million in shipping costs, and $1.8 million in spare parts to be available for future repairs. The street running will be enhanced with signal priority for the streetcars.

Broward Transportation Director Chris Walton said one reason Siemens was chosen is because it can accommodate future line expansions. Officials would like to see the downtown system eventually expanded to Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, the Tri-Rail station on Broward Boulevard, and the educational campus on Davie Boulevard. (***Broward Sun-Sentinel***, September 15)

Dallas, Texas

Stadler unveiled its first "Fast Light Intercity and Regional Train" (FLIRT) for the TEX Rail commuter line in the Dallas/Fort Worth area at the APTA EXPO in Atlanta in October.

The diesel-electric multiple unit is equipped with 224 seats and USB ports for passengers. Capable of traveling at a maximum speed of 81 miles per hour, the train complies with the Environmental Protection Agency's Tier IV emissions standards, according to a Stadler press release.

In June, 2015, the Fort Worth Transportation Authority — which will operate the TEX Rail line — signed a contract with Stadler for the eight FLIRT units.

The unit for TEX Rail is the first FLIRT model to be used in the United States. Built in a leased Stadler plant in Salt Lake City, the units will satisfy Buy America requirements, Stadler officials said. TEX Rail's eight FLIRT units also will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. (***Progressive Railroading*** via Randy Glucksman, October 12)

Dallas City Council members recently gave a unanimous endorsement of Dallas Area Rapid Transit's proposal to build an underground light rail expansion through downtown Dallas.

In a meeting with city officials in early September, Council members endorsed a DART plan to connect the southern portion of downtown Dallas to the light rail network and to relieve a bottleneck where all four of its light rail routes share tracks between the West End and St. Paul stations. ***The Dallas Morning News*** cited a DART spokesperson who said the agency expects to pay for the $650 million subway through a combination of federal funds and increased local sales taxes.

In earlier stages of planning, DART considered an at-grade light rail route, but put its weight behind the subway after the public raised concerns that the noise and construction might harm the economic viability and historic nature of the area through which the street-level tracks would have be routed.

DART currently operates one other underground station, Cityplace, which serves the Red, Blue, and Orange Lines. The D2 subway expansion is expected to be complete by 2024.

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The Dallas City Council also gave a preliminary endorsement for a third streetcar route that would link the two existing routes to Uptown and North Oak Cliff. DART's preferred plan routes the streetcar along Commerce and Elm Streets due to the possibility for economic development, but will also study an alternative route along Main Street.

The new route is estimated to cost $92 million. DART is still in the process of securing funding and determining the streetcar's exact route. (***Trains Magazine*** via Al Holtz, September 19)

El Paso, Texas

The infrastructure phase of the El Paso Streetcar's construction is progressing earlier than expected. The El Paso Times reported on October 18 that this phase of the $97-million project includes utility work, and track and overhead wire placement. The work was originally scheduled to be finished in early 2018, but officials now say that the work should be finished before Thanksgiving. The El Paso Streetcar will use six vintage streetcars that were operated in the area until 1974. Brookville Equipment Corporation of Pennsylvania is restoring the vehicles. The first of the restored cars will be delivered in the first quarter of 2018, allowing for testing of the newly constructed tracks. When service begins in late 2018, the 4.8-mile streetcar loop will operate between downtown El Paso and the University of Texas at El Paso campus. Officials are also considering a possible Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, expansion. (trains.com, October 20)

Denver, Colorado

State regulators on September 27 delivered a major blow to RTD, denying its request to change the timing of crossing gates on several of the metropolitan area's commuter rail lines as well as turning down a planned resumption of full testing on the as-yet-unopened G-Line.

The unanimous decision by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission came at a morning meeting of the agency's three Commissioners, who concluded that the Regional Transportation District's at-grade crossing plan did not enhance safety for those driving or biking over the tracks.

PUC, along with the Federal Railroad Administration, must approve operational changes at the dozen at-grade crossings on the University of Colorado A-Line to Denver International Airport and the B-Line to Westminster. Until they do, flaggers are required at crossings 24 hours a day. However, RTD announced that the Federal Railroad Administration has approved the Regional Transportation District's request for an extended waiver for the operation of the University of Colorado A-Line and the B-Line. The waiver is for a five year period. However, on October 11, the RTD received permission from FRA to eliminate the grade crossing flaggers, a sign that the delayed G-Line is closer to opening. (RTD press release via ***Mass Transit Magazine***; ***Denver Post*** via ***Mass Transit Magazine***, September 29 and September 28; Denver Post, October 12)

Grand Junction, Colorado

A woman sleeping on railroad tracks in Grand Junction, Colorado on October 15 miraculously escaped injury after part of a Union Pacific train passed over her. Lands End Fire Protection District Fire Chief Brian Lurvey told the Daily Sentinel that the woman was wearing earphones and did not hear the train approaching. The first locomotive in the consist rolled over her before the crew could stop the train. The woman was able to crawl out from underneath the train and walk away unharmed. She refused to receive medical attention and did not offer an explanation as to why she was trespassing on railroad property. Lurvey says that he was contacted by a Union Pacific special agent regarding the incident, but does not know whether the woman was issued a trespassing citation by Union Pacific. (trains.com, October 19)

Seattle, Washington

Seattle Department of Transport has awarded CAF a contract to supply 10 three-section 100% low-floor Urbos trams.

Announced on October 2, the contract is worth in excess of $50 million including spare parts, tools, and testing equipment. SDOT has an option for up to 10 more vehicles. The bi-directional cars will be equipped with CAF Power & Automation's Onboard Energy Storage System for use on catenary-free sections of the network.

The new cars are being ordered to operate the 1.2-mile Center City Connector, on which construction was expected to start in October. The line is scheduled to open in 2020. (***Metro Report International***, October 2)

Portland, Oregon

Portland's TriMet MAX Orange Line may be only two years old, but it has already transported nearly 7 million passengers, transit officials say.

The 7.3-mile light rail line connecting southeastern Portland communities with the city's downtown core logs about 67,000 riders each week. The total number of trips on the line has grown 6.1 percent from 3.2 million in its first year to more than 3.4 million in its second year.

The two-year-old light rail corridor connects Portland State University's campus with Southeast Portland, Milwaukie, and the Oak Grove community. Trains operate on 15-minute intervals.

The MAX Orange Line is one of five light rail lines contributing to Portland's 60-mile rail transit system. The first line opened in 1986. (TriMet via ***Trains Magazine*** via Al Holtz, September 20)

Churchill, Manitoba, Canada

A VIA Rail Canada train recently took an extremely unusual journey over Hudson Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Workers loaded a stranded VIA Rail passenger train onboard the MV Nunalik vessel on October 18. The ship was expected to take the train to eastern Canada where it would be put back on the tracks of the North American

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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rail network. The train had been stranded in Churchill, Manitoba since May when track washouts and damaged bridges caused the line to become severed from the main rail network. OmniTRAX, which owns the line, has claimed repeatedly that it cannot afford to repair the tracks. The federal government has given OmniTRAX notice that it has a month to complete repairs to the line or it may face an $18.8 million lawsuit. Without the train line in service, shipping goods to Churchill has become much more difficult and expensive. No timeline is currently available regarding restoration of service to the damaged rail line. (trains.com, October 19)

Buenos Aires, Argentina

The federal government announced on September 26 the start of tendering for what it describes as the largest rolling stock order ever to be placed for the Buenos Aires commuter network, covering the supply of 1,500 e.m.u. cars or 169 trainsets plus maintenance over 10 years in five new depots.

Deliveries would take place in a staged program running from the second half of 2020 to 2023. The order would represent investment of US $2 billion, not including spare parts and maintenance which is expected to create 1,000 new jobs.

According to Transport Minister Guillermo Dietrich, the new fleet would accompany the major infrastructure investment program now underway on the Buenos Aires commuter network, including electrification and new tunnels to create an RER network for the capital. Increasing train capacity from the current fleet of 1,346 cars would enable service to operate as frequently as every 3 to 5 minutes.

The new air-conditioned e.m.u. fleet would feature free on-board Wi-Fi, wireless CCTV, and a real-time passenger information system enabling the number of free seats on a train to be displayed before it arrives at a station. Each trainset would be able to accommodate 2,000 passengers, according to the ministry, and would consume 15% less energy than existing rolling stock. (***Railway Gazette***, September 28)

Kharkiv, Ukraine

Requests for proposals are expected to begin in the fourth quarter of 2017 for the construction of a two-mile southern extension of Kharkiv Metro Line 3. The scope of the works would include the construction of two stations, a depot and connecting tracks, and the supply of new rolling stock.

The project is expected to cost a total of €382 million, and the government has applied for loans of €160 million from each of the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development and the European Investment Bank. (***Metro Report International***, October 3)

Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona transport operator TMB is to assist Wiener Linien in the development of the Wien U-Bahn network, including the modernization of line U2 and construction of the driverless line U5.

The agreement signed on September 29 is valid for three years with the possibility of being extended.

TMB said Wiener Linien sought its assistance because it has operated automated service since 2009, and 25% of its network now operates without drivers. The agreement would provide opportunities for mutual learning benefiting both parties, TMB said, and confirmed Barcelona's position as an international reference point for public transport technology. (***Metro Report International***, October 3)

Tel Aviv, Israel

Alstom has been selected as preferred bidder for a US $110 million contract to supply signaling, control, and automation systems for the 23-kilometer Tel Aviv light metro Red Line, project promoter NTA announced on October 1. Ansaldo STS had also expressed interest but did not reach the final stage of the bidding process. (***Metro Report International***, October 2)

China

Chinese fixed investment in railroad infrastructure could exceed $120 billion in 2017, according to chinadaily.com. That puts the country on track to meet an investment goal set by China Railway at the beginning of 2017. Investments in the first two quarters of 2017 were up 4.7 percent on a year-to-year basis, according to China Railway data. An anonymous source said that the fourth quarter is an important season for railroad building and repair in China, and that multiple major projects will be the primary beneficiaries of the investment. The approximately 110-mile Lianyungang-Xuzhou railway line, located in eastern China, broke ground in July and is anticipated to cost about $4.2 billion. The line is expected to be finished by December, 2020. Early August saw the start of construction on the Dunhua-Baihe line, a 70-mile route that is expected to reduce travel times between Shenyang and resorts in the Changbai Mountains. Its anticipated 2021 opening will cut the travel time to four hours. Many other additional projects account for large investments that help bring China closer to meeting its investment goal. (trains.com, October 21)

Staten Island's 157-Year-Old Railroad

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only track connection between New Jersey and Staten Island. In the 1950s an oil tanker hit the bridge, slightly damaging the superstructure, and breaking it off its center foundation, which was also damaged. The old bridge was replaced by a new one, which was opened on August 25, 1959. The longest railroad vertical lift bridge span, 558 feet long, is suspended from 215-foot steel towers. It can be raised to a maximum height of 135 feet or lowered to closed position of 30 feet above water in two minutes. Of course, the bridge must be dropped for trains to pass. *(Continued next issue)*

SWITZERLAND IN THE LATE SUMMER
by Jack May
(Photographs by the author)
(Continued from October, 2017 issue)

Today was a special day for me, as I was to meet Australian railfan and tram advocate Greg Sutherland in Mulhouse, France, while Clare would stay in Basel and visit some additional museums. I had used our cheap mobile phone to reach Greg (whose number has an Australian country code, but who was physically in France) and we agreed on a meeting time and place at the Mulhouse railroad station. We would concentrate on that city's new tram-train, as I had been there before for Routes 1 and 2, and Greg would be spending a second day there.

A Route 8 car came just as I reached the tram stop and I arrived at the railway station at 8:30. I then walked into "France," actually the section of the SBB Bahnhof that is operated by the French National Railway System, SNCF. I first encountered a large empty gallery that clearly once held French Customs and Immigration. Now with the European Union, that space is surplus, and access to the small four-track SNCF "station within a station" is transparent (officially tracks 30-35, but only four of the six access a platform). One could say that going from Switzerland to France is now just like going from Connecticut to New York.

(As mentioned earlier, the Basel tramway now runs into both France and Germany. Route 10 operates to Rodersdorf, which is in Switzerland, but en route passes through a piece of France with a single stop, at Leymen. I got off at that point for photos on an earlier trip, and saw a sign that in effect requested those who plan to stay in France to report to... After World War II Basel's local routes to both Germany and France were abandoned, but similar routes are now being reestablished. Tram Route 8 was pushed across the border to Weil am Rhein in Germany on December 14, 2014 and work is proceeding to extend Route 3 to St. Louis in France, planned for 2017. In fact, a 500-meter extension over the border opened on July 31, with cars stopping at the border station and then looping around the facility without passengers; the full extension is scheduled to open on December 9 and is now operating in test mode.)

Anyway, frequent service is operated over the 25-mile-long run to Mulhouse, with the journey taking about 25-35 minutes, depending on the number of intermediate stops. Although they are in different countries, Mulhouse and Basel are considered to be in the same metropolitan area; in fact they share the region's commercial airport, which happens to be in France, but is closer to Basel. Greg would start his journey back to Australia from that airport later in the week. I purchased a ticket to Mulhouse upon arriving at the station and I remembered to validate it at one of the machines at the foot of the platforms. I rode the 8:39, a typical French regional M.U. train that made most local stops, including St. Louis (I saw no sign of connecting Metrolink LRVs). Unlike the trilingual announcements on Swiss trains, only French came over the public address system as we made our way to Mulhouse (would you expect anything different?). The E.M.U. arrived at 9:14, and Greg was waiting for me.

Our first order of business was to get day tickets for the three-route tramway and tram-train. We were not totally successful, as we could not figure out how to buy passage for riding beyond Lutterbach, the last station on the city system, in order to continue aboard the tram-train to Thann. So we settled for urban day tickets and started our explorations. After taking a few photos along the reserved track leading to the Gare we realized we just missed a tram-train and rather than waiting a full half-hour for the next one boarded a Route 1 car.

Mulhouse has a population of 110,000, with some 220,000 in its metropolitan area. Among railfans it is well known as being the site of France's National Railroad Museum, an exhibition that does justice to the history of railroading in that country — from early steam to today's high-speed TGVs. I spent several hours at the site on my first trip to this city, in conjunction with visiting the first two routes of the tramway system, which opened in 2006.

North-south Route 1 and east-west Route 2 provide excellent base service frequencies of every 6 minutes. We alighted from our Route 1 car at Port Jeune, the four-track crossroads in the center of town. After stopping for some photos, we continued west on the 2, which shares track with the 3 and the tram-train for part of its route. The 3 runs to Lutterbach, northwest of the city, alternating with the tram-train to provide a 15-minute headway (see http://www.urbanrail.net/eu/fr/mulhouse/mulhouse-tram.htm).

The 2 is the system's "signature" route, as most of its stations feature a pair of distinctive arches over the right-of-way painted in a pastel color. They are the distinguishing badge of the city's tramway, and their visibility probably serves as a unique wayfinding tool. We rode out to the end of the line at Coteaux, and then worked our way back to the junction with the Lutterbach lines at the Daguerre station. By then we had missed another tram-train, but a Route 3 car arrived soon enough.

The 3 took us to its terminal, Lutterbach, traveling mostly on trackage alongside SNCF (and past the railroad museum, which is easily visible). Here, 15 minutes

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Switzerland in the Late Summer

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later, we would transfer from our bright yellow Alstom 100-percent low-floor Citadis 302 car to a blue and grey Siemens Avanto dual-voltage 70-percent low-floor unit. But first we had to get tickets. The machines on the platform were the same as those at other stops — with no visible option to sell tickets for a continuing journey to Thann. There was another couple at the platform who were experiencing the same dilemma, but fortunately we spied an SNCF station on the other side of the tracks. So, leaving Greg to "hold the fort," the three of us walked through a long underground passageway to the rail station, where we came upon a different type of ticket machine, one that typically serves SNCF. I purchased two round trips from Lutterbach to Thann from that machine, as did the other couple, and we rushed back to the tram platform just in time to board the tram-train unit. It would have been a lot easier had we purchased our tickets to Thann at the Gare upon my arrival from Basel, but who knew? I do not recall if we validated the tickets at the SNCF station or aboard the tram-train. In any case it turned out that each of the tram-train cars has a ticket vending machine on board so advance purchase is not necessary.

After having passed through the city imitating tram Route 3, the Avanto car, now with us aboard, switched over to 25,000 volts soon after leaving the station and continued on to Thann over the railroad. The track layout at Lutterbach is interesting. An island platform double-track tram stop under 750 volts d.c. is adjacent to the SNCF double-track 25,000-volt station, which is equipped with side platforms. Beyond the station, in which Route 3 cars change ends, the rails merge into a single track, which probably has a dead section shortly before the 25,000-volt a.c. current kicks in. A track cuts away from SNCF and then merges with the tram right-of-way, resulting in a continuation of single track northward to Thann with appropriate passing sidings. After the crossover the SNCF double-track mainline turns away to the right.

This is actually the only "real" tram-train route in France, being similar to Karlsruhe, Kassel, and several other places in Germany, where most passengers ride in LRVs that operate over parts of the national railroad network. They are mixed in with passenger and freight trains, and either start or end on an urban tramway, which allows convenient distribution in city centers. In effect, a one-seat ride replaces commuting on a suburban railroad train and transferring to or from urban transit at the city's railway station. The so-called tram-trains in Paris, Nantes, and Lyon operate only on SNCF, and thus could technically be considered little more than using very light railroad rolling stock, despite their capability of operating on more than one voltage.

Mulhouse's tram-train is 14 miles long and has 18 stops, of which 7 are on SNCF. Its rolling stock consists of 12 Siemens Avanto cars, which were obtained for the line's opening at the end of 2010. Five of the SNCF stations are in the suburb of Thann, with the most important being the Gare, which is also served by diesel-propelled through trains that operate from the main railway station in Mulhouse and continue beyond to Kruth. These D.M.U.s, which share the tracks with the tram-trains beyond Lutterbach, run hourly, and take 27 minutes to get from inside the Mulhouse station to the Gare in Thann, while the tram-trains take 41 minutes to reach the same point from the Mulhouse station's forecourt. At the time of our visit there was also frequent DMU shuttle service to Kruth using the center track at Thann Gare, which has platforms on both sides to allow easy across-the-platform transfer to and from tram-trains. I understand that work to electrify the remainder of the line and extend tram-train service all the way to Kruth is now underway. Currently the wire ends at Thann St. Jacques, two stops beyond the Gare. With inbound and outbound cars passing at the main station, we spent quite a bit of time at this busy location photographing, before heading back to Mulhouse.

We rode in a car that was very crowded with school children, outlasting them by the time we arrived at the Port Jeune transfer station, where we took the 2 east to its Nouveau Bassin terminal. The outermost section runs through a tree-lined center reservation, presenting an exposure challenge to photographers using film — especially in today's mixture of clouds and sun. Then we returned to Port Jeune and rode north on Route 1. I had concentrated on Route 2 on my first visit, so now I had a chance to photograph this route, which is interesting in its own right. Part of it traverses a greenbelt on reserved track, with the outer end, having been extended from Rattachement to Chataignier since my first visit, is beautifully channeled along quiet streets through a suburban development.

We finished our work around 16:00, and after a brief snack, I said goodbye to Greg and caught the 16:46 E.M.U. back to Basel. It was an express, stopping only at St. Louis (still no Metrolink in view), and arrived at the Bahnhof SBB at 17:09. Clare got to the apartment just a few minutes before I did and after we rested a bit and consulted one of Basel's tourist folders, we decided to have dinner at a restaurant that featured Spanish cuisine. Located along the Rhein near the Johanniter Bridge, we rode there and back on the 6 and 11. The restaurant, Don Pincho, had an eclectic menu; we shared an assortment of tapas and were very pleased with the cuisine. We both were very happy with our day's activities.

This segment covers Mulhouse's tram-train. Some of you may have seen the photos displayed here before, in an earlier essay about the tramways of France, but they are being included here and in the next segment, for the sake of completeness.

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Switzerland in the Late Summer

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A Siemens Avanto tram-train at the Thann Gare station. Note the step that slides out from the body of these 70 percent low-floor cars at each door.

The tram-train cars feature a route diagram superimposed on a rainbow of stripes. The map includes the proposed extension of electric service from Thann to Kruth, which is now served by diesel shuttles connecting with the trams, although there are also some through runs entirely over SNCF from the main station in Mulhouse.

Gare Thann with the Vosges mountains in the background. A diesel shuttle to Kruth on the center track is available to passengers using the tram-trains to and from the center of Mulhouse.

A Siemens Avanto car on the joint trackage with local Lines 2 and 3 in the city of Mulhouse. This view is at the Daguerre stop, the first after the junction of the two lines. Note the arches, which are emblematic of the city's tramway.

A tram-train is shown leaving downtown Mulhouse along Avenue du President Kennedy just west of the Mairie stop.

The forecourt of Mulhouse's Gare Central, showing a Route 1 Citadis tram laying over opposite an Avanto tram-train. One will follow the other through the city center to Porte Jeune, where the tram-train will take a switch to join Line 2.

(Continued next issue)

IS METRO-NORTH A 24-HOUR RAILROAD?
by Randy Glucksman

I was inspired to write this article following a recent conversation with a senior Metro-North official. When I wrote my Commuter and Transit Notes column, I also included an occasional piece titled "Last and First Train," and below I have created a current version.

The answer for Metro-North using the "current schedules" is that the railroad misses this distinction by just eight minutes, as can be seen in the table below.

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD, OCTOBER 6, 2017

LINE	LAST TRAIN #	FROM	TIME	TO	ARRIVAL	FROM	FIRST TRAIN #	DEPARTURE TIME	TIME THAT NO TRAIN IS ON THE LINE (HH:MM)
Hudson	701 801	GCT Croton-Harmon	1:50 AM	Poughkeepsie	3:03 AM 4:05 AM	Poughkeepsie	802	4:13 AM	00:08
Harlem	699	GCT	1:56 AM	Southeast	3:45 AM	Southeast	602	4:24 AM	00:39
New Haven	1502	GCT	1:47 AM	New Haven	3:53 AM	New Haven	1503	4:05 AM	00:12

I could not just write about Metro-North, so below are tables for the Long Island Rail Road and NJ Transit. While the Long Island Rail Road does operate 24 hours per day, providing all-night service on the Port Washington, Port Jefferson, Ronkonkoma, and Babylon Branches, there are some periods when no train is operating on the branches listed below.

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD, SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

BRANCH	LAST TRAIN #	FROM	TIME	TO	ARRIVAL	FROM	FIRST TRAIN #	DEPARTURE TIME	TIME THAT NO TRAIN IS ON THE BRANCH (HH:MM)
Far Rockaway	2802	Atlantic Terminal	1:09 AM	Far Rockaway	2:08 AM	Far Rockaway	2805	3:21 AM	01:13
Hempstead	704	Jamaica	3:22 AM	Hempstead	3:51 AM	Hempstead	707	3:59 AM	00:08
Long Beach	802	Jamaica	1:11 AM	Long Beach	1:40 AM	Long Beach	805	3:58 AM	02:18
Montauk	2702	Jamaica	1:10 AM	Montauk	3:57 AM	Speonk	2731	4:37 AM	00:40
Oyster Bay	574	Jamaica	11:45 PM	Oyster Bay	12:39 AM	Oyster Bay	501	5:12 AM	04:33
West Hempstead	900	Valley Stream	12:55 AM	West Hempstead	1:10 AM	West Hempstead	901	5:37 AM	04:27

NJ TRANSIT, SEPTEMBER 2, 2017

LINE/ BRANCH	LAST TRAIN #	FROM	TIME	TO	ARRIVAL	FROM	FIRST TRAIN #	DEPARTURE TIME	TIME THAT NO TRAIN IS ON THE LINE (HH:MM)
Atlantic City	4651	Philadelphia-30th Street	12:50 AM	Atlantic City	2:28 AM	Atlantic City	4608	4:33 AM	02:05
Gladstone	453	Hoboken	11:54 PM	Gladstone	1:38 AM	Gladstone	400	4:35 AM	02:57
Main/Bergen	1101	Hoboken	1:32 AM	Suffern	2:41 AM	Suffern	1100	4:49 AM	02:08
Montclair	6201	NY Penn	12:34 AM	Montclair State University	1:24 AM	Montclair State University	6200	4:45 AM	03:21
Montclair/ Boonton	1061	Hoboken	10:04 PM	Mount Olive	11:58 PM	Hackettstown	1070	5:09 AM	05:11
Morristown	6601	NY Penn	12:56 AM	Dover	2:30 AM	Dover	6602	4:16 AM	01:46
North Jersey Coast	3205	NY Penn	1:00 AM	Long Branch	2:39 AM	Long Branch	3202	3:58 AM	01:19
	4397	Long Branch	1:00 AM	Bay Head	1:44 AM	Bay Head	2300	4:49 AM	03:05
Northeast Corridor	3805	NY Penn	1:22 AM	Trenton	3:06 AM	Trenton	3806	3:48 AM	00:42
Pascack Valley	1647	Hoboken	11:13 PM	Spring Valley	12:23 AM	Spring Valley	1602	5:10 AM	04:47
Port Jervis	41	Hoboken	12:40 AM	Port Jervis	3:10 AM	Port Jervis	42	3:50 AM	00:40
Princeton	4103	Princeton Junction	1:35 AM	Princeton	1:40 AM	Princeton	4106	4:58 AM	03:18
Raritan Valley	5403	Newark	1:28 AM	Raritan	2:34 AM	Raritan	5404	4:31 AM	01:57
	5197	NY Penn	10:48 AM	High Bridge	12:36 AM	High Bridge	5710	5:51 AM	05:15

Around New York's Transit System

Subway Cars With Reduced Seating Debut

The pilot R-160 Ⓔ train with seats removed at the ends of the cars to make room for around 10 additional standees made its passenger service debut in October. ***New York Post*** images show mid-consist car 9240 and lead cars 9242 and 9547. A dark blue decal wrap above the beltline to the roofline denotes the cars with the seats removed; the interior has a colorful decal wrap adorning the walls of affected ends of these cars along with directional arrows on the floor to guide passengers to the proper places to stand inside. The longitudinal seats between the four side doors remain available at all times. Car 9247 has a "sash" decal applied behind the Operator's window with yellow and white accenting. On Ⓛ, the reduced seating scheme will have cars featuring fold-up seats locked in the up position by NYCT crews during the peak periods. The fold-up seats are staggered through the designated car, two per side. In any section of the car, there are seats on one side, no seats on the opposite side, and enhanced grab poles with twin vertical grasps are provided for the standees. Four of eight cars in this train will be equipped with the fold-up seating and the train is expected to be placed into service shortly. The R62As assigned to the 42nd Street Shuttle will also have seats removed; however, no word has been given as to the exact seating configuration or when they will debut on the Shuttle. In addition to increasing the carrying capacity the trains, it is hoped that this will also reduce station dwell times.

Governor Cuomo Says Subway Conditions Are Improving

The ***New York Daily News*** ran an article on September 19 noting that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said that people who are "looking very carefully" can see that the trouble-plagued train system has improved.

On September 14, a third rail cover that came loose and ended up on the tracks cut off ❶❷❸ service in parts of Manhattan at rush hour. And on September 17, a power outage caused shutdowns and delays between Brooklyn.

Cuomo did not cite data showing better service, but said people have told him it has gotten better. It could take a year for the full effects of MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota's rescue plan to be felt, he said. The Governor pointed the finger at Con Edison for the transformer failure in Brooklyn, and said MTA could not be blamed for its own track troubles either.

Lhota released a 30-point plan almost two months ago which MTA has begun to put in place, but Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio continue to squabble over who should pick up the $836 million price tag.

John Raskin, head of the Riders Alliance, said MTA had put out a "credible" plan to address the subway's worst problems but there is not yet evidence of whether it has produced improvements.

New Subway Performance Measurements

MTA managers on September 25 unveiled a plan to show the agency's Board new statistics to measure service and a flashy digital dashboard that will give everyday riders a better sense of how bad their ride is and where it needs to improve, according to the ***New York Daily News***.

For the first time, riders will know how much longer than normal they are waiting on a platform, and MTA will tell them how many minutes are wasted inside delayed trains. There will also be a tally of "major incidents" and how well MTA is sticking to its train schedule. The metrics will be presented in a format that non-transit professionals can read.

The new performance measurements put MTA in line with reporting from transportation agencies elsewhere in the world, according to an MTA management source familiar with the project. Riders can check the statistics for a single subway line or see the statistics for several lines for comparison. The page additionally will tell riders which train models they ride and how well they perform.

Figures can even be broken down by peak rush hour and off-peak service.

The old statistics — a pass-fail measure of trains reaching their last stop on time and a measure of how well trains on a line stick to their schedule, station-to-station — were criticized internally and publicly as practically useless and vague.

A 2016 report from Department of Subways analysts that ***The News*** exclusively obtained in May said that top MTA officials had a "high level of interest" in nixing delays and on-time performance of trains from its public operations reports.

That was partly because passengers rarely ride terminal-to-terminal. MTA officials also found that finding the cause of a delay — overcrowding or a sick rider, for instance — was "subjective and frequently inaccurate."

MTA will nonetheless keep those figures, rebranding them as "legacy indicators" of subway performance.

Holiday Train To Operate Via Second Avenue Subway

Internal sources at NYCT report that the annual "Holiday Train" will operate via the Second Avenue Subway to 96th Street instead of Queens Plaza as it has in past years. It will run with the usual R-1 to R-9 equipment and continue to operate on the former Sixth Avenue IND originating from Second Avenue and Houston Street on Sundays from November 26-December 17.