

The Bulletin



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TECH TALK by Jeffrey Erlitz

Over the weekend of July 13-14, the Long Island Rail Road placed in service the very first segment of Farmingdale to Ronkonkoma double-track on the Main Line, between CI Interlocking (west of Central Islip station) and Ocean Interlocking (west of Ronkonkoma station). This first segment is just short of five miles long. Use of the two main tracks was short-lived, though, as right after midnight on the following Saturday, July 21, eastbound Track 2 was removed from service between those same two points so that the wood ties could be replaced with concrete ties.

As of now, the two remaining single-track segments are east of the Farmingdale station to west of the Deer Park station and east of the Brentwood station to west of the Central Islip station. This second piece of single-track is quite short, a little over 1½ miles. I presume that this small section of double-track will be placed in service in the next couple of weeks. At that time Brent Interlocking, at the former end of the short double-track section built during the electrification project in 1987-8, will be removed from service.

Over on the subway, the new interlocking at 34th Street-Sixth Avenue was placed in service over three weekends in May. This work, under contract S-32764, is being performed by TC Electric, LLC, sub-contractor to Alstom Signaling, Incorporated. The new signals on southbound local Track B1 were done May 12-14, southbound express Track B3 was done May 19-21, and both northbound tracks, B2 and B4, were done over the long Memorial Day weekend, May 26-29. The old 68-lever General Railway Signal Company (GRS) Model 5 interlocking machine was not one of the oldest machines on Subdivision "B2" (IND), having been placed into service sometime before the opening of the Sixth

Avenue Line in December, 1940.

The new interlocking is controlled from the new 34th Street Master Tower, which is located up on the mezzanine in the closed-off passageway between the 34th Street and 42nd Street stations. As is custom these days, the new control panel was built by Mauell Corporation of Dillsburg, Pennsylvania. Since Alstom was the prime contractor, it, of course, used its own Model 5 switch machines and Type AT signal heads. The train stops, however, are NYCT-standard Twincos Model PS-1 equipment.

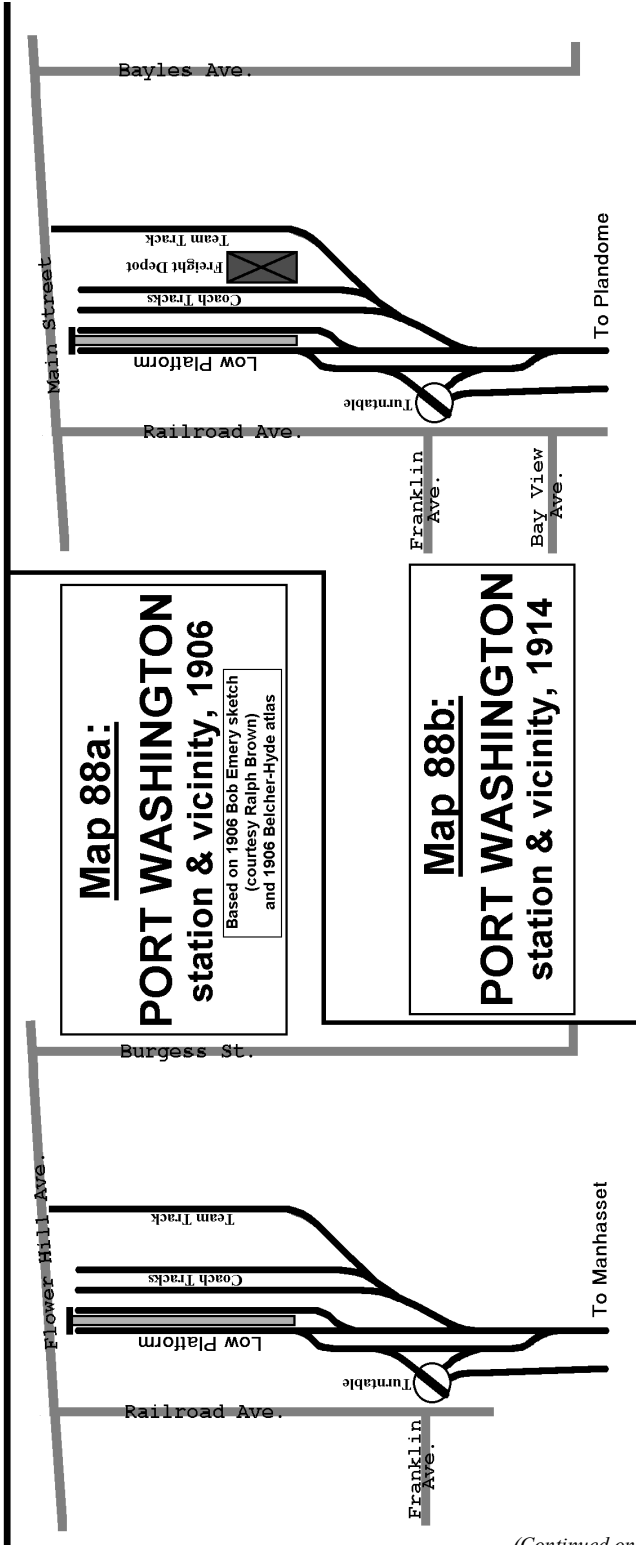
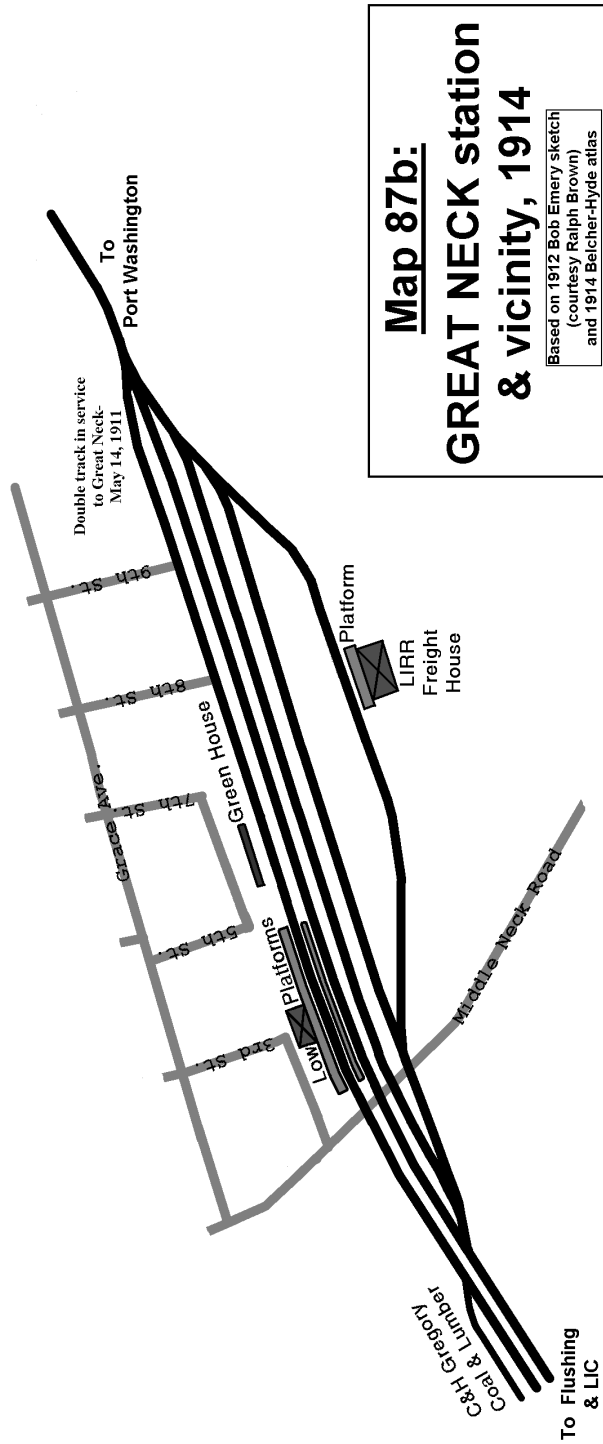
Elsewhere in this issue mention was made regarding another cut-in of CBTC on the Subdivision "A" (IRT) Flushing Line. There were two separate cut-ins, both on express Track M. The first of these, from 33rd Street Interlocking to 74th Street Interlocking, was placed in service over the same weekend, May 26-29, as the final installment at 34th Street-Sixth Avenue, mentioned just above. Twenty-six automatic signals were removed from service and one new automatic signal was placed in service. The second cut-in was over the weekend June 30-July 2 and involved the segment from 74th Street Interlocking to Willets Point Interlocking. Twenty-eight automatic signals were removed from service and one automatic signal had its grade timing feature removed.

On both of these weekends, the master control panels at Queensboro Plaza and 111th Street, the maintainer's control panels at 33rd Street, 74th Street, 111th Street, and Willets Point, and the dispatcher's indication panel at Main Street were all modified to reflect these signal changes.

Many of the automatic signals on Track M that were removed dated from about 1938

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THE GENESIS OF DASHING DAN — ENTER THE NORTH SIDE DIVISION by George Chiasson (Continued from July, 2018 issue)



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A SPECIAL TRIP OUT OF GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL

by Alexander Ivanoff

On April 7, 1991, Amtrak bid Grand Central Terminal farewell after spending its first nineteen years dividing its New York operations. Until that point, there was no way to bring trains coming from the Hudson Line (used primarily by Metro-North but also by Amtrak to link Upstate New York with New York City) into Penn Station until the construction and completion of the Empire Connector, a tunnel that links the west end of the Penn Station interlocking with the old West Side Line, which had not really been in service since the 1970s. A little trivia is warranted here: Amtrak's consolidation of operations at Penn Station predates the *New York Times* printing in color!

Growing up, it saddened me that only commuter trains operated from Grand Central Terminal, and having grown up on the Harlem Line in Brewster, I had a solid bias against Penn Station (that bias has lessened). Since 1991, there has been a rare occasion or two where Amtrak would end up at Grand Central Terminal (either for a photo op, a day of trains like in 2014, or for some rare weekend work). But it was never long-term. Metro-North, despite dropping the "Commuter" from its name, is not really an intercity railroad. While it does link the City of New York with the cities of White Plains, Yonkers, Poughkeepsie, New Rochelle, Stamford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Danbury, and Waterbury, Metro-North simply does not qualify.

The derailments at Penn Station in 2017 made full operations there impossible due to needed repairs, and, as a result three weekday *Empire Service* trains were rerouted to Grand Central during the Summer. From the start there were rumors that Amtrak would return to Grand Central in 2018 on a larger scale. Like with many Amtrak rumors, this one was confirmed when in the Spring Amtrak started changing itineraries. The nature of the beast was such that the final schedule was only made public just a few days before service out of Grand Central even started!

As Grand Central is my spiritual train station (my home station is technically Middletown on the Port Jervis Line), I felt it obligatory to take the train to Albany from Grand Central Terminal. I cashed in about 3,000 Amtrak Guest Rewards (AGR) Points for the privilege. Even with a quick itinerary change, I was glad to make the trip.

After fretting as to whether I would make it after slow running on the ⑥, I got to Grand Central about 7:10 AM with enough time to head to Track 23, where the *Adirondack* was waiting. This Summer, the trains are a bit different: all of the Amfleet II cars assigned to the *Adirondack* and *Maple Leaf* have been either reassigned or

sidelined because of the necessity to have automatic train doors at Grand Central Terminal. Despite the inconvenience, the familiar announcements of a sold out train were there and, not surprisingly, the train was 90% full. One thing I found delightful: there was no conga line for boarding like at Penn Station. I hope this carries back over to Penn Station, as it makes boarding far more peaceful.

It is pretty neat to ride in an Amfleet on the Park Avenue Viaduct while a train from Poughkeepsie comes inbound. The same for the Harlem River lift bridge. The rest of the trip was relatively uneventful, with the train arriving in Albany too late to take the CDTA bus to Downtown. As a result, I ended up walking the Dunn Memorial Bridge, which is a wonderful walk when the weather is nice enough. For brunch I went to the Iron Gate Café, where I had one of the better omelets I have ever had. Since brunch was quickly served, I had time to stroll around a very quiet Downtown Albany, including grabbing myself photographic proof of being in front of the State Capitol, which looks far smaller than one would think.

There were some peculiarities with this trip. For one, the absence of a Quik-Trak contradicts Amtrak's own marketing. I went on a scavenging hunt back in June to see where they were, and after asking a less-than-thrilled MNR Station Agent, I was informed that there are none. Not sure who to blame on this one, but it would be nice for those of us who find the Amtrak app fussy with Amtrak Guest Rewards redemption tickets. Amtrak should work to ensure that AGR redemption itineraries show up properly.

While several realities make it challenging (from the fact that Amtrak trains are primarily not push-pull trains to Grand Central running at peak capacity), I would welcome some permanent intercity rail service at Grand Central. Even to have select Albany trains operate out of Grand Central would restore some of the magic of the terminal that was lost years ago, even with the restoration work that happened in the 1990s. Part of the issue has been resolved, with Amtrak's dual-mode locomotives receiving escape nose hatches like the ones found on the Metro-North locomotives. (Speaking of dual-modes, Amtrak is supposed to at a later date modify the escape hatches on the Metro-North dual-modes, which is a better design than the one factory-supplied solution). However, with the current management situation at Amtrak, I find that a service out of Grand Central, for the foreseeable future, is just a dream. That said, the fact that it has happened in my lifetime is something that brings me joy.

Tech Talk

(Continued from page 1)

when the express track was signaled for the first time,

in preparation for the first World's Fair of 1939-40. Those were the signals, US&S Style R (or R2), with the notably larger lenses.

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NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR UPDATE

Subdivision “A” News

Just as fleet incorporation of the R-179s has begun to accumulate momentum and grab most of the attention on Subdivision “B,” the final few moves related to arrival (and conversion) of Subdivision “A”’s 506-car R-188 fleet played out through the spring and early summer of 2018, at last bringing that 6½-year odyssey to a close. As concluding events transpired quickly through mid-March in the advent of “full” CBTC on the ⑦, use of the four remaining R-62A trains virtually collapsed at a corresponding rate, with only one or two such consists seen during rush hours on weekdays. First to then depart for the ⑥ on March 14 were ten of the single units coupled as 5-car sets (1916-20 and 1961-5), after which there tended to be one very last 11-car SMEE train hanging on across the following two weeks (of varying consist make-up) until it finally vanished within the afternoon rush hour of Friday, March 30. Not only did this spell the end of the R-62A era on the ⑦, which had been initiated through the arrival of lone pilot car 2155 in August, 2001 (with the first 11-car train in revenue service the following February 19), but that otherwise anonymous event also drew down the curtain on the reign of SMEE equipment serving the Flushing Line in general, which dated back 70 years to the dedication of the first brand-new train of R-12s by Mayor William O’Dwyer at Main Street on July 13, 1948. This was exactly twice the length of service (1915-50) given by the original IRT Steinway cars with which this now-critical line to Queens was created.

With CBTC in full effect starting on March 31, the 35 R-62As remaining at Corona were then technically “marooned” until their disposition was decided, and they could gradually be removed through pre-arranged non-revenue moves. This process occurred over the next three months, with 5-car unit 2071-5 not arriving at Westchester and being placed in ⑥ service until May 3. Next to go to the ⑥ on May 17 were 10 of the remaining single units, composed of two coupled 5-car sets as follows: 1954-1957-1958-1959-1960 and 1942-1938-1924-1926-1934, with the ends of each (1954, 1960 and 1942, 1934) set up as full-width cabs. The other singles were then drawn (officially) into the work service pool of equipment, with 4-tripper cars 1901, 1904, 1907, and 1908 making their way to Westchester on June 1 (then 1901 and 1908 later finding their way into utility duty out of 207th Street), while leftover car 1923 had migrated to 239th Street for work service as of June 21. Each of these transfers was accomplished with units 2081-5 or 2091-5 employed as lead “horses,” after which the latter was permanently relocated to the Bronx on June 22, followed, at last, by unit 2081-5 on June 26, 2018 when it was first witnessed in service on the ⑥. Interestingly, by early July single R-62A 1907 was train-lining with long-retired ex-Flushing, World’s Fair R-33 “Redbird” 9324 on the Bronx-based garbage train. Meanwhile 4-tripper singles 1902, 1903, 1905, 1906,

and 1910 were based out of Corona as of early July, faithfully holding down their assignment to refuse job “7-Ash” arranged in pairs. This is because the “EP0”-type R-127 and R-134 work motors designated for this duty are sidelined for the summer (at least) due to reliability issues.

Conversely, the one train of R-142As used on the ⑥ in the first few weeks of 2018 continued to pop up until about February 21, at which time it also evaporated, until on March 19 it was observed that 7595-7600 along with 7606-10 were again in regular ⑥ service on weekdays (with 7601-5 as an alternate set). These 15 cars then persisted until all were transferred (back) to the ④ in one final stroke through two separate moves on May 22. Like the R-62A finale in Queens, this also marked an operational landmark for the New Technology generation R-142As, which ended their 18-year assignment on the ⑥. There they were first introduced to the riding public as they started service back on July 10, 2000.

Two somewhat obscure shifts which also took place during this timeframe were the homecoming of Kawasaki R-62s 1406-10 and 1456-60 from the ① to the ③ on March 30 (no relation to the last R-62As on the ⑦) and the return of R-142s 7116-25 from the ④ to the ⑤ on May 21, coincident to relocation of the last R-142As from the ⑥ to the ④ noted above. One correction was offered to the previous (January, 2018) Update, which showed that former Corona single-unit 1939 had actually been shifted to the ⑤/Grand Central Shuttle as early as August 7, 2017 (complete with photographic proof). On or about March 12, 2018 Livonia-assigned single unit 1928 was first observed in a “Cuomo” state on the Grand Central ⑤, with its middle seating removed and modified center stanchions. As part of a weekend G.O. associated with the Clark Street Tunnel rehabilitation, ③-assigned R-62 trains were used on the ②, complete with proper signage, on March 24-25. In addition, an advertised equipment shortage affecting the ① (due to air-conditioning issues) brought about the employment of some R-142s from the ② and ⑤ on the Broadway-7th Avenue Local over the weekend of June 30-July 1.

Subdivision “B” News

By July 1, 2018 there were 80 of the “4-car” R-179s on NYCT property overall, with seven 8-car trains (56 cars) available for passenger service on the ①/②. The monthly delivery summary through the year’s first half showed 3094-7 coming in January; 3082-5 and 3098-3101 in February; 3078-81 and 3110-3 in March; 3102-5 and 3114-7 in April; and 3106-9 along with 3118-21 in May. The rate of arrival picked up appreciably during June, with 3074-7, 3122-5, 3126-9, and 3134-7 all on hand by the end of the month.

A third train of R-179s (3086-9 with 3094-7) was finally introduced to ①/② revenue service on March 5, with the first six Phase I R-32s (3445/3468, 3714-5, 3770-1)

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New York City Subway Car Update

(Continued from page 4)

to be displaced from the **J/Z** moving on to 207th Street (**A/C**) the same day. This set a pattern for the initial round of new car acceptance, which looks to continue through much of 2018 if not beyond. The R-179s will first address the equipment needs at East New York, then eventually enable a sufficient expansion of the **A** fleet to allow for the complete use of full-length (8-car) R-46 trains on the **C**. A third leg of the R-179s' arrival is also planned to coincide with the broader rolling stock requirements associated with the long-term closure of the **L** 14th Street (Canarsie) Tunnel planned between April, 2019 and July, 2020. The latter, and the associated growth in rolling stock requirements that it engenders, will likely preclude any direct retirement of existing equipment as the R-179s arrive. Beyond that timeframe fleet events promise to be dictated by the expected start of deliveries under the R-211 contract recently awarded to Kawasaki Rail Car. Be that as it may, another of the many "hiccups" that have plagued the R-179 contract forced their temporary but complete withdrawal from service on March 20, a hiatus which endured for 3½ weeks until April 13. A fourth new train, composed of 3082-5 and 3098-3101, was then released for service on April 18, followed by the fifth (3050-7) on May 4; the sixth (3078-81 and 3110-3) on May 16; and the seventh (3102-5 and 3114-7, in separate consists) on June 22. An eighth train (3122-5 and 3134-7) was in an advanced state of pre-operational testing as of July 1.

A corresponding shift of Phase I R-32s from East New York to 207th Street was resumed a bit warily as the acceptance of R-179s began again, then was carried out somewhat more readily as confidence in the new cars was gained. By July 1 though, the transfer of existing equipment was still only equal to half the quantity of incoming cars. Sent from the **J/Z** to the **A** and **C** on April 25 were 3818-9 and 3888-9, followed by 3896-7 and 3928-9 on May 12; 3520/3891, 3621/3644, and 3924-5 on May 15; and 3682-3, 3718-9, 3730-1, and 3810-1 on or about June 18. The 84 Phase Is which remained at East New York in early July were still to be found on the **J/Z** at just about any time, though obscured among the broad array of Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s, R-143s, R-160s, and now R-179s already present. As the Phase Is' quantity has increased to some 138 at 207th Street in recent months, so has their presence on the **A**, which now sports upwards of eight or nine trains of R-32s during rush hours (plying both branches), plus perhaps a half-dozen 8-car sets on **C**. The latter has also been a mixed bag for several months, with about ten 8-car R-160A consists now providing base service, supplemented by the

Phase Is and up to seven full-length R-46 trains at any time, seven days a week.

As for Bombardier's "pilot" duet of 5-car R-179 units (3010-9), after a long series of tests the implementation of their necessary refinements was tossed to the builder over this past winter, with cars 3015-9 being disassembled and trucked back to their Plattsburgh facility in late March, followed by sisters 3010-4 as of May 23. They and their companion 110 5-car R-179s will eventually return to NYCT later in 2018-9 as their acceptance program proceeds and they eventually work their way onto the **A**.

Elsewhere on the Subdivision "B" front, R-68 link 2900-3 was restored to passenger service out of its home at Coney Island (**B/G/N/W**) around April 30. This was after spending 2½ years in the shop to have its car bodies mended, due to the damage they received during a September, 2015 derailment which knocked the cars into a decaying bench wall near the station at Hoyt-Schermerhorn Streets. On or about July 2, Pitkin-based R-46 links 5850-3 and 5954-7 were imported for use on the **G**, where in addition to normal duties they and the line's standard R-68s have been used to support a new rush hour Crosstown service between Court Square and the middle siding at Bedford-Nostrand Avenues (see car assignment on the back page). It is possible this is a forerunner of extra **G** service to be provided in the coming months as part of the 14th Street (Canarsie) Tunnel closure mentioned above. Member Bill Zucker reports that an R-46 train from Pitkin (5882-5 and 5906-9) was using the Brighton Line's southbound express track to test an emergency brake system modification middays between Avenue M and Kings Highway from March 7- 28. On June 14, he also observed the morning rush hour R-46 "Special" that travels as an **R** between 95th Street-Bay Ridge and 96th Street-2nd Avenue, then returns to Stillwell Avenue as a **C**, making a second round trip back to 96th Street in the late AM before finally being rested at Coney Island Yard.

Through **M** service between 71st-Continental and Metropolitan Avenues was resurrected, as expected, on April 30, 2018 and the 24 Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s which had been isolated at Fresh Pond Yard for the interim shuttle immediately reunited with their 26 mates. Each has been observed back in their previous **J/Z** routine as June progressed into July, though they should also be sent elsewhere (eventually) as the R-179 acceptance at East New York continues. The new "Myrtle Viaduct" (nee Myrtle-Chambers connector) is very much the contemporary-looking black-painted steel successor to its 1913-built ancestor, which was a somewhat artful structure of (unreinforced) concrete that had performed its function well over a full century of service.

Tech Talk

(Continued from page 3)

Trains running on this segment are still only using the

Automatic Train Protection-Manual mode and not full automatic mode.

RAIL TRACTION TO THE REGION'S BEACHES

by Alexander Ivanoff

For as long as New York has had railroads, they have been catalysts to get people to and from the beach. In fact, what is today the BMT Brighton Line (**BQ**) originally started out in 1878 as the Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island Railway, with its primary purpose being to carry beachgoers. Since the 1870s, the region's rail network has expanded (and in some cases, unfortunately contracted) but that rail network is still essential to moving thousands of sun-seekers to and from the region's most popular summer destinations. Having spent many of my summers on the beach growing up, I almost always enjoy any chance to get to the beach I can get.

Coney Island is, of the region's beaches, one of the busiest and also one of the most accessible. The **DFNQ** all terminate at the massive Stillwell Avenue complex, which is just a stone's throw away from the Coney Island boardwalk, Luna Park, and the beach proper. It is also worth noting that the Stillwell Avenue complex is one of the largest elevated railway stations in the world.

The 1956-era conversion of the west end of the Long Island Rail Road's Far Rockaway Branch to become the IND Rockaway Line (**AS**) has ensured that New York City has some of the best public beach access by transit. I frequently make summer trips to the Rockaways by subway to take advantage of the wonderful beachgoing that the Rockaways has to offer.

Speaking of the Long Island Rail Road, many of the beaches in Nassau and Suffolk Counties are accessible by either the LIRR directly or by a combination of LIRR and either NICE (Nassau Inter-County Express) or another transit provider/shuttle bus service. For instance, on July 7, I made a day trip to Montauk and had the opportunity to utilize a community shuttle (the Hampton Hopper to be exact) as part of my rail-to-beach travels.

For those seeing an experience on the Jersey Shore, both NJ Transit's North Jersey Coast and Atlantic City

Lines offer frequent service to the shore, and NJ Transit has often promoted summer beach travel packages, which include a beach pass. During the summer, NJ Transit adds additional Bay Head shuttle service to accommodate the crowds and promotes service to Monmouth Park.

The interesting aspect of each transit option to the beach is that the majority of them are one-seat rides from New York City proper using electric traction — few require a transfer to another rail service or bus service. The subway services and the LIRR to Long Beach are no more than a ¼-mile walk to the respective beachfronts.

New York City is by no means the only place in the United States where the beach can be reached via electric traction, or at least not anymore! In 2016, the Phase II extension of the Los Angeles Metro (LACMTA) Expo Line opened, reaching Santa Monica. That line has been a resounding success, with LA Metro unable to keep up with ridership demand. Like with New York, the beach in Santa Monica is a quick walk from the Expo Line terminal, and when I walked it back in 2017, it was about fifteen minutes, not including stops. For a more exotic beach trip in Southern California, the San Clemente Pier (and beach) are accessible via Metrolink trains on weekends and on Amtrak seven days a week. Oceanside is also accessible by rail.

While it does not currently go to the beach, Norfolk's The Tide LRT line could if the city of Virginia Beach were to join in the partnership; however in 2016 voters rejected the proposal. The right-of-way, which is publicly owned, could at a later date expand the line to the beach.

With so many of America's finest beaches accessible by transit, whether it be by bus or by rail, the relaxing sounds of a beach are a just a car-free ride away.

(Continued on page 7)

SUBDIVISION "B" CAR ASSIGNMENTS

CARS REQUIRED JULY 2, 2018

The following are different from the assignments that appeared in the July, 2018 *Bulletin*:

LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH
A	80 R-32, 216 R-46	80 R-32, 244 R-46, 8 R-68A
G (as of July 9)	8 R-46, 48 R-68, 4 R-68A	48 R-68, 4 R-68A (no change)
S	40 R-46	40 R-46

The **A** and **S** changes are due to Recovery and Resiliency work at Hammels Wye that affects service south of Beach 67th Street. Far Rockaway **A** trains are diverted to Rockaway Park. **S** Rockaway service operates between Rockaway Park and Far Rockaway, with trains lengthened to 600 feet and OPTO (One Person Train

Operation) suspended.

The **G** change is to reduce passenger surge volumes at Court Square during the removal of the moving walkway in the passageway between the **G** and **EM** platforms. Two additional **G** trains operate between Court Square and Bedford-Nostrand.

Rail Traction to the Region's Beaches

(Continued from page 6)



Five sets of R46s laid up at Rockaway Park Yard. A trains have been a far more common sight here this summer due to track work at Hammels Wye.

Alexander Ivanoff photograph



A Rockaway Park-bound A train at B. 90th Street.

Alexander Ivanoff photograph



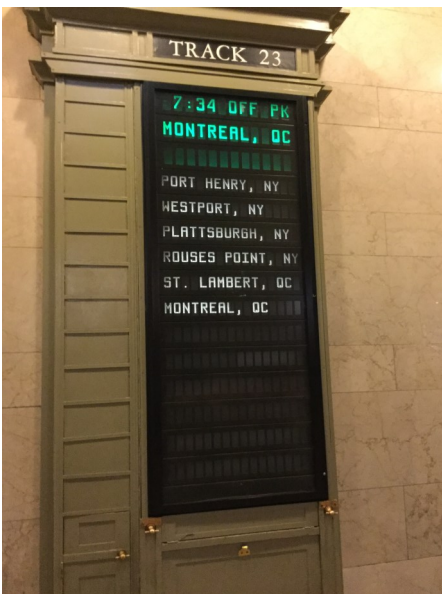
A DE30AC and two DM30ACs at Montauk Yard. Just like in yester-years, the yard is quite busy during the summer.

Alexander Ivanoff photograph



A view of Fort Pond Bay from inside one of the Long Island Rail Road's C3 bilevel coaches. This was your author's first time on them and I was fairly impressed by them.

Alexander Ivanoff photograph



The track display at Grand Central for the *Adirondack*. Your author disagrees with the Amtrak way of having state/province abbreviations, as it does not keep with Metro-North's format.

If Amtrak were to split operations for the *Empire Service*, I would hope the MNR format is adopted.

Alexander Ivanoff photograph



Amtrak P32AC-DM 705 at Track 38 at Grand Central Terminal. There has been talk that at a later date Amtrak will modify Metro-North's dual-modes with the Amtrak design, as Amtrak's retrofit is more watertight and thus less susceptible to locomotive nose corrosion.

Alexander Ivanoff photograph

Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 355

by Ronald Yee and Alexander Ivanoff

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

MTA announced the completion of the signal upgrades for Harold Interlocking in Sunnyside, Queens. The old centralized control point (formerly Harold Tower) governing all signals and switches was replaced with a new decentralized, microprocessor-based system, splitting the control of the interlocking amongst six separate control points, where a failure in one controller would not affect or cascade over to the entire interlocking. This will dramatically improve the reliability and resiliency of the busiest interlocking in North America, handling LIRR and Amtrak trains. In addition to new signals and controls, the interlocking has also received new switches, third rail, and catenary as well as preparations to realign Track 4 which had been on a temporary and slower speed alignment during the Harold rebuilding and reconfiguration. The completion of this work will clear the way for the final phase of the LIRR East Side Access (ESA) terminal at Grand Central Terminal, during which all four of its tunnels will be physically connected to the LIRR at Harold. Contracts for that final stage will be awarded later this Summer with work commencing during Fall, 2018. The entire Harold Interlocking project is expected to cost \$1.5 billion when it is completed with all of its connections to LIRR-ESA. (*Railway Track and Structures*, July 13)

New schedules were placed into effect systemwide on the LIRR spanning a six-week period from July 21-September 3. The schedules will not only permit the aforementioned trackwork to be performed, but also reflect the completion of a phase of ongoing Penn Station track work by Amtrak that had forced a reduction in the number of trains the station complex could handle since January. On the Babylon Branch, the 8:25 AM train from Freeport stopping at Baldwin, Rockville Center, and Jamaica once again terminates at Penn Station instead of Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn. On the Far Rockaway Branch, the 8:10 AM and 5:53 PM trains making all stops from Far Rockaway to Valley Stream returned to Penn Station. The morning train had been diverted to Hunterspoint Avenue and the evening train diverted to Atlantic Terminal since January. The 5:32 PM once again originates at Penn Station (it had been originating at Jamaica). On the Hempstead Branch, the 7:05 PM from Penn Station once again departs from Penn Station, not Atlantic Terminal. On the Port Jefferson Branch, the 5:06 PM from Penn Station to Syosset, Cold Spring Harbor, and Huntington, and the Port Washington Branch's 5:50 PM to Bayside, Douglaston, Little Neck, and Great Neck are both restored. These trains allowed the 5:33 PM from Penn Station to once again terminate at Hicksville and 5:49 PM from Hunterspoint to operate express through Huntington. Lastly, the 1:32 PM from Penn Station to Farmingdale was removed from the schedule, with passengers advised to

use eastbound Ronkonkoma trains 18 minutes earlier or 42 minutes later. (LIRR press release, July 18)

The LIRR, upon completion of the double-tracking project between Farmingdale and Ronkonkoma, will finally be able to operate reverse-peak train service not possible with the original single track and passing siding configuration of the line. Immediate service improvements proposed for the schedule to be effective September 3, 2018 include: an extension of train #2300, departing Penn Station at 6:07 AM, will be able to operate east of its present terminus at Farmingdale all the way to Ronkonkoma, offering a connection to Train #202 departing Ronkonkoma at 7:30 AM and arriving at 8:54 AM into Greenport. Two evening reverse peak trains, #2351 and #2355, will originate from Ronkonkoma at 5:57 PM and 6:36 PM respectively instead of Farmingdale. Train #2355 will also connect with Greenport Train #253 and provide a new reverse peak travel option for passengers traveling in the evening reverse peak direction. Train #2008 departing Penn Station at 7:39 AM will add station stops at Bethpage and Wyandanch and Train #2061 departing Ronkonkoma at 4:48 PM will add station stops at Brentwood and Wyandanch. Prior to the double-tracking of the line, this was not possible as trains had to skip select stations in order to pass through a single-track section as quickly as possible to minimize their impact on peak direction train traffic. Adding those stations will require some minor adjustments to their schedules. Finally, the second track will provide improved service reliability and resiliency with the ability to use the second track to bypass disabled trains or track outages that currently cripple service on the single-track line. (LIRR press release, July 23)

On Saturday evening, July 21, an equipment move from the LIRR's West Side Yard into Penn Station derailed two cars mid-consist of an M-7 electric multiple unit commuter train. Aside from re-railing and removing the two derailed cars, several sections of track and crossovers were damaged, requiring replacement or repair. While efforts were made to complete the track and switch repairs prior to the Monday morning peak period, it could not be completed in time to permit access to all of the tracks in the yard. Late on Sunday evening, the LIRR announced that eight Penn Station-bound trains would be either cancelled or terminated at Jamaica on Monday, July 23. As repairs could not be completed before the evening peak, seven PM peak trains had to be cancelled. Normal service was resumed for Tuesday. ABC and NBC video coverage showed M-7 car 7364 leaning at an approximately 30 degree angle with the left front corner of its front end crunched into a concrete abutment and M-7 car 7012 being re-railed by a Metro-North Railroad hi-rail crane. (ABC, NBC-TV News, July 23)

(Continued on page 9)

Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 8)***MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD**

Using funds “saved” when select Pascack Valley Line trains, including all but one AM peak express train, were cancelled to facilitate the installation of Positive Train Control (PTC), the Nanuet station will receive a facelift including a repainting of the entire station platform canopy, installation of bird netting, repairing an access ramp, and replacing a passenger shelter. In addition, Metro-North agreed to add two cars to Train #1616, making the sole remaining express train to Hoboken a six-car train, cross-honor Pascack Valley Line tickets on the Port Jervis Line as well as the Haverstraw/Ossining ferries, and east-of-Hudson trains, and coordinate with Rockland County for the Tappan ZEEexpress bus service. (Lohud.com, July 19)

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CTrail ridership during its first week of operation, June 18-24, when fares were charged, exceeded expectations, topping off at 10,719 as announced by Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy, who declared the new \$760 million Hartford Line a commuter rail success. There is confidence that ridership will continue to grow as more people are attracted to the new service as an alternative to the traffic-clogged Interstate 91 and spur development along the corridor spanning from New Haven to Hartford, Connecticut and onward to Springfield, Massachusetts. (masslive.com, June 26)

AMTRAK

Amtrak and the Harrisburg Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society are undergoing negotiations on a temporary and possibly future permanent home for GG-1 4859 and a Pennsylvania Railroad class N6B caboose that had been on display at the Harrisburg station for decades. Both pieces of historic equipment have been moved out of the station to a siding while modernization work is done to the Harrisburg station which includes a total upgrade of that station and its facilities. The track and platform that formerly housed the GG-1 and caboose are being upgraded to a high-level platform to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Once the work is complete, there will be high-level platforms for use by Amtrak Harrisburg and *Pennsylvanian* services and those tracks will no longer be available for display purposes. Two alternatives are the front-runners thus far: construction of a new track at the station, albeit leaving the equipment partially exposed to the elements, or moving the equipment 1,000 feet north of the station to a new pavilion adjacent to Harris Tower that would shelter the locomotive and caboose from the elements. The President of the NRHS chapter has expressed a preference for the construction of a new track within the Harrisburg station track complex so that the GG-1 and caboose can be seen by customers using the station. As the GG-1 is officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Amtrak, using federal funds, cannot place the NRHS and its interests at a disadvantage, namely evicting the

equipment from the station, without finding a suitable new location to display it. GG-1 4859 is of historical significance as it was the first electric locomotive to haul a passenger train into Harrisburg in January, 1938, just a month after it was built in Altoona, Pennsylvania and delivered to the Pennsylvania Railroad. *(Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: While the locomotive and caboose are left sitting on that isolated siding while a new permanent home is constructed, temporary chain link fencing should be erected all around it with some security lighting shining on it on both sides to ward off vandalism.)* (Al Holtz, July 16)

The departure of the 6:30 AM North Carolina Department of Transportation train to Charlotte on July 10 ushered in the next chapter in intercity rail transportation with the opening of the new Union Station at 510 West Martin Street in Raleigh. Four daily round trips as well as Amtrak's *Silver Star* will stop at this new facility, which has a 9,200-square-foot passenger waiting and seating area and a 920-foot-long center island platform between two newly built tracks serving only passenger trains. This track configuration permits freight trains to safely bypass the Raleigh passenger station's platform tracks without delay. (Al Holtz, July 11)

MUSEUMS

The Branford Electric Railway Association (BERA/ Shore Line Trolley Museum) sent out an email on July 24 that the Board of Trustees intended to deaccession Atlantic City Transportation car 250 from BERA's collection. Car 250 had been acquired from the Trolley Museum of New York in 2007 but was not intended to be part of the collection. It was owned by the late Bruce Thain, who recently passed.

The car was relocated in 2007 to Thain's Guilford, Connecticut property and stored there, with little work having been done to the car in the last decade, with the car in poor condition. BERA reported the car needed to be moved. BERA's Collections Committee recommended the car be donated to the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society (NJERHS). Car 250 will join Public Service car 2651 as part of the NJERHS collection.

Due to an oversight error from November of 2015, BERA is acting to correct the accession list to remove car 250 to allow the donation to the NJERHS at the museum's next regularly scheduled Board meeting on August 11. (BERA email, July 24)

In other BERA news, the State of Connecticut has awarded the Shore Line Trolley Museum a \$1.5 million bonding grant. This money will be used to provide fire safety to the collection, move the shop to Building 9, and provide a new restroom facility in the yard area. Planning is underway. (BERA email, July 26)

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker and officials from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) unveiled the first of 24 new low-floor LRVs (Light Rail Vehicles) ordered by the MBTA to provide the cars necessary to serve the extension of the Green Line into Somerset. This extension is expected to open in

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Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 9)*

2022, around four years after the June, 2018 ground-breaking. CAF-USA will receive carbody shells and frames from Spain at its Elmira, New York plant, assemble the cars with components made in the United States, and test them prior to delivery to the MBTA. The new LRVs are expected to carry 10% more passengers than existing LRVs and new-design sliding doors will reduce station dwell times by smoothing passenger flow during the boarding process. The first of the new LRVs are expected to enter service in September and feature an advanced structural design with crash energy management, a first for LRVs in the United States. (*Progressive Railroading*, July 20)

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTA placed the first of 15 ACS-64 electric locomotives (901) into service on Wednesday, July 11. Built by Siemens of Sacramento, California, they will replace, then expand upon, the current seven 1990-vintage AEM-7 (2301-7) and one 1998-vintage ALP-44 (2308) electric locomotives, which will be retired as the new units go into service. The added locomotives will eventually be used to haul the 45 multi-level commuter coaches currently on order with CRRC to be built at its Springfield, Massachusetts factory for \$137.5 million. (*Philly Voice*, SEPTA, July 12)

SEPTA "KEY" Turnstiles went into service on Monday, July 23 at the 30th Street station. They will be in effect Monday through Friday, 6 AM to 8 PM. The turnstiles will be set to "free-wheel" and permit unlimited access at all other times and during weekends and holidays with customers paying their fares to the train's Conductor. During the times the turnstiles are in service, customers must swipe the magnetic stripe of their SEPTA *Trailpass* on the reader at the top of the turnstile. Seniors and reduced-fare *Key Card* holders will be required to purchase the correct Regional Rail ticket at the sales office and present those tickets with their photo ID. Passengers exiting the station will simply exit through any turnstile, rotogate, or ADA exit gate without swiping a fare media card. (SEPTA press release, July, 2018)

WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

A systemic fault in soldering quality of components discovered by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) led to a decision to suspend the ongoing delivery of the 7000-class Metro cars on May 9. At that time, 564 of the 748 cars ordered from Kawasaki had been delivered. When the soldering issue is resolved, deliveries at a pace of 20 cars per month are expected to resume. No delivery resumption date has been set as WMATA and Kawasaki technicians inspect all of the 564 cars delivered thus far as well as those completed at the Lincoln, Nebraska factory for defective soldering work and rectify them. In the meanwhile, another issue with the 7000s has arisen that has resulted in an FTA (Federal Transit Administration)-mandated installation of safety chains between cars. Since the 7000s went into service, there have been three inci-

dents in which visually impaired customers have fallen between the cars while trying to board, mistaking the gap between cars for doorways. The rubber barriers at the car ends have proven ineffective as a safety barrier to prevent such mishaps. WMATA expects to begin retrofitting all of its 7000s with safety chains at a pace of 50 cars per month and attempt to meet a year-end FTA deadline. There is a possibility that non-compliant cars may have to be removed from service on January 1, 2019, resulting in a temporary car shortage and potential 26% reduction in train service. The structurally deficient 1000-class and unreliable 4000-class cars have already been retired. For the time being, automated external PA announcements are being made as a train makes its station stop pronouncing "this is a 7000-series railcar" to alert the visually impaired and blind to the hazard. (*Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: It is hoped that the retirement and removal of the 5000-class cars being replaced by the 7000s is suspended until these two major issues are resolved to mitigate any car shortages.*) (Greater Washington.org, July 18)

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Because only one manufacturer, CRRC, submitted a bid for the April, 2017 RFP (Request for Proposals) for 75 Gallery commuter coaches with options for additional cars, Metra will re-issue the RFP and, as a first, consider alternatives to the classic Gallery cars most associated with Chicago's commuter rail scene. Such bi-level or multi-level cars may permit a low-floor design to enable the cars to meet ADA requirements for platform level boarding for passengers with disabilities. It is hoped that the re-issue of the RFP will encourage innovative design as well as a more economical purchase price per car. (*Progressive Railroading*, July 19)

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) President Dorval Carter, Jr., and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities announced that the CTA plans to make all of its stations fully accessible to persons with disabilities. The All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) is expected to take around 20 years, modernize 42 stations currently not accessible to the disabled, and upgrade or replace elevators and escalators at 162 stations with existing elevators and escalators. This continues a program the Mayor has initiated with the CTA which has already made 71% of its system's stations accessible using ramps or elevators. Stations upgraded include the Red Line's Wilson, Garfield, 63rd, and 87th Streets, and Addison on the Blue Line and Quincy in the Loop by the end of 2018 and three new accessible stations at Morgan on the Pink Line, Cermak-McCormack Place on the Green Line, and Washington/Wabash in the Loop, which replaced two older stations that could not be retrofitted economically. Challenges at the stations to be rebuilt include historical aspects, century-old structures, and design and street-level space constraints. (Chicago Transit Authority, July 19)

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

A dispute between a freight rail operator and Twin Cit-

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

ies transit planners is coming to an end, clearing one of the biggest obstacles to construction of the Southwest light rail line, the largest public works project in the state.

A pact struck with Glencoe-based Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) would allow light rail and freight trains to share part of the nearly 15-mile corridor between downtown and Eden Prairie.

The deal still needs final approval from the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and the federal Surface Transportation Board, but officials emphasized its importance in announcing it July 16.

Southwest Light Rail, a \$2 billion extension of the existing Green Line, is slated to begin service in 2023. Between Minneapolis and Eden Prairie, stops are planned for St. Louis Park, Hopkins and Minnetonka.

In the works for decades, Southwest has encountered numerous delays and cost increases due to a range of issues, from litigation by neighbors to a crash-protection wall between freight and LRT trains. (*Minneapolis Star Tribune* via *Mass Transit Magazine*, July 17)

DENVER, COLORADO

26 months after the opening of the University of Colorado A Line, the CPUC (Colorado Public Utilities Commission) and the FRA (Federal Railroad Administration) gave permission to the RTD (Regional Transportation District) to remove flagger protections during June at six of the 11 grade crossings along the A Line connecting downtown Denver with Denver International Airport. Flaggers had been required at the 11 grade crossings since the line's opening on April 22, 2016 due to software issues affecting the reliability of the quad-gate grade crossing barriers that were intended to establish quiet zones all along the line. The six crossings are: Clayton, Steele, Holly, Dahlia, Havana, and Chambers. The RTD is now working with the FRA and CPUC to remove the flaggers from the remaining five grade crossings. (*Railway Track and Structures*, June 22)

Almost two years after it had originally been scheduled to open for service, Denver's RTD received permission from the FRA to commence the next phase of testing prior to the line's eventual opening. Up to three trains will operate over the entire 11.2-mile-long G Line from Denver Union Station to Wheat Ridge. It will fully simulate 21 hours of passenger operation and familiarize Train Operators with the line. No date has been set for an opening day for passenger service. The delays have been largely attributed to a lack of confidence in the reliability of the grade crossing protection systems identical to that used on the A Line, requiring the use of flag persons since opening day. (*Progressive Railroading*, July 23)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

LAMTA (Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority) will complete the year-long process of retiring the 54 car fleet of Nippon-Sharyo P865 light rail

cars (100-153) by the end of August. These cars were built in 1990 for the opening of the Long Beach Blue Line. Car 144 will be donated to the Orange Empire Railway Museum located in Perris, California. These cars are being replaced by P3010 class cars built by Kinkisharyo. The 15 P2020 class cars, built by Nippon-Sharyo in 1994-5 (154-168) and almost identical in appearance to the P865, will continue in service on the Blue and Expo Lines for around another five years before being retired. (*Progressive Railroading*, July 12)

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

The NCTD (North County Transit District) Board of Directors approved an order for five Siemens Charger diesel locomotives scheduled for delivery between March and June, 2021 and to be placed into service after three to six months of acceptance testing. They will, on a one-for-one basis, replace existing engines dating back to 1975-92 that have reached the end of their expected service lives. The new units cost over \$37 million but will be 16% more fuel efficient and have just 10% of the emissions of the older units they replace. They will also enable NCTD to operate an additional 36 additional *Coaster* trips each week, six per weekday and three each on Saturdays and Sundays. This order was tacked onto an existing joint order already being built for the California and Illinois Departments of Transportation. (*Metro*, July 9)

PARIS, FRANCE

The coordinated deployment of the ERTMS train control system on the high-speed rail routes linking London, Paris, and Brussels was agreed by the four infrastructure managers at a meeting in Paris on July 19.

Channel Tunnel operator Getlink, the United Kingdom's High Speed 1, France's SNCF Réseau, and Belgium's Infrabel have committed to developing a common strategy for implementation. They will share expertise, select a uniform technical system, and work to a common deployment schedule with the aim of maximizing economies of scale.

The deployment of ERTMS on the international high-speed routes is intended to improve interoperability, capacity, and punctuality while avoiding any problems arising from obsolescence of the existing TVM430 train control system. (*Railway Gazette*, July 20)

SOFIA, BULGARIA

Sofia Mayor Yordanka Fandakova and Sofia Metropolitan CEO Stoyan Bratov have visited the first train for metro Line 3 following its delivery to Sofia. The train was transported by road from Newag's Nowy Sacz factory in Poland. Each of the three cars was carried on a separate vehicle.

In September, 2015 a consortium of Siemens and Newag was awarded a €140 million contract to supply rolling stock and signaling for the first phase of the east-west Line 3, which is due to open in 2019. The base order is for 20 three-car sets and the contract includes an option for 10 more.

The vehicles are based on Siemens' Inspiro trains that are operating in Warsaw. Siemens is supplying car bod-

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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ies from its Vienna plant and bogies from Graz. Final assembly is taking place at Newag's plant, and Newag will be responsible for servicing during the warranty period.

The trains are being built with driver's cabs, although the line will be equipped for GoA3 automated operation. They will use overhead electrification and are equipped with air-conditioning. (*Metro Report International*, July 19)

UKRAINE

GEVO's in Ukraine? It is a thing! General Electric Transportation has rolled out the first of 30 TE33A Evolution Series locomotives which it is building for Ukrainian Railways (UZ) at its Erie, Pennsylvania plant. The final 10% of assembly work as well as painting of the locomotives is to be undertaken in Ukraine under the Ukrainian equivalent of "Buy American" laws. Both Chinese and European builders bid for the contract.

UZ ordered the locomotives on February 23 to meet a requirement for additional locos to haul heavy bulk agricultural product and metals trains. The modern locomotives are replacing UZ's legacy diesel fleet, 90% of which is estimated to have exceeded its planned service life and can safely be assumed to date back to the Soviet era.

The order was placed a part of a framework agreement which includes provision for General Electric to deliver kits for the assembly of up to 195 additional locomotives over 10 years, to provide long-term maintenance services and assist in modernizing UZ's existing fleet, which could take the overall value to US\$1 billion. Regular maintenance is to be performed at UZ's regional depots, with General Electric providing support for more extensive scheduled overhauls.

Originally developed for the Kazakhstan, the TE33A is derived from General Electric's North American ES44AC design, adapted for the 1,520-millimeter gauge market and complying with GOST (Russian and Euro-Asia) technical standards. Powered by a 12-cylinder 4,500-horsepower Evolution Series engine that meets UIC Stage IIIa emission standards, it is designed for operation in temperatures between -60°C (-76°F) and +45°C (+113°F). (*Railway Gazette*, July 19)

The European Bank for Reconstruction & Development is providing Mariupol city transport operator MTTU with a loan of up to €13 million to finance the acquisition of up to 72 low-floor trolleybuses, spare parts, and maintenance equipment, and the modernization of the existing depot and electrification equipment.

The loan will be secured by a municipal guarantee and complemented by a loan of up to €2 million from the Clean Technology Fund and a €3 million grant from the European Union-backed Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership.

Announcing the loan on July 6, EBRD said the popula-

tion of the second largest municipality in the Donetsk (Donbass) region had increased by 20% in recent years as a result of the arrival of 100,000 internally displaced persons (due to the civil war in the Donbass region), and demand for public transport was increasing.

The new trolleybuses will be used on existing routes and to expand the network to serve the seafront Morskoy Boulevard. They will provide easier access for passengers reduced mobility, and are expected to reduce the fleet's electricity consumption by 40%.

EBRD will also provide €460,000 in technical assistance grants to support project implementation and the restructuring of MTTU on more commercial lines. (*Editor's Note by Alexander Ivanoff: While some might take issue with this non-rail-related article being in here, I felt it fitting as two of ERA's most active contributors have made trips to Ukraine recently and despite the heartbreak that is the civil war in the eastern part of the country, Ukraine is another home to me, having been there twice during my high school years.*) (*Metro Report International*, July 13)

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

PK Transportnye Systemy presented its newest tram model at its St. Petersburg factory on July 20.

The single-section 100% low-floor Lionet left the workshop driven by a traction battery along a short section of catenary-free track. Designated 71-911M, the Lionet is a development of the City Star model. PK TS has made 38 City Stars, and the largest fleet is in Rostov-na-Donu. The Lionet features changes in the interior and exterior design, as well as a redesigned driver's cab.

The Lionet and three-section Lion, the first of which is currently being assembled in St Petersburg, will be displayed at InnoTrans 2018 in Berlin in September. Both models will be there in their 1,435-millimeter versions.

PK TS plans to undertake trial runs of Lionet in Romania later in the year, before a longer period of dynamic testing in the Russian city of Perm. This follows the signing of a co-operation agreement between Perm municipality and PK TS on July 18. (*Metro Report International*, July 23)

ISRAEL

National operator Israel Railways has awarded government-owned Rafael Advanced Defense Systems a US\$8.2 million contract for the development of a Cyber Security Operation Centre.

This is intended to provide ISR with improved monitoring and control capabilities, and better protection against attempts to penetrate and attack its electronic systems.

The CSOC will be adjacent to the central control facility which is under construction at ISR's headquarters in Lod, and will be staffed and operated by ISR.

The National Cyber Security Authority has classified the rail network as critical infrastructure, while ISR believes it is more at risk of cyber attack than comparable rail operators in other countries. (*Railway Gazette*, July 19)

SWITZERLAND IN THE LATE SUMMER

by Jack May

(Photographs by the author)

(Continued from July, 2018 issue)

We woke up in the morning with the realization that this would be our last full day in Europe; all good things must come to an end. But there were still a few items to accomplish and so we had to make hay while the sun shines — and so it did on this blue-sky morning. We would be spending the night in Milan and since we did not want to go back up the mountain to pick up our luggage, we took our bags with us after breakfast and rode the BOB's 8:03 down to Wilderswil, arriving at 8:19. We had seen lockers on the station's platform two days earlier and a number of them were vacant, waiting breathlessly for our luggage. Our cog-wheel train to Schynige Platte was due out at 8:45 and we were among the first to board, just as the sun was clearing the mountains.

Each train on this steep and scenic 800-millimeter gauge Schynige Platte Bahn (SPB) consists of an electric locomotive pushing two cars up the mountain under 1,500-volt d.c. catenary (or retarding them on the return trip). Similar to the steam-operated Brienz Rothorn Bahn, the trains run in packs (convoys). Like the BRB, the railway is entirely rack-operated and climbs grades of up to 25 percent, but rather than employing the double Abt system, Riggenbach technology is used (same as its BOB parent). The single-track railway was opened in 1893, but was not electrified until 1914.

In fact, like the old Furka before the base tunnel was built, the overhead system has to be dismantled every year because of heavy winter snowfall and occasional avalanches. Thus the line runs only from the end of May to the end of October, but I found out that even during this period there are still days when it is not wise to ride it. In July, 1989 I reached Wilderswil with a ticket in hand (purchased in Interlaken), but upon my arrival I was offered a refund, being told that the top of the mountain was totally fogged in. The agent said they were operating, but I would be disappointed if I rode the line. I took her advice and ended up spending the day in Bern, where I met another tourist traveling alone, who lived in Indianapolis (Speedway) and turned out to be the next-door neighbor of a member of the trade association with which I was associated. It is a rare trip that coincidences of this sort do not occur.

Thus this would be my first trip over the line. The trains operate every 40 minutes with an end-to-end running time of 52 minutes. As we ascended we operated alongside the meter-gauge BOB for a short distance, but then turned away. We passed a "down train," but it was in shadow because of the low sun. After four-and-a-half miles we reached the kulm, 6,520 feet up, at 9:37, having climbed some 4,660 feet, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, in a little less than an hour.

The summit contains a hotel, the usual restaurant facilities and tourist shops, and most interestingly, an al-

pine garden. The views are outstanding, with the Eiger, Monch, and Jungfrau looming as the most distinctive peaks. But they are positioned to the south, and I found it tricky to photograph them until I was able to discover a way to prevent the sun from reflecting directly into my camera lens. The Swiss tourism folks clearly knew that, and they had planted "frames" in the ground at eye height for just that purpose. Positioning my camera at an appropriate angle behind one of these rectangles allowed my lens to be in shadow while I composed and took photos. On this date the view from the peak also included a layer of mist that made some of the mountains appear to be rising from clouds rather than the ground.

It was a bit early for the crowds and we were able to explore the area with little contact with others. Being the end of the season the somewhat hilly garden was not in full bloom, but there were enough flowers to keep Clare's interest and allow some good photographs. Those with a botanical bent would be best served by visiting Schynige Platte in the middle of the summer. We did not see the 10:17 train arrive, but were back in time for the 10:57, which had two packed sections. The visitors were received by two musicians in costume playing Swiss horns — a traditional oom-pah-pah greeting — and were directed to the hotel and all of its facilities. Very colorful.

I photographed those trains as they pulled in and we boarded the second of the two that made up the 11:01 departure. This allowed me to get good photos of the first section of this short platoon on the line's acutely angled cutback-style curves — some with beautiful backgrounds. There are two passing sidings and we ran by a three-section pack (10:45 ex-Wilderswil) and later a two-section group (11:25 departure) at the "loops." The latter included what appeared to be wooden museum or heritage cars. Our arrival back in Wilderswil was on time at 11:53.

Now what to do? Our initial plan was to pick up our luggage and continue to Milan on the 12:49 using connections that would bring us to the Italian city at 16:35; our backup strategy was a departure one hour later. But it was sunny and we had not gotten good photos of the BLM along the ledge to Murren with the mountains in the background. We made a quick decision to stay for another three hours, which meant a much later arrival in Milan, as there were no through trains via the Simplon Tunnel that late in the afternoon. However, there were connecting locals and regional trains, which would result in the trip extending for an extra hour, with an arrival time of 20:31. But if something went wrong, ...

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Switzerland in the Late Summer

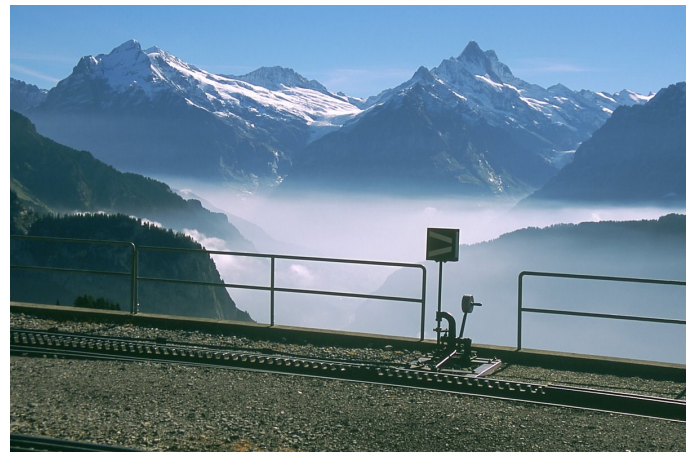
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Two views from the platform of the 800-millimeter gauge rack line to Schnige Platte at Wilderswil, the “down mountain” terminal. The gentleman advertising the line loves skateboarding. The tracks at left are used by the meter-gauge Bernese Oberland Bahn.



Despite a schedule that calls for operations only from June to October, the SPB has this contraption to deal with the occasional snowstorm that can occur at any time.



Views from the summit station of the railroad, some 6,520 feet above sea level. The Eiger, Monch, and Jungfrau appear to be rising from the early morning mist.

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Switzerland in the Late Summer

(Continued from page 14)



Two close-up views of the SPB's motive power and its two-car trains at the Schynige Platte terminal. The locomotives, operating at 1,500 volts d.c. and on the Rigenbach rack system, were built for the similar 800-millimeter gauge Wengernalp cog railway between 1910 and 1912 — and became hand-me-downs between the 1960s and 1990s. The electrical equipment was built by pioneer manufacturer Alioth, which was merged into Brown-Boveri in 1911. The photo at right features a sign advertising the Alpine Garden, one of the summit's tourist attractions.



Two views shooting forward from the second train of a convoy returning to the SPB's base at Wilderswil. The town of Interlaken is featured in the photo at right.



On the return trip we passed a train of historic equipment heading up the mountain. The SPB has rolling stock that dates back to its opening as a steam road in 1893.

(Continued next issue)

Around New York's Transit System

Museum Train Operates to Coney Island

NYC Transit operated a New York Transit Museum excursion train from Manhattan to Coney Island-Stillwell Avenue on Sunday, July 8. The train consist was: S-2390-2391-2392-6095ABC-N, one former BMT B-Type "Standard" and a D-Type "Triplex" unit. The train originated out of 207th Street Yard and, due to the multitude of planned construction and repair related General Orders in effect that day and the "flipping" of the **D** and **F** routes in Brooklyn (**D** on the Culver elevated line and **F** on the West End elevated line), it was forced to take a circuitous routing via the Eighth Avenue Line to Jay Street-MetroTech and over the Culver elevated to Stillwell Avenue and then return north on the Brighton Line following the entire route of the **A** train to reach 96th Street-Second Avenue, where the trip officially began at around 11 AM. The excursion train retraced its path on the **A** back to Stillwell Avenue, where it discharged and laid up in the yard for the midday. At around 4 PM, the train returned to Stillwell Avenue, where it received its excursion passengers and made a run back to Manhattan via the Culver elevated and enabled the train to easily return to its home base at 207th Street Yard. While discharge stops were made at select stations enroute, the final passenger discharge station stop was at 175th Street on the **A** train. *(Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: Of interest with this consist is how it is coupled together. To enable the vintage pre-World War II subway cars to operate as a multiple unit (MU) train, the coupler on B-Type 2392 has been modified so that it can MU with D-Types and R-1 to R-9 equipment. The coupler of B-Type 2390 is still un-modified. The couplers on both ends of the D-Type "Triplex" (6095A and 6095C) and D-Type 6112A have already been modified to make them compatible with the R-1 to R-9. At some point in the near future, the coupler at the other end (6112C) will also be modified for R-1 to R-9 compatibility. It is important to remember that although these modifications will enable MU operations with regard to propulsion and braking, they will NOT permit train-lined door operation between the historic sets.)*

Flushing Line Rehabilitation Project

NYC Transit began a two-year-long, \$45 million project that will repaint and restore the steel elevated structure of the Flushing Line from 48th Street and Queens Boulevard to Mets-Willets Point. Phase one commenced in July, 2018, covering the section from Mets-Willets Point to 82nd Street and Roosevelt Avenue. Phase two will cover the section from the 82nd Street station to the 46th Street station. Testing of paint chips falling off the severely rusting elevated structure (mandated by legislation put forth by New York State Senator Jose Peralta and signed by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo in December, 2017) revealed that there was an extreme lead paint contamination to the commu-

nities over which the line runs, some samples testing over 40 times the 5,000 parts per million safe limit threshold. As a result, the repainting work will include a total stripping of all layers of existing paint down to the bare metal, identification and remediation/repair of any structural defects, then three coats of modern lead-free paint including one layer of primer sealant. *(Editor's Note by Ronald Yee: The section of elevated structure from north of 103rd Street-Corona Plaza to Mets-Willets Point was repainted just a few years ago in conjunction with the opening of Citi Field in 2009. It is unclear if that section of the structure needs to be totally stripped and repainted, as the paint (as observed from street level on July 17) is still in good condition. Despite that, it may still be ordered as a lead paint remediation effort.)*

Clark Street Tunnel "Fix and Fortify" Project Completed

NYCT completed the "Fix and Fortify" project for the two 1.2-mile-long Clark Street Tubes, which carry over 145,000 daily riders on the **2** and **3** routes between lower Manhattan and Brooklyn. The tunnels had been closed almost every weekend for the past six months to permit the replacement, repair, and upgrading of critical components in the tunnel including 11,000 feet of benchwall and conduit damaged from saltwater flooding during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, 99,000 feet of copper communication, 54,000 feet of fiber optic cable, 29,000 feet of radio antenna, and 32,000 feet of signal cable as well as 1,500 feet of track. Critical items such as communications and signal control equipment and emergency water pumps and their controls were upgraded and in some cases, raised or moved to locations less vulnerable to flooding. Measures to prevent future flooding from storm surges were installed.

CBTC Activated on More of Flushing Line

A ride on the Flushing Line and observation of the signals reveals that the CBTC (Communication-Based Train Control) signal system has been activated on the southbound local track between Mets-Willets Point and the northern limits of 74th Street Interlocking. This marks another phase of gradual cut-ins of the new signals on this line. All three tracks between 103rd Street and Main Street-Flushing as well as Track M from 33rd Street Interlocking to the southern limits of 74th Street Interlocking had already been activated in stages since April, 2018. Full cut-over is still slated by the end of 2018. In addition, emergency steel girder replacement was performed from July 9-27 at 61st Street-Woodside. Two sections of steel girders supporting Track M over the station mezzanine had failed, necessitating a 10 mph slow order through the entire station for trains operating on Track M. New concrete roadbed flooring was poured by July 19 and ties and rails reinstalled during the week of July 23.