

# The Bulletin



**Electric Railroaders' Association, Incorporated**

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## **The Bulletin**

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## **This Month's Cover Photo:**

R-1 170 (American Car and Foundry, 1930) is on the head end of a BMT 4th Avenue Local service and has just arrived at its terminal station, Queensboro Plaza, c. 1948. Unknown photographer

## **In This Issue: Canarsie Line Rehabilitation Update...Page 2**

## **SUBWAY TRAIN DERAILS— VANDALISM THE APPARENT CAUSE**

A northbound **A** train derailed on Sunday morning, September 20, after a maniacal, laughing vandal tossed metal clamps onto the tracks, police sources said. The uptown train was about 50 feet into the 14th Street station in the West Village when it ran into the metal tie plates, also known as D plates, at 8:14 AM. Three passengers suffered minor injuries. One refused medical attention, another was treated at the scene, and the third was taken to Bellevue Hospital for further treatment, officials said.

The incident train, the 7:35½ **A** from Lefferts Boulevard to 207th Street, was composed of R-46s (N) 6062-6063-6065-6064+6142-6143-6145-6144 (S).

The plates are normally used to secure rails to the roadbed. Police sources said the ones thrown onto the tracks had been left behind by NYC Transit work crews.

The alleged saboteur, Demetrius Harvard, 30, of the Bronx, tossed them onto the tracks, but a bystander leapt onto the roadbed to clear the debris before the train pulled in, a police source said. Harvard — who has an extensive criminal history — was undeterred. He threw more clamps just as the **A** train roared into the station, the source said. Commuters saw the suspect laughing at the disaster he unleashed, sources said. Good Samaritans held him at the station until cops took him into custody.

Police brought Harvard to NYPD Transit District headquarters at the Canal Street **A C E** station for questioning. He was later charged with reckless endangerment, criminal mischief, assault, and criminal trespassing, police said. Police and Metropolitan Transportation Authority investigators recovered a rail plate believed to have derailed the

train in the tunnel just south of the 14th Street station, according to an internal incident report obtained by the Daily News.

The brazen act caused one of New York City's most catastrophic train derailments in years. The train's first two wheel sets were thrown from the tracks and the front car slammed into four structural pillars, causing its metal siding to peel back like a can of anchovies and its front three door panels to be damaged.

"Hundreds of feet" of electrified third rail was damaged or destroyed, said Frank Jezycki, Acting Senior Vice president of Subways at NYC Transit. Around 200 feet of tracks and ties also sustained heavy damage, transit sources said.

Transit workers have been told in the past not to leave construction materials near tracks or in reach of straphangers, police sources said. But MTA Chief Safety Officer Pat Warren asserted the agency's employees were not to blame for the derailment, which caused extensive train delays across five different subway lines. "We've ruled out that this was any malfunction of our equipment or any inappropriate action of our crews," Warren said at a press conference that day. Transit officials said the rail plates that appeared to derail the train were stored in a secure, nonpublic area. The Transit Authority also stores the plates in subway tunnels, officials said.

First responders evacuated about 135 people from the train, who were all able to exit onto the station platform, police said.

The derailment tripped a breaker that cut the power on the uptown express tracks between Canal and 34th Streets, stranding another train in the tunnel just south of Penn

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**Subway Train Derails**

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Station with about 125 people on board, transit officials said. Those riders were removed by a rescue train that was dispatched onto an adjacent local track. Transit crews set up a metal emergency bridge plank so the stuck riders could move onto the working train.

Harvard is not suspected of any previous derailments but has a litany of arrests both in and outside the subway system, according to police sources. Counterterror units in the NYPD conducted an investigation but do not believe the act was linked to any type of protest or terrorism, sources said.

Service on the **A** and **C** lines was suspended in both directions south of 14th Street, and uptown service was knocked out from Canal Street to 59th Street-Columbus Circle. Rerouted trains also caused headaches for **D****E****F** train riders throughout Sunday morning and into the afternoon.

By 3:30 PM, **A** trains were running on local tracks in both directions in Manhattan with “extremely limited service” and were bypassing the 14th Street station, said MTA spokesman Aaron Donovan. Service on the **C** line

remained suspended entirely.

Transit crews had to wait for police to complete an hours-long investigation of the crime scene before beginning extensive repair work on the tracks that was slated to last through the night. Jezycki, the NYC Transit subway chief, said he hoped to restore full service on the **A** line by Monday morning’s rush hour.

Crews had to use a diesel locomotive to tow the derailed subway train to a maintenance yard for repairs and further inspection. Workers also had to replace the large stretch of damaged and destroyed third rail and track components as well as make repairs to structural pillars.

“This was an all-hands on deck emergency with transit workers from multiple divisions responding to assist riders and then begin repairing the extensive damage,” said Transport Workers Union Local 100 President Tony Utano. “It’s a stark reminder that the MTA can’t cut its frontline workers even if the federal government fails to provide funding in a COVID relief package.”

Subway derailments are rare — and few cause as much damage as this one. (*New York Daily News*, September 20)



R-46 6062 (Pullman-Standard, 1975) was the lead motor of the **A** train that derailed at 14th Street on the IND Eighth Avenue Line. Marc A. Hermann/MTA New York City Transit photograph



Closeup of the damage on R-46 6062 at 14th Street on the IND Eighth Avenue Line. Track, third rail, and four columns were also damaged. Marc A. Hermann/MTA New York City Transit photograph

**CANARSIE LINE REHABILITATION UPDATE — SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION OF WORK AT 1ST AVENUE **L** STATION**

**by Subutay Musluoglu**

**(Photographs by the author, August 7, 2020)**

Speaking for myself, the last several months have been difficult to be a railfan. Regular readers of the *Bulletin* will know that for the last couple of years I have been closely monitoring the progress on several ongoing capital projects in the NYC Subway system, with a focus on two in particular — the reconstruction of the Grand Central subway station complex and the Canarsie Line Rehabilitation Project. Both of these projects

were scheduled to wrap up this year, and I was looking forward to seeing them through to completion. However, as we all know too well, 2020 has so far been a year unlike any other in our lifetimes.

For various reasons, I was not able to get out and document the work being done at Grand Central and at various locations along the 14th Street-Canarsie Line as

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**Canarsie Line Rehabilitation Update**

*(Continued from page 2)*

much as I would have liked. I did manage a couple of trips here and there in February and early March, but then the coronavirus pandemic lockdown began.

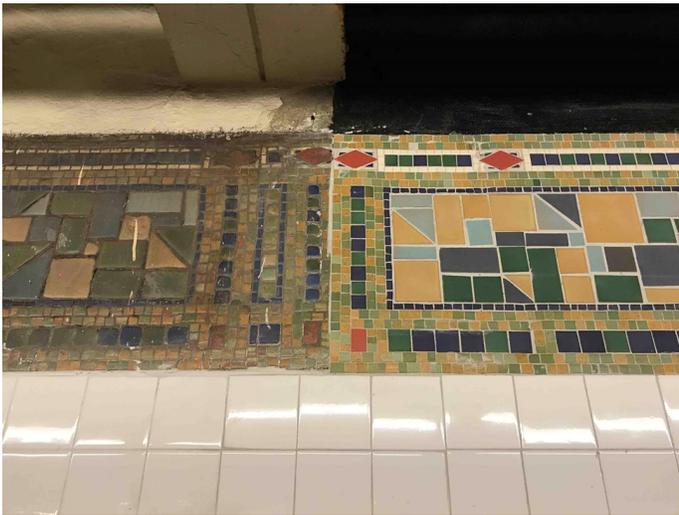
Over the last two months I have ventured out on to the system more frequently, revisiting some familiar sites as well as a few new ones. In the coming issues I hope to share more of my travels. In the meantime, here is the latest from the 1st Avenue **L** station.

Substantial completion was achieved in the last few months on the expansion of this station, a key component of the overall Canarsie Line Rehabilitation Project. Following the opening of new entrances at Avenue A in November, 2019 (Brooklyn-bound platform) and Febru-

ary, 2020 (8th Avenue-bound platform), the focus shifted to rehabilitating the original 1924 entrances at First Avenue and the completion of two new elevators.

A major milestone was achieved on April 26, with the substantial completion of the rehabilitation of the 14th Street Tube under the East River, addressing the severe damage wrought by Superstorm Sandy in 2012. In May, the First Avenue entrance to the Brooklyn-bound platform reopened, followed by the reopening of the First Avenue entrance to the Eighth Avenue-bound platform on June 6.

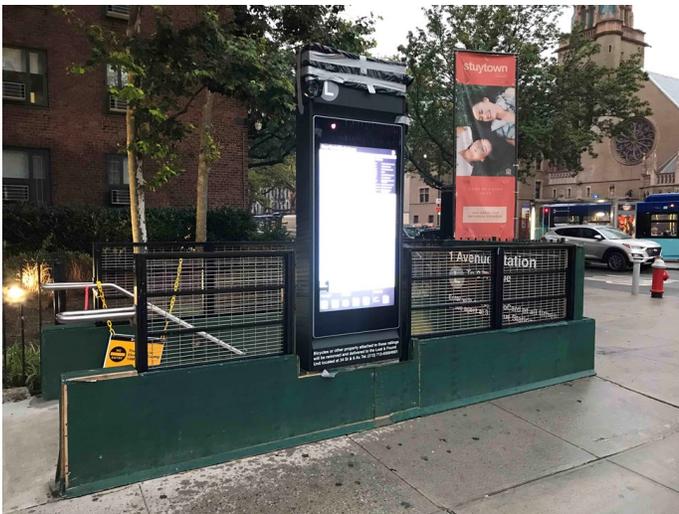
The elevators to each platform opened on August 6. All that remains now is the completion of punch list items, mostly involving station finishes. A decades-long effort to effectively double the passenger capacity of the 1st Avenue Station has now been realized.



Old meets new: A Dual Contracts-era Squire Vickers mosaic tile band from 1924 matched up with a 2020 recreation on the Canarsie-bound platform of the 1st Avenue **L** station.



Also on the Canarsie-bound platform, disembarking passengers are now greeted by this creative modification to the 1924 exit directional mosaic tile, replacing the original flight with an arrow point, indicating that you can now also exit to the east at Avenue A. Similar modifications were observed to the directional tiling on both platforms. Was this specified in the construction contract, or an initiative on the part of the tile layer? While the work is not seamless, it is certainly accurate and better than the alternative, which could have been wholesale destruction, an action that would not have been unthinkable in the recent past.



The reopened entrance stair on the northeast corner of First Avenue and E. 14th Street. Additional finish work remains to the station name totem and the railing base. Note that the entrance enclosure railing is similar in style to recent installations carried out under the Enhanced Stations Initiative.

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**Canarsie Line Rehabilitation Update**

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View of the fare control line at the reopened First Avenue entrance to the 8th Avenue-bound platform.



View of the newly opened elevator at Avenue A to the 8th Avenue-bound platform, adjacent to one of the two new stairs there. The canopy of the new elevator to the Canarsie-bound platform is visible in the left background.

**NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR UPDATE**

Back in March, six of the Livonia-based single unit R-62As assigned to the **S** 42nd Street Shuttle were marshaled at 207th Street Yard, where they were transformed into a single permanently linked 6-car unit, as such: (N) 1955-1939-1932-1935-1933-1936 (S). This resulted in the loss of a full-width cab on one end of car 1935 as well as the removal of intervening controller handles and Master Door Control panels, with operational functions all being consolidated into the full cabs at the very end of “motors” 1955 and 1936. The unit is intended for future assignment to the reconfigured Shuttle, which will enable two 6-car trains to be operated on Tracks 1 and 4, whose platforms at both Times Square and Grand Central are being lengthened accordingly. Though Track 1 was reopened for service on August 10 after almost a complete year of related construction, Track 4 was closed at the same time, while (unchanged) Track 3 remains in operation with its nominal, lone train consist of four cars, as has been the case for many decades. While another set of six cars has been earmarked for future configuration to assignment on the rebuilt 42nd Street Shuttle, its formation had not as yet begun in September and its component cars remained in waiting.

The following additional Jamaica-assigned R-160s have operated on the **A** from August 20 through September 17: Alstom R-160Bs 8713-8717, 8728-8737, 8743-8747, 8758-8762, 8838-8842 (Cuomo); Siemens R-160Bs 8868-8872, 8933-8937, 8973-8977, 8983-

8987; Alstom R-160A-2s 9238-9242, 9253-9257, 9263-9267, 9283-9287, 9298-9302, 9323-9327, 9468-9472, 9633-9637, 9718-9722, 9758-9767, 9778-9782, 9798-9802; Kawasaki R-160Bs 9808-9812, 9828-9832, 9858-9862, 9868-9872, 9893-9902, and 9908-9912. Since early August, Kawasaki R-160Bs 9923-9927 and 9933-9937 have been kept together as a test train at Coney Island Yard as CBTC was in the process of installation along the Culver end of the **F** train.

After having been transferred to East New York Yard earlier in the week, starting on Wednesday, September 23, the first trains of R-179s returned to service on the **1/2** lines, beginning a new period of in-service testing. The first three trains included cars 3050-3053, 3058-3061, 3082-3085, 3110-3113, 3126-3129, and 3142-3145. There are supposed to be eight trains included in this latest testing period. With this reintroduction to service, the R-32s will, once again, be removed from regular revenue service.

All re-acceptance will proceed through East New York Yard for the 188 4-car links. Re-acceptance program for the 207th Street Yard-based (**C**) contingent and for the 5-car links for Pitkin Yard have not yet been finalized. As of September 25, all cars 3146-3237 were still with the status of Long Term Hold/SMS, "Until Further Notice."

The other 56 R179s from East New York Yard were shown as "Held" as well but they are being readied for retesting.

# TRANSIT, COMMUTER RAIL & PASSENGER RAILROAD NEWS

## by Jeff Erlitz and Ron Yee

### NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA

#### METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued an executive order directing the MTA to develop a plan to bolster mask compliance across public transportation system's subways, buses and railroads.

In response to this directive, the MTA announced riders who refuse to wear a mask on public transit will be subject to a \$50 fine. This new measure, effective Monday, September 14, follows Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.18 issued on April 17 requiring all customers and employees to wear a face covering while riding on public transit.

MTA surveys show more than 90 percent of customers are using masks on subways, buses, the Long Island Rail Road, and Metro-North. The \$50 fine is the latest measure to drive mask compliance even higher. Mask compliance will be enforced by MTAPD, NYPD, and Bridge and Tunnel Officers as all rules and regulations are. MTA frontline employees are not responsible for enforcement.

The MTA has launched an aggressive public awareness campaign, "Operation Respect," as part of a multi-layered strategy to encourage riders to wear a face covering while on public transit. The agency has made available 4 million masks from the State of New York and City of New York available for free at station booths, across NYC Transit, Long Island Rail Road, and Metro-North. Hundreds of volunteers with the MTA's "Mask Force" are distributing these masks to riders systemwide.

The MTA has also deployed vending machines at NYC Transit subway, Long Island Rail Road, and Metro-North stations allowing customers to buy COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE). The machines, part of a pilot program, offer reusable face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes. Additionally, the MTA has installed free surgical mask dispensers inside 360 buses across 15 routes to help further protect customers while on board. (MTA press release, September 10)

#### MTA NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT

The installation of new elevators at the Chambers Street **J/Z** subway station has been completed and the station is now fully accessible for passengers with disabilities. The work began almost exactly two years ago and was completed on time and on budget. In addition to installing a pair of platform elevators that will give passengers access to the 105-year-old complex from the mezzanine to both **J/Z** platforms, workers also installed three new ramps in the station's mezzanine area and several aesthetic improvements.

The project will enable passengers with disabilities to access the Chambers Street mezzanine from the street level elevator in the Brooklyn Bridge/City Hall **4 5 6** station and also adds an additional pair of accessible

ramps leading to the **J/Z** platform elevators. Platforms were modified to reduce gaps between platform edges and trains. The Chambers complex also now features a new pedestrian bridge across the **J/Z** tracks within the station in order to provide more seamless access to both platforms. The original fare control area was reconfigured to ensure that turnstiles are at wheelchair-friendly height and replete with powered gates.

To accommodate the ramps, new stairs, the pedestrian bridge, the new elevators, and their electrical components, parts of the mezzanine and existing station facilities have been reconfigured or removed entirely. The more than century-old complex now also features brighter, more energy-efficient LED lighting and fresh paint.

Completion of architectural finishes and station facilities will be ongoing in the area adjacent to the newly installed elevators through the end of 2020. Additional station repairs and enhancements, including major water mitigation work and infrastructure improvements to platforms, floors, and columns, are being planned for the Chambers Street **J/Z** station in the future. (MTA press release, September 2)

#### MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD



Looking east at the Merillon Avenue station on August 30 with a new temporary platform over the third track under construction. C-3 5010 (Kawasaki Rail Car, 9/1999) is seen here leading Train #6505 from Oyster Bay to Jamaica with DE-30AC 423 (EMD, 11/1999, s/n 956623-8, ex 507) pushing from behind. The locomotive on this train happens to be the one unit that was rebuilt from a dual-mode to a straight diesel several years ago.

Jeff Erlitz photograph

A second, temporary platform has been constructed over the newly installed (and unfinished) third track at the Merillon Avenue station on the LIRR's Main Line. Though expected as part of the construction phasing on this project, this writer was surprised to see this construction activity so soon after the installation of the third track, literally only six days later. The new temporary

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platform will be the same six-car length that the existing temporary platform to the west is. This will enable access to the permanent platform as soon as said platform is available for passenger use, probably by late September.

On Tuesday, September 8, at a live press conference held on the upper mezzanine of Jamaica Station, President Philip Eng introduced the latest version of the railroad’s popular application TrainTime. There were two notable improvements with this latest iteration. The level of passenger crowding in each car of a train is now shown on the diesel-hauled ones. Previously, this information was available only on M-7 and M-9-equipped trains.

The other software improvement is the ability to predict future passenger crowding, by car, based on real-time information from the previous seven days of actual data. This will enable passengers to select less crowded trains if they have flexible travel options.

Over the weekend of September 12-13, crews began the installation of a new Nassau 3 Interlocking, between the Mineola and Carle Place stations. Located roughly 4,000 feet closer to the Mineola station than the current Nassau 3, the switches for this interlocking are being installed with the help of a gantry crane that was brought onto the right-of-way a few weeks before the work started.

On this same weekend, the railroad took advantage of no service between Floral Park and Hicksville to use a track laying machine on Track 2 (normally eastbound track) to install concrete ties. The work was performed between School Street on the Westbury/New Cassel border and Divide 1 Interlocking, about 1½ miles west of the Hicksville station. Additionally, work was performed at the location of the new Elmont station, between the Queens Village and Bellerose stations.

**PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY**



**Rendering of the proposed AirTrain LGA's east station at LaGuardia Airport.**

Port Authority of New York & New Jersey rendering

The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ) recently issued a request for proposals

(RFP) for a landscape architecture or engineering design firm to advance Flushing Bay promenade improvements as part of the proposed AirTrain LGA project and \$8 billion LaGuardia Airport redevelopment plan.

The authority plans to build AirTrain LGA to provide millions of air travelers a reliable, 30-minute trip from midtown Manhattan to the airport, with connection through a new Willets Point station. PANYNJ’s preferred alternative calls for building two airport stations and connecting the AirTrain to Long Island Rail Road and NYC Transit lines.

As part of the project’s federal environmental review, PANYNJ has committed to providing additional mitigation measures to the promenade area based on public comments to a draft environmental impact report and a community outreach program. The firm chosen through the RFP will help the authority develop a plan to improve the promenade. (**Progressive Railroading**, September 8)

**OTHER SYSTEMS**

**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**

The Port Authority Transit Corporation (PATCO) reopened four closed rail stations and added more frequent train service to New Jersey on September 14.

PATCO opened the Ashland, Westmont, City Hall, and 12/13th & Locust Street stations, which temporarily closed March 28 as part of the agency’s COVID-19 response.

The agency will also increase weekday train service to offer trains every five to 10 minutes during rush hours. Weekend departures increase with trains running every 20 minutes on Saturdays and 30 minutes on Sundays. (**Progressive Railroading**, September 10)

**WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA**

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and Cubic Transportation Systems (CTS) have enabled the agency’s SmarTrip AFC (automated fare collection) system on the iPhone and Apple Watch, giving transit riders a contactless way to pay for their journeys on trains and buses in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. In addition, Cubic and WMATA have launched a SmarTrip app, the first mobile app for the region.

“With *SmarTrip* on the iPhone and Apple Watch, riders can add their *SmarTrip* card to Apple Wallet and easily use their iPhone and Apple Watch to ‘tap and ride’ at gates and fareboxes at Metro and nine regional transit partners,” the agency said. “*SmarTrip* on iPhone and Apple Watch offers the ability to instantly view balances and top-up stored value with Apple Pay through Apple Wallet, eliminating physical contact and standing in line at ticket vending machines.”

The *SmarTrip* app features a fully integrated user interface that provides the ability to manage a *SmarTrip* card on the iPhone and Apple Watch, plan and manage trips, view arrivals and save frequent destinations and stops, through a Trip Tools feature. The *SmarTrip* app supports SmartBenefits and Senior *SmarTrip* card users

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and allows for flexible payment options including credit/debit cards, account cash and Apple Pay. (**Railway Age**, September 1)

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) reopened the Vienna and Dunn Loring rail stations following a summer-long closure to rebuild and modernize the stations.

All 91 WMATA stations are now open for the first time since the agency implemented station closures as part of its pandemic response in March.

The reopening also marks the end of summer station closures to reconstruct aging platforms at four Orange Line stations in Virginia.

WMATA crews installed slip-resistant tiles on the platforms and in the mezzanine areas, stainless steel platform shelters, additional passenger information display screens, LED lighting throughout the stations, and improved speakers for clearer public announcements and emergency notifications. (**Progressive Railroading**, September 10)

**The Washington Post** is reporting that one Metro board member, David Horner, has had it with the continuing problems at the agency, and said that Metro should be shut down until the toxicity and safety issues are resolved, and that local, state and federal officials should work with the Board to restructure Metro's leadership.

Paul J. Wiedenfeld, Metro's General Manager, did just that in March, 2016 after a series of electric cable problems created concerns about passenger safety. The system was shut down for 24 hours. In addition, there have been other safety problems that caused the federal government to threaten to shut down the system for a period of time.

Horner said "We should not overlook the fact that the problems of the ROCC are derived in part from how [the agency] is organized, meaning the region's work on governance is not finished. The fact that many of the problems identified in the report have persisted for a decade suggests to me that management and the Board actually don't possess the tools needed to address fundamental problems in a timely manner."

To make the situation more challenging, Metro, like nearly all public transit agencies, is facing a serious budget shortfall. Metro has received hundreds of millions of dollars to keep the system running since the pandemic hit, but these funds will be exhausted by the end of 2020, leading planners to forecast a \$212 million shortfall, which raises the specter of possible service reductions and employee layoffs in 2021.

Horner said that he is working on a plan to restructure Metro's leadership in concert with all of the jurisdictions that contribute to Metro's operation. (**Railway Track & Structures**, September 11)

**MIAMI, FLORIDA**

The South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) on September 16 increased the Tri-Rail commuter-rail service to include 35 weekday trains and 18

weekend trains as ridership ticked up.

The amended schedule allowed for more frequent service during peak hours, with four-car train sets to allow social distancing. Three-car train sets will run during off-peak times.

The new schedule marked the third incremental adjustment to Tri-Rail service since the agency first reduced its service in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, Tri-Rail is gearing up to reinstate fares starting October 1. Fares were suspended on March 28. (**Progressive Railroading**, September 14)

**CLEVELAND, OHIO**

The FTA awarded GCRTA \$15 million to replace the agency's aging rail-car fleet.

GCRTA plans to purchase 34 new heavy-rail vehicles to serve the Red Line and make associated infrastructure upgrades to the agency's rail maintenance facility, equipment and stations to accommodate the new units.

The existing rail cars have reached the end of their useful life due to corrosion and obsolete parts from excessive age, resulting in maintenance costs that are twice that of a newer fleet, GCRTA officials said in a press release. (**Progressive Railroading**, September 11)

**Illinois Department of Transportation/Amtrak Midwest**



**New Siemens "Venture" coach for Illinois DOT's state-supported Amtrak service, "Amtrak Midwest."**

Art Peterson/**Railway Age** photograph

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has begun taking delivery of 88 new Siemens "Venture" single-level passenger cars. According to WSP USA Senior Engineering Manager Art Peterson, the first four arrived in Chicago in mid-August, and four more are en route.

The Siemens/IDOT contract dates to November, 2017, when Caltrans and IDOT amended a \$317 million contract for new passenger cars, replacing Nippon Sharyo with Siemens, which partnered with Sumitomo Corporation of America to fulfill a delayed multi-state order. The revised contract involved 137 single-level passenger railcars — 49 for Caltrans and 88 for IDOT. Under the original terms of the deal, Sumitomo had subcontracted

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construction of bi-level cars to Nippon Sharyo of Japan. The revised pact substituted Siemens as a subcontractor, changed specifications to single-level cars, and accelerated delivery from five years to 24-34 months.

The IDOT contract with Nippon Sharyo dated to 2012 and was financed by \$551 million in federal funds. But the order was jeopardized in 2015 when a prototype car failed to pass a mandatory crash safety test. In August, 2017, IDOT announced that Siemens would replace Nippon Sharyo as subcontractor, and that it was changing specifications from bi-level to single-level cars. Nippon Sharyo was building the cars in Rochelle, Illinois.

The U.S. operations of Sumitomo are a unit of Japan's Sumitomo Group.

The Venture cars are being built at Siemens' manufacturing hub in Sacramento. Siemens is also building SC-44 Charger passenger locomotives in Sacramento as part of a similar multi-state order that includes Illinois, as well as similar ALC-42 Chargers for Amtrak long-distance services.

The new cars will be used on Midwest Coalition service trains represented by IDOT; and on *Pacific Surfliner*, *San Joaquin*, and *Capitol* Corridor trains in California. (**Railway Age**, August 31)

**KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**



**Rendering of the Kansas City Streetcar Riverfront Extension.**  
Kansas City Streetcar Authority rendering

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced it has awarded the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) and the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants totaling a combined \$29.2 million to advance rail projects.

The FTA awarded KCATA a \$14.2 million grant to fund the Kansas City Streetcar's Riverfront Extension. The project will extend the existing downtown streetcar line about a half mile from 3rd Street and Grand Boulevard to the base of Grand Avenue Bridge on the Berkley Riverfront in Kansas City, Missouri.

FTA's BUILD grant represents 70 percent of the \$22.2 million project, and allows it to advance through the design phase and complete construction, Kansas City

Streetcar Authority (KCSA) officials said in a press release.

The remaining funding for this project will come local sources, including \$5 million from Port KC.

The Riverfront Extension project is being built by a partnership between the KCATA, KCSA, Port KC, and Kansas City. Construction is slated to begin next year. The extension is scheduled to open in 2024.

**(Progressive Railroading**, September 11)

**SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**

Sound Transit is seeking public input on proposed changes to rail service in 2021, as well as feedback on how service changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic have affected riders.

Sound Transit is planning for what service should look like beyond March, 2021. Considerations include where services are most needed, where demand might increase, and which passengers depend most on services, Sound Transit officials said in a press release.

The agency also is looking at the Northgate Link light-rail extension opening in fall 2021 and considering how to reroute some services to connect with the extension's three new stations in north Seattle.

Sound Transit invited the public to comment on the plan by phone or email through September 25, or by participating in a virtual public hearing.

The agency responded to reduced ridership due to the pandemic by reducing service on its Link light rail and Sounder commuter trains earlier this year. In response to increases in ridership, Sound Transit planned to add rail service starting September 19 until March, 2021.

Meanwhile, Sound Transit announced that civil construction on the Lynnwood Link Extension is 15 percent complete. The project will extend light-rail service from Northgate to Snohomish County by 2024. (**Progressive Railroading**, September 10)

**PORTLAND, OREGON**

TriMet has concluded the Steel Bridge MAX Improvements Project following 28 days of round-the-clock work, amounting to 672 hours of demolition, construction, and testing.

The top deck of the Steel Bridge reopened on August 30 at about 3 AM to MAX, bus, and auto traffic. This marked the end of TriMet's biggest light rail revitalization effort in 34 years and represents an important accomplishment in continuing to keep MAX service reliable.

Crews spent the previous four weeks rebuilding the light-rail system across the Steel Bridge from the ground up, chiseling away at concrete, replacing thousands of feet of old rail, and installing a new and improved signal system. With the new rail and signal equipment in place, the agency says it has strengthened a stretch of light rail, less than half a mile long, that is among the most important and dynamic in the 60-mile system.

Despite its age, the Steel Bridge typically carries more than 600 MAX trains a day across its upper deck. And,

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as a critical connection and crossing point for trains on all MAX lines, its health and resiliency has a ripple effect throughout the entire light rail system.

Installing new and more durable rail, lift joints, and locks, as well as replacing switches, switch machines, and signal equipment, means fewer issues that could slow or disrupt MAX service. Improvements to the rail and track bed itself will also mean a smoother ride.



SD660 319+325 (Siemens, 2003) are seen coming over the Steel Bridge on June 23, 2017 while operating on a MAX Blue Line trip to Hillsboro. Paralleling it is an LF-40, 3124 (Gillig, 2013), heading out to Marquam Hill on Route 8.

Jeff Erlitz photograph

Some of the improvements were made for the safety of TriMet employees, including the maintenance-of-way team who inspect rail and make repairs during normal service hours. The cabinets that house signal equipment were turned to make it easier for the maintenance teams to access them.

On August 29, the project's final day, TriMet says it ran a train through the area to test every single possible move a train could make. This allowed the team to double check all the new equipment to make sure it is working as intended.

With no vehicles able to go over the Steel Bridge during the project, shuttle buses moved riders across the Willamette River, using the Broadway and Burnside bridges.

Nearly 200 support staff, mainly TriMet volunteer ride guides, were at MAX stations and shuttle bus stops to assist riders throughout the four-week disruption. TriMet staff dedicated more than 3,800 hours, answering questions, helping riders make connections and promoting physical distancing. They were deployed with face masks and hand sanitizer for those who needed them and informed riders of TriMet's precautions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the pandemic posing a new challenge to an improvement project such as this, concrete decals and signs were placed at transfer points reminding customers to spread out for safety.

Over the past five years, on-time performance of MAX trains has improved from 75 percent in November, 2015 to around 90 percent today.

MAX passengers will continue to see more improvements in the coming years as TriMet works to rejuvenate the light-rail system to keep trains moving and on schedule. This fall, crews will be back at it, making improvements to the end of the MAX Blue Line in Gresham. This will fully complete the second phase of the Gresham MAX Improvements project, which was started last year. (*Mass Transit*, September 2)

### LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

On September 8, Metrolink reinstated two Ventura County Line trains as vehicle traffic in the San Fernando Valley and Ventura County returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Ventura County Line Trains #101 and #110 were restored to serve stations connecting Los Angeles to Glendale, Burbank, Northridge, Van Nuys, Chatsworth, Simi Valley, and Moorpark.

The eastbound service provides the first morning connection from Los Angeles to Ventura County since the pandemic forced temporary service reductions in March, Metrolink officials said in a press release.

In the first week of September, the California Air Resources Board issued a Tier 4 Verification Certificate for Metrolink's 37 new diesel locomotives after emissions verification testing.

The certification confirms Metrolink's locomotives continue to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Tier 4 standard for diesel engines — the most stringent emission-reduction designation for engines, Metrolink officials said in a press release.

The Tier 4 certificate is a requirement to receive previously awarded grant funding from South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) for Metrolink's 40 new locomotives, which cost \$280 million. The final three locomotives will be placed into service this fall.

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**Transit, Commuter Rail & Passenger Railroad News**

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**(Progressive Railroading, September 8)**  
**MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA**



**Rendering of Pie-IX station after refurbishment work.**  
 STM rendering

The Societe de transport de Montreal (STM) on October 13 will begin refurbishment and universal accessibility work at the Pie-IX metro station of the Green Line.

The CA\$81 million project will include the installation of four elevators, entrance expansions, refurbishment of mechanical rooms, construction of a new staircase, improved lighting, and additional signage.

The work will be completed in November, 2023.

On September 22, STM was to hold a virtual public information session to share project details.

During the project, STM will work with the Montreal government as the principal contractor for municipal infrastructure work and refurbishment on Pierre-De Coubertin Avenue outside the station, STM officials said in a press release. **(Progressive Railroading, September 10)**

**TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA**



**Crews stand in one of the new Flexity Freedom cars, 6208 (Bombardier Transportation, 2019), at the Keele station as part of recent testing.**

MetroLinx photograph

Light rail vehicles (LRVs) have traveled along MetroLinx's Eglinton Crosstown route.

On its most recent journey, a Crosstown LRV went all the way from the Mt. Dennis station through the tunnel to the Caledonia station and back. That is about 0.81 miles each way and marks the furthest east a train has traveled along the Crosstown route so far.

The Eglinton Crosstown LRT will open in 2022 as Line 5/Eglinton and will be operated by the Toronto Transit Commission. The C\$8.4 billion (US\$6.43 billion) project will serve 25 stops and stations along an 11.8-mile line. **(Mass Transit, September 3)**

**AUSTRIA**



**Hydrogen-powered Alstom Coradia iLint on test for Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB).**

*International Railway Journal* photograph

Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) launched a hydrogen train into passenger service for the first time on September 11 as it embarks on a 10-week trial with an Alstom Coradia iLint two-car multiple unit.

The trials will take place on the Aspang and Thermen railways from Vienna Neustadt to Aspang and Hartberg respectively, and on the Vienna Neustadt-Puchberg am Schneeberg-Gutenstein line. The full tests started on September 12 and will run until November 26 with six trips set to operate on Mondays and Thursdays, 10 on Fridays, and 12 on Saturdays.

Following tests of the vehicles on relatively flat terrain in the Netherlands and northern Germany, ÖBB says iLint will be put through its paces in the more challenging alpine routes in Lower Austria.

A mobile hydrogen filling station has been constructed at ÖBB's facility in Wiener Neustadt, enabling the railway to trial the complete hydrogen infrastructure required to operate the trains.

ÖBB says it is aiming to become carbon-neutral by 2050. In addition to electrification, the railway says it is exploring the potential of hydrogen and batteries as alternative traction solutions on around 808 miles of lines in Austria currently served by diesel trains. ÖBB tested a prototype Siemens Desiro ML battery-electric Cityjet Eco multiple unit in passenger service in lower Austria in September, 2019.

As well as Alstom, ÖBB is supported in the project by Climate and Energy Fund, and Verbund, which certifies the hydrogen used during the trial run as green. It is also assisted by Shift2Rail, Austrian Institute of Technol-

*(Continued on page 11)*

**Transit, Commuter Rail & Passenger Railroad News**

*(Continued from page 10)*

ogy (AIT), and Hydrogen Centre Austria (HyCentA). (*International Railway Journal*, September 11)

**DUISBURG, GERMANY**



The first Bombardier Flexity Classic for Duisburg was shown to the public on September 7.

*Metro Report International* photograph

The first of 47 Flexity Classic trams being supplied to Duisburger Verkehrsgesellschaft (DVG) by Bombardier Transportation has been delivered to DVG's Grunewald depot for testing ahead of entry into revenue service.

Ordered in December, 2017 at a cost of €135 million, the trams are all due to be delivered by mid-2023. Following testing and commissioning, the pre-series vehicle is expected to start carrying passengers in summer, 2021, after which delivery of the series-built cars will begin.

Being assembled at Bombardier's Bautzen plant, the three-section bi-directional cars are 112 feet long and 7½ feet wide, with capacity for 200 people. They are 70% low-floor, with five double-leaf doors per side and a single door to the cab. The air-conditioned vehicles are equipped with energy-saving LED technology and a passenger information system, as well as a collision warning device. (*Metro Report International*, September 8)

**UZBEKISTAN**

Uzbekistan Railways (UTY) has received delivery of five 3ES5K 25,000-volt 50 Hertz a.c. electric freight locomotives from Russian manufacturer Transmashholding (TMH). The three-section locomotives can operate at a design speed of 68 mph and come equipped with regenerative braking.

The locomotives are from an order placed in May and were manufactured at TMH's Novochoerkassk Electric

Locomotive Plant (NEVZ) to operate on 1,520-millimeter gauge.

The new fleet is intended to allow UTY to haul heavier trains and more efficiently manage routes on steep gradients.

TMH has manufactured 1,067 3ES5K locomotives as of August, including two locomotives previously purchased by UTY in 2018. The locomotives are also operated on Russia's Eastern Siberian and Far Eastern Railways and on the Odessa Railway in Ukraine. (*Railway Gazette International*, August 31)



Uzbekistan Railways Class 3ES5K electric locomotive 1004.

Transmashholding photograph

In other news from Uzbekistan, electrification of the 206-mile railway ring in the Ferghana Valley was officially completed on August 30, when electric service was inaugurated on the 63-mile Namangan-Andijon section.

The ring runs from Pap through Namangan, Andijon, Marg'ilon, and Qo'qon back to Pap.

"The times of diesel locomotives have ended," said Khusniddin Khosilov, Chief Executive of national railway UTY, adding that electrification offered significant economic and ecological benefits. It has also enabled speeds to be raised, with it now being possible to travel around the complete ring in 2 hours 20 minutes.

The first section of the ring to be electrified under the US\$202 million program supposed by the Asian Development Bank was the 115-mile Pap-Qo'qon-Andijon southwestern segment, which was energized in 2016. The 28-mile northwestern section from Pap to Namangan followed on August 31, 2019.

UTY began operating modernized ER9E electric multiple-units between Andijon and Qo'qon in March, 2020.

The electrification project required various infrastructure works, including a new bridge over the Great Ferghana Canal which was designed by Boshtransloyikha and built by UTY subsidiaries Andijon Mechanical Plant and Trest Kuprikkurilish. (*Railway Gazette International*, September 2)

## NYCTS PROTOTYPES FOR POST-WORLD WAR II NEW CARS by Henry Raudenbush

As World War II came to an end, the staff of the Board of Transportation (BoT) began to consider what might be design features for a new fleet of rapid transit cars to be ordered for the New York City Transit System.

### BACKGROUND

The B of T staff had developed the design for cars built in 1930 under Contract R-1 for the City-owned Independent system (IND). These represented a good basic design for that period, which served well and additional cars of this type were ordered throughout the 1930s on Contracts R-4, R-6, R-7 and R-9 to a total of 1,703 cars.

A few years earlier, the City had purchased the systems of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT) and the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation (BMT). Each of these had some ideas of their own about car design. The IRT had not bought any new cars from 1925 until 1938, when 50 "World's Fair" Steinway cars were acquired for the Corona-Flushing Line which would serve the 1939 Fair. Because purchase of the IRT by the City was in the final stages of negotiation, the B of T staff played a part in developing the specification for these cars. The BMT had been involved in a very progressive program to develop lightweight articulated units, to modernize the old wood-car elevated lines and culminating in the six PCC-based "Bluebird" cars, delivered in 1939-40. In the rest of the industry, there had been very few orders for new rapid transit cars, but many PCC streetcars had been purchased by systems all over the USA.

New developments in the technical systems such as propulsion, braking, couplers, etc. would most likely be offered by the specialized suppliers of such things, but the interior appointments were an area for which the B of T could work on the details. In order for the Board to visualize these details, and present them to the City administration, it would be desirable to mock them up. While a full-size wood mockup had been used for the 1938 IRT cars, it was decided to put the proposed features into existing R-1 to R-9 cars.

So far as is known, there were five mockup cars, of four types. One car, of an unknown number, was modified only in about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the car, with a variety of proposed features. Two cars, 484 and 744, had bullseye-type lensed lights. One car, 103, had a low ceiling with "Axiflo" type fans. Car 1575, which had been damaged in an accident, had a completely new welded carbody and interior appointments essentially identical to the production version of the R-10 cars.

### WORK IN PROGRESS – CAR OF UNKNOWN NUMBER

Recently pictures came to light of what was probably the first of these mockups, but there is no record of the individual car number. Assuming that it had not been changed, the end door visible in the pictures indicates that this was an R-1 or R-4 car, with a one-piece window in that door; R-6 and later had a two-piece. The

pictures indicate that the proposed features were mocked up in one section of the car, between the first two doorways. At the extreme right edge of the pictures, there is a vertical row of rivets in the side wall, which confirms that this is a real car. Several different changes can be noted. Because the other mockup car types still exist but this one does not, a more detailed description is needed.

**Ceiling and roof vents:** The most notable change is in the ceiling. The R-1 to R-9 had the traditional arrangement of a clerestory roof with vent panels similar to deck sash. The ceiling in this section is similar to that in the "ogee" type roof, as in the IRT 1938 cars, the BMT 67-foot cars 2000-2399, and the BMT Multi-Section cars. This foreshadowed the arrangement in the 1575 and the R-10, R-12 and R-14.

Four different arrangements of stanchions, horizontal grab rails, and seat end rails are shown. These are all of aluminum, with streamlined fittings where they attach to the ceiling. The seat end rails appear to be attached to a square post next to the door, as on 1575 and R-10. Horizontal grab rails replaced hand "straps," this was not adopted for 1575 and R-10, but such bars of a different style were used in R-12/14/15.

Destination signs were placed above the windows, instead of in a window space.

Two window sash arrangements were tried, replacing the two glass panels of R-1 to R-9. On the right side in the picture, the windows are of two glass panels and a metal panel below. On the left side, each window is a large single glass panel.

Traditional paddle fans were replaced by pairs of small bracket fans with guards.

A strip of fluorescent lights on each side replaced the traditional bare bulbs.

The seat arrangement is much the same as on R-1 to R-9, (which was a miniature of the "Manhattan" seating plan of most "L" cars), but some of the seats are on legs rather than on enclosed seat boxes. The backs of the cross seats are lower than on R-1 to R-9.

This car looks more like a mockup than a car which might be placed into revenue service, and no information has come to light that it was so used, nor anything as to what finally happened to this car, although there has been a recollection of a fluorescent-light car, not the 1575, in service.

### CARS 484 AND 744

The ERPC had done considerable research into improved lighting. Their final recommendation was the use of fixtures with glass lenses arranged to focus light on passengers reading, but to provide a less glaring general lighting. These two cars were equipped with that kind of lighting. In addition, the upper half of the interior walls were painted in a light yellow-green more attractive than the old dark olive green.

In my opinion, from the passenger's standpoint, this

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**NYCTS Prototypes for Post-World War II New Cars**

*(Continued from page 12)*

was the most pleasant lighting on any subway car. As you looked around the car, there was none of the glare, as with bare bulbs or fluorescents, but if you wanted to read, all the light you needed was focused on your newspaper or book. Car 484 was used on the lines I regularly used (IND **E** and **F** services), and when I saw it in the train, I would dash to get a spot in that car! For NYCTS, the disadvantage was that instead of 22 bare bulbs, or long-lived fluorescents, these cars had 44 bulbs, each accessible only by using a screwdriver to open the lens. The labor cost of re-lamping would be higher, and it was decided not to go that way. Car 744 was eventually returned to the original bare bulbs, but 484 remains in service today as part of NYCT's vintage fleet.

**CAR 1575**

This car was an R-7A, which was damaged in a collision with the end of a tunnel. It was decided to rebuild this car with an R-10 carbody from the floor up. This was done by ACF, which had the contract for the R-10s, and it would most likely have been agreed as an add-on to that contract. From the floor up, it is essentially identical to the R-10s, but the underfloor equipment and trucks are of the R-7A design. As a result, this car, which has AMUE brake equipment, cannot be operated in a train with look-alike R-10s, which have SMEE brakes; it can only operate with R-1 to R-9 cars. This

car has the R-10 type ogee roof, the small bracket fans, one-pane windows which drop down on the outside, fluorescent lights, and streamlined hand straps. It has remained in service in the vintage car fleet.

**R-10, R-12, AND R-14**

The 300 cars in the R-10 order had the same interior appointments as 1575, but a new generation of trucks, propulsion, and braking systems. The IRT-size R-12s are very much the same, except that they had longitudinal grab bars instead of hand straps. For years after they went into service, NYCTS received complaint letters from passengers of short stature. A new flood of such letters followed years later when these cars were moved from the Flushing line to the IRT main lines, and this led to the addition of small handholds attached to the bars.

**CAR 103**

Westinghouse introduced a new ventilation system, with axial-flow fans of about the same size as traditional paddle fans, set in a flat suspended ceiling, and blowing through a circular distributing grille. The trade name was "Axiflo," and fans of this type were retrofitted or built in to PCC and rapid transit cars in several other cities. This car, an R-1, was rebuilt with this fan and ceiling arrangement. This car may have been modified after the design and building of the R-10 cars; Axiflo fans first appeared on new NYCTS cars in the R-15s and other orders until air-conditioning became standard. No other changes were made in this car, which has also remained in service in the vintage fleet.



[Interior of Subway Car], n.d., 2004.20.11.107, Lundin Collection; New York Transit Museum.



[Interior of Subway Car], n.d., 2004.20.11.107, Lundin Collection; New York Transit Museum.

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**NYCTS Prototypes for Post World War II New Cars**

*(Continued from page 13)*



[Interior of IRT R15-Type Subway Car #5965], ca. 1950s, 2004.20.11.109, Lundin Collection; New York Transit Museum.



[Interior of Subway Car #8015, BMT Brighton Line, Coney Island Yard, Brooklyn, NY], 1949, 2004.20.11.110, Lundin Collection; New York Transit Museum.



[Interior of BMT D-Type Subway Car, BMT Sea Beach Line, Brooklyn, NY], ca. 1940s, 2004.20.11.116, Lundin Collection; New York Transit Museum.

# SOUTHWEST UNITED STATES

by Jack May  
(Continued from September, 2020 issue)  
(Photographs by the author)

**Tuesday, April 18 (Continued)**

Here are some views at the northern end of the Sun Link streetcar line. After the penultimate station at Cherry Avenue, the double track becomes single and the line turns northward from 2nd Street onto Warren Avenue. It then runs through an underpass to avoid a grade crossing with Speedway Avenue, a major arterial road. And finally it turns east onto Helen Avenue, where it stubs ends at the station of the same name. The end of track (and wire) is about 100 feet east of the platform, and lacks a bumper block.

Clare and I had decided to meet at the same corner at 3:30. She arrived 5 minutes early, but I was already waiting. It took 2 hours 20 minutes to get back to the rental car return area at Sky Harbor, which included stops for soft drinks and for just under \$24 worth of gas (10.375 gallons). Thus the entire cost for the 24-hour use of the Kia came in at just under \$50. But now, the rest of the story.

We used my new Android to call Sig and Cathy after alighting from our return ride aboard the Sky Train and they picked us up at the 44th Street light rail station, exactly where they dropped Clare off on the previous day. But as soon as we got to the hotel Clare realized she no longer had her cellphone, and we soon came to the conclusion that it probably was left in the car. As a result we drove back to the rental car office in the Volvo

and scurried over to the desk where we had dropped off the keys. We told the attendant our story and he then went looking for the auto, but could not find it. After some more time spent checking the computer he discovered that the car had been rented again, about a half hour after we returned it — talk about fast turnaround time! So all we could do is leave our names and my cellphone number with Fox, and hope for the best. We kept calling Clare's number for the next few days — but all we got was her recorded message. We eventually became reconciled that Clare's AT&T phone [pay as you go/10 cents per minute] was gone, along with the funds still in the account. However, six days later, out of the blue, Fox called me and said the car had been returned and the cellphone was now in their hands. If we would give them a credit card number for charging the shipping costs, they would UPS it back to our home address. And it actually was delivered about two days after we arrived back at home, no worse for wear, clearly having not been used, and even had its electric charge intact.

By the time we had gone through all of the time-consuming rigamarole trying to find the phone that evening, it had become quite late, so we went back to the nearby Ruby Tuesday for dinner and then retired. Except for the excitement after we got back to Phoenix, it was an excellent day.



Lots to describe on this photo of car 104 operating southward on 4th Avenue at 8th Street. The double track in the foreground, which becomes single at the left edge, connects the Sun Link line to its car barn and shop at 8th Street and 5th Avenue, near Tucson's Amtrak station. It passes the headquarters of the Old Pueblo Trolley, but there is no longer a connecting track into the museum's facility. In the days of OPT operation, the single track at left turned in the opposite direction. Tucson's landmark Tiki Head prominently guards the patio of The Hut nightclub. The 25-ton sculpture originally decorated a tunnel at the Magic Carpet miniature golf course. When that establishment closed, the community raised \$20,000 to saw off the decorative head and have it moved to its current location.



New York in Tucson? Second Street traverses a portion of the campus of the University of Arizona, an institute of higher learning favored by many New Yorkers. This scene might demonstrate how such students can overcome a feeling of homesickness for the Big Apple. Streetcar 107, decorated with an ad for the Brooklyn Pizza Company, is shown passing the Oy Vey Cafe in front of the university's Hillel Foundation. Knishes and kugel, anyone? Or a thin-crust slice to go?

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**Southwest United States**

*(Continued from page 15)*



Like the previous photo, this view was taken from Second Street parking garage. Car 101 operates westward on a street that is home to several fraternity and sorority houses.



Car 104 turning east onto Helen Avenue just short of the end of the line. It is probably redundant to mention that the university's sports teams are known as the Wildcats.



Above and below: The single-track Warren Avenue underpass, with southbound streetcars starting their trek through the University's campus and heading for the city center. The upper photo shows car 107 descending toward the mouth of the tunnel, about to glide by a pedestrian crossing between the stairway from the street surface on the right to a sidewalk on the left. A barrier in the center of Speedway Avenue prevents pedestrians and motor traffic from crossing that thoroughfare. The lower photo of car 104 shows that those having to get to the other side of Speedway Avenue are separated from the track by a very high fence inside the underpass, and that the sidewalk then rises to cross over the track.



*(Continued next issue)*

## ASSORTED TRAVELS FROM THE FIRST HALF OF 2020

by Jack May

(Continued from September, 2020 issue)

(Photographs by the author, except where noted)

Cabin fever, increasing as the lockdown/quarantine dragged on, had started to rear its ugly head. We finally decided that the greatest risk in going out was being close to others, especially those not wearing masks. Even though many of the days this spring were sunny, the fact that rail services were running at reduced frequencies, as per notices in the press, took away some of the impetus to get out my camera and go somewhere.

NJ Transit's light rail lines began running a modified Sunday schedule in late March/early April, but that made little difference in service levels on the River Line between Trenton and Camden. While normal frequencies were every 15 minutes in rush hours, the base headway of 30 minutes continued to be operated 7 days per week. Of course I had photographically covered almost every inch of the line since its opening in 2004, but most of my slides had never been digitized. I could have spent my time during this period doing that tedious work, but being out linesiding would be much more fun. And I felt there would be little risk of infection, as few were riding and most of the rail line operates through areas that are hardly crowded.

Here are some facts and figures about the River Line, with some details taken from Al Fazio's epic volume, **River Line — Southern New Jersey's Interurban Railway**. And interurban railway it is, as despite not be operated electrically, it reflects many interurban features, and more importantly, feels like an interurban when riding.

It runs for 34 miles from the Pennsylvania Railroad station (now Amtrak) in Trenton to Camden, over a route that can be partly characterized as a portion (south of Bordentown) of the original Camden & Amboy Railroad (1832-3), New Jersey's first railroad. It eventually fell into the hands of the Pennsy, which ran both passenger and freight service over the line into my lifetime. But the rise of the auto and the decline of the railroad industry resulted in local passenger service being discontinued in 1963,\* two years after the demise of the inter-city varnish *Nelly Bly* between New York and Atlantic City that ran over those tracks. There is still active freight service on the line, with track sharing (temporal separation) between NJ Transit and Conrail Shared Assets (which uses the joint portion of the line during the midnight hours).

*\*The final service was a single round-trip provided by a Pennsy doodlebug, which I had the fortune of riding. Earlier there were also locomotive-hauled trains, with some service turning off the line in Pennsauken onto the Delair Bridge, and then running under PRR catenary to 30th Street Station in Philadelphia.*

The River Line opened on March 14, 2004, with 21

stations served by a fleet of 20 model "GTW" DMU cars built by Stadler. Since they are not FRA compliant (for FRA defined buff strength/crash worthiness), a waiver is in place to permit operation over tracks that also see railroad freight trains, albeit not in the same timeframe.

I decided to spend my time on the northern end of the line as I find it to be the more interesting and it is a shorter drive, so I went out on an early June day whose weather was predicted to be sunny. It was for a while, but not after 12 noon. Having enjoyed myself without the fear of being infected by COVID-19, I repeated that a few days later: on a Sunday — as NJ Transit's plan for social distancing on the line called for two-car trains on weekdays, but with only one needed for Sundays. As it happened I saw hardly anyone in the areas where I was photographing (except for a long line of masked people at the door of the L & M Bakery in Riverside).

I have split the results of my sojourn into two parts; this one covers the portion of the line closest to Trenton. There was little new for me to see, but nevertheless, a couple of surprises. The locations for the first three photos are within the city limits of Trenton, New Jersey's capital city. This report is not meant to be a comprehensive article about the River Line, and so just contains short descriptions of the areas I visited surrounding the photos.

Having taken photos throughout the length and breadth of the line since its opening, these pictures could be described as gratuitous, and so I did not think it was necessary to go to every town. Thus I skipped the next portion of the line through Bordentown and Fieldsboro. Bordentown is where the original Camden and Amboy joins the line's right-of-way, and since the sad day that the area surrounding Crosswicks Creek was fenced in, it is hard to get a good photographs there (although in the afternoon some good views would be available if a photographer wanted to risk accessing private property). Through Fieldsboro (no stop there) the line runs adjacent to the Delaware River, but it is hemmed in, so photography there is a little tricky (although in the past I have wandered along the right-of-way to photograph the DMUs with the river in the background). An unrealized goal has been to photograph the line from a boat on the river during the late afternoon.

My next stops were in the town of Florence, which contains the village of Roebbling, named for the steel mill founded by John Roebbling, who built the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883. That factory supplied the steel for many other spans, including the Golden Gate, and provided the elevator cables for the Empire State Building. There is a Roebbling stop, but I drove further south to the main Florence station.

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**Assorted Travels From the First Half of 2020**

*(Continued from page 17)*

I continued further south, to the city of Burlington, which is one of the largest river settlements between Trenton and Camden, albeit with a population just short of 10,000. There are also two stations here, with the

Towne Centre stop located in the midst of a commercial area that has seen better days, but could now be coming back. The photos on page 19 show the line running on single track between opposing lanes of traffic (and parking) along Broad Street. The sight of passenger trains through here has existed from time immemorial, dating back to Camden & Amboy days.



Leaving the line's northern terminal at Trenton's main railroad station, the line twists and turns a bit, ending up running southward alongside Canal Boulevard, an arterial also labeled State Highway 129. There are two stations on that stretch, Hamilton Avenue and Cass Street, serving a mixed residential-commercial neighborhood that also contains the New Jersey State Prison and the city's sports arena. The left photo was taken at the Hamilton Avenue station. Directly to the right of it is a view at the Cass Street grade crossing, taken from the pedestrian access ramp leading to of that stop's northbound platform. This was my first view of one of two wrapped DMUs. The one shown is advertising Virtua, the largest chain of hospitals and health care services in South Jersey.



Two long blocks after the Cass Street station, where Route 129 ends at a freeway interchange and joins I-195 and I-295, Trenton's built-up area gives way to the Duck Island Nature Preserve, where the Stadler DMU cars can really show their speed. With virtually no grade crossings, this is 65 mph territory.

Trains on this mainly single-track line are scheduled to pass near the Florence station. With the camera pointed northward, the third (west side) track is used by Conrail to connect with some sidings that serve various plants, as well as the 2-mile long Florence Industrial Tract that runs into the main part of town adjacent to the Delaware River.

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**SUBDIVISION "A" CAR ASSIGNMENTS**

The following is different from the assignment that appeared in the June, 2020 *Bulletin*:

LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH
7	418 R-188 (no change)	396 R-188

**Assorted Travels From the First Half of 2020**

*(Continued from page 18)*



Speaking of industrial track, the Haines Campus stands out as a good customer of Conrail, with some 800 acres containing 11 box warehouse buildings serving a number of major corporations. The cross street that accesses the Florence station, is named John Galt Way. Yes, the owners named it after Ayn Rand's protagonist in *Atlas Shrugged*. Both these photos look southward from John Galt Way, previously just "Florence Access Road," as shown in the left view.



About  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile north of the station a relatively new overpass runs parallel to the New Jersey Turnpike-Pennsylvania Turnpike connection. This was my first attempt to photograph a light rail train from the Cedar Lane bridge. It is not safe to park on the span or along the ramps leading to it, so I had to walk a bit to reach this spot. With the camera pointing southward, the other wrapped car passes by. This is single-track territory for the DMU service and the passenger line's track is sandwiched between Conrail iron. The track at left curves away just behind the tree to serve a freight customer. Conrail can also use the DMU running track when it operates during the midnight hours.

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**Assorted Travels From the First Half of 2020**

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Looking northward, the left photo shows a southbound DMU train gliding down Burlington's East Broad Street at about 20 miles per hour. Turning the camera 180 degrees, the right view shows a Trenton-bound train passing the handsome First Baptist Church.



Of course during the first 100 years of passenger service, motive power was steam, with this photo from the internet showing a Pennsylvania Railroad K4 Pacific hauling standard [railroad of the world] Tuscan-red passenger cars.

Steven Allen photograph

Working our way southward, the line fans out into double track before crossing the access road of the Burlington-Bristol Bridge at grade. The bridge, which crosses the Delaware River, and its approach roadway and toll booths along Keim Boulevard mark the edge of the

city's business district. The South Burlington station, which is located just past that point, contains a large park-and-ride lot, which was virtually empty in these days of the coronavirus.



A northbound DMU approaches the South Burlington station.

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