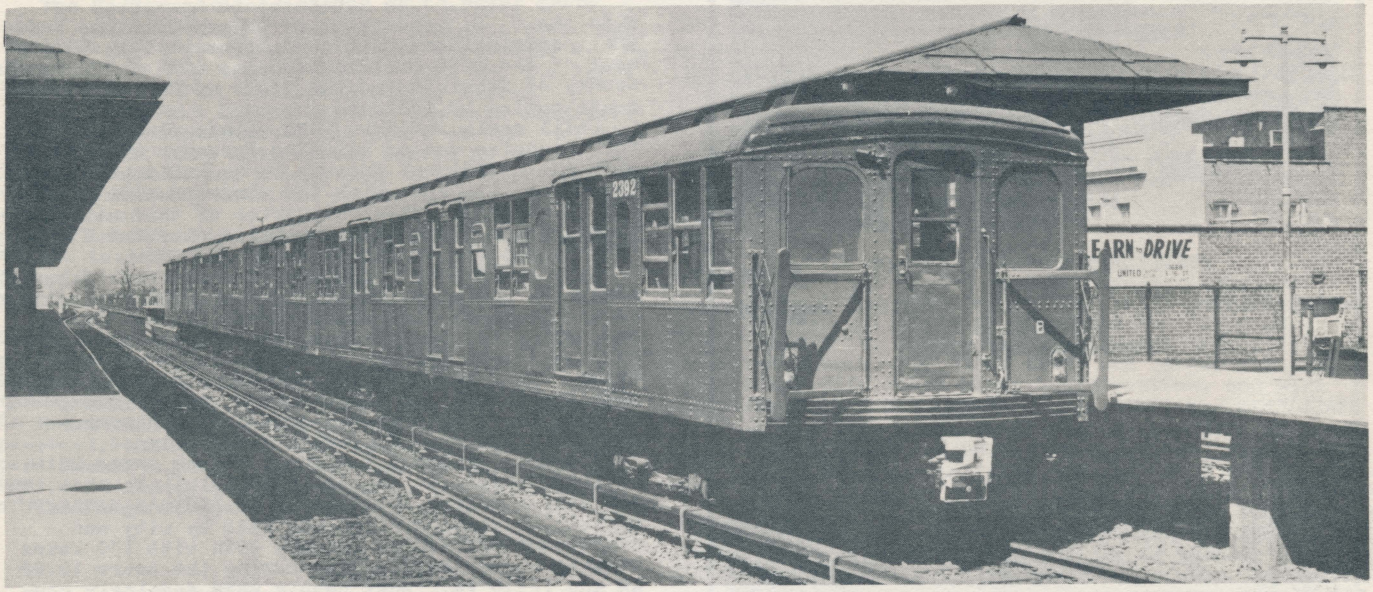
HEADLIGHTS NEWS JOURNAL

March 1978



NEW YORK

The now-famous Nostalgia Special train, which is operated as a public weekly fantrip with restored BMT "B" and "D" type equipment, has finished its second successful season.

This train departed on Saturdays and Sundays between July and November during 1976, and between June and December during 1977. The route was from the 57th Street Station on the Sixth Avenue line to the Transit Exhibit at the Court Street Station in Brooklyn. All passengers have an hour to browse around the exhibit, and then the train leaves for Rockaway Park.

Leaving the exhibit, the train runs non-stop to Rockaway Boulevard Station where it switches to the Rockaway line. This is the most picturesque portion of the entire trip. The five mile run between Howard Beach and Broad Channel stations is within the Gateway National Park, which is an active bird sanctuary. The entire area is along Jamaica Bay.

Of the two swing bridges on the line, the one at the south end, the Beach Channel Draw Bridge, opens with fair regularity so that it too adds a picturesque sight to the trip.

The south terminal for the trip is Rockaway Park, and after a short interval there, the train returns to 57th Street and Sixth Avenue, making one stop at Hoyt-Schermerhorn Streets. The entire round trip is under five hours, and during 1977, the summer weekends were sold out. This was resolved by operating two Specials thirty minutes apart on a number of days.

There are three cars in a BMT "B" type set - two single end control motors and one blind motor, and each car is 67-feet long. A "D" type articulated car consists of three sections mounted on four trucks, 134-feet total length. The IND R-1 through R-9 class are all single cars.

The BMT purchased 67-foot cars starting in 1914, and the "D" type starting in 1925, while the IND R-1 through R-9 class were built between 1930 and 1940.

During the season, some trains have had to be rerouted to Coney Island because of track reconstruction on the Rockaway line. When this happens, trains operate to Coney Island via the Culver line and return to Manhattan via the Sea Beach line, West End line or Brighton line to 57th Street and Sixth Avenue. This routing has more variety, but cannot compare with the view in Jamaica Bay.

As things now stand, the Nostalgia Special will start the 1978 spring season on a date to be announced by the Transit Authority.

--Cornelius D. Seon

MIDDAY SUBWAY TRAINS LENGTHENED

Effective January 30, 1978, midday trains on the A, D, E, F, 1, 2, 4 and 6 trains were lengthened on weekdays. In most cases, the weekday midday trains are as long as rush hour trains, although, of course, they do not run as frequently. Certain lines also received longer trains on weekends (the E on Sundays only). Generally, these are 7 or 8-car trains on the IRT, and 8-car (R-44 and R-46 equipment, 75-feet long), and 10-car trains (standard 60-foot equipment) on the IND-BMT lines affected.

The longer trains are estimated to cost $607,000 a year, but ridership these past months has stopped declining and has actually increased slightly. The additional farebox revenues and continuing cost cutting measures, including the lengthening of times between overhauls of cars, are expected to pay for the added expense. In any case, the lengthened trains will be much appreciated by the subway-riding public, which had to endure crush conditions during off hours for the better part of the past year.

--David L. Klepper

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FRONT COVER: A three-car train of New York's vintage "B" type museum stock is shown here at King's Highway Station on the Brighton Line during 1977.
--Jerome Landesman

IT ISN'T EVERY DAY we see an advertisement in the trade press for used streetcars. The accompanying example appeared recently in Passenger Transport.

Not mentioned in the ad is the fact that the other thirteen all-electrics are no longer around, the result of last year's scrapping program touted by some as being successful.

Boston's PCC rebuilding program will be limited to cars equipped with Westinghouse controls. Cars with GE controls will be offered for sale or scrap.

Other cars to be disposed of in the near future include the famous picture-window PCC's which were built in 1951 and are considered by many to be the most modern cars of their type.

Rapid Transit for Honolulu?

Honolulu's long fight for modern rail rapid transit took another step closer to reality recently with the evaporation of most state objections to the planned 14-mile Honolulu Area Rapid Transit (HART) proposal. Only the House of Representatives of the Hawaiian Legislature still needs to be convinced that the project is worthy of legislative funding.

Under terms of an agreement being worked out with the U. S. Department of Transportation, federal contributions will fund approximately 80 percent of the $730 million project, with the City and County of Honolulu and the State of Hawaii each contributing 10 percent.

Until early January, 1978, state plans called for intensive use of existing freeways by buses, with one additional freeway to be built connecting the Pearl City area with the windward side of the Island of Oahu. Chief supporter of this all-bus plan, former state transportation director E. Alvey Wright, retired at the first of the year.

City and County transportation director Kazu Hayashida has announced plans for putting a portion of the proposed line underground. The initial proposal calls for a subway through Kaimuki under Waialae Avenue through a revitalized business district. This would better serve residential neighborhoods as well as the shopping center, and would be more acceptable to the state which has shown concern about use of crowded freeway lanes.

A second proposal would put tracks under Hotel or King Streets in downtown Honolulu. To show the congestion caused by buses on Honolulu's downtown streets, a demonstration was held by City and County authorities on January 20th with 150 buses causing major traffic jams during the hours 10:00 AM and 12:30 PM. Most people were seemingly convinced that buses were not the answer to the problem, and that the trains should run underneath the streets.

With over 400,000 motor vehicles on an island approximately 37 miles long and 26 miles wide, Oahu's residents look forward to a rapid transit alternative to the congestion of today.
--Robert A. Ramsay

High Wire Act

U. S. Department of Transportation and the German Ministry of Research and Technology will jointly assess the feasibility of cable-suspended transportation systems under a contract award announced last December by UMTA officials.

The $99,856 contract to N. D. Lea and Associates of Huntsville, Alabama, is part of an UMTA automated guideway transit socio-economic research program.

The U. S. and German firms will assess the technical and engineering features, evaluate their performance and determine the public acceptance of the Roosevelt Island Tramway in New York and the Aerobus system in Ste. Anne de Beaupre, Quebec.

The Roosevelt Island Tramway connects Roosevelt Island with Manhattan in the heart of New York City. The one-half-mile long system serves as a commuter link for the island's more than 2,000 families. It can move as many as 1,500 people in each direction every hour.

The Aerobus is a cable-suspended system developed and tested in Zurich, Switzerland, operated in Manheim, Germany, for six months in 1975 and currently installed at Ste. Anne de Beaupre.

The announced project comes as a result of a 1976 agreement for joint assessments of automated guideway transit systems between the U. S. DOT and German Ministry of Research and Technology. Under the agreement the United States has participated in assessments of the German Cabintaxi, a four-passenger automated transit system operating on a test track in Hagen, Germany and the German Ministry is currently participating in the assessment of the Morgantown, W. Va. people mover system.

--Passenger Transport

Chicago

One of the CTA's newest structures recently fell victim to the stresses of nine years of service. On the morning of January 4, a structural engineer for the Rock Island Railroad glanced out the window of his commuter train and observed a crack in one of the girders supporting the elevated connection to the Dan Ryan rapid transit line. He alerted CTA officials who immediately ordered the suspension of service on that line between 35th Street and the Loop.

An inspection of the structure revealed that two other cracks had developed in support girders near the one that was originally reported. The cracks were serious enough to force the suspension of service on the Rock Island Line's tracks because it was feared that the elevated structure would collapse onto the railroad right-of-way.

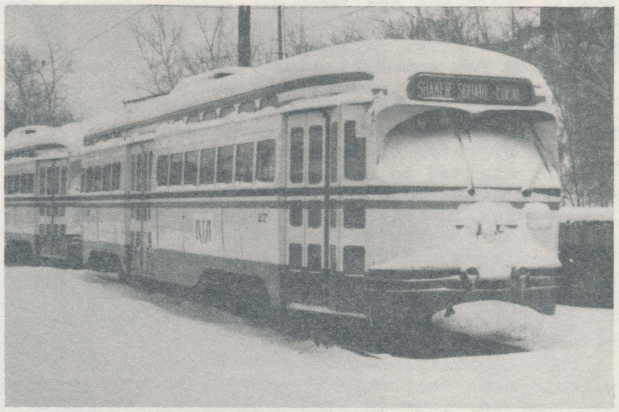
The disruption in service caused inconvenience to 130,000 daily riders on the Dan Ryan line and 13,000 daily riders on the Rock Island trains. An agreement with the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad enabled Rock Island passengers to transfer to ICG trains at Blue Island for the completion of their trip to the Loop without extra charge.

Construction crews and structural engineers worked in 12-hour shifts around the clock to shore up the elevated structure so that service could be resumed. Rock Island trains were restored to normal operations on January 9, but it was not until January 15 that the service on the Dan Ryan line began running through to the Loop.

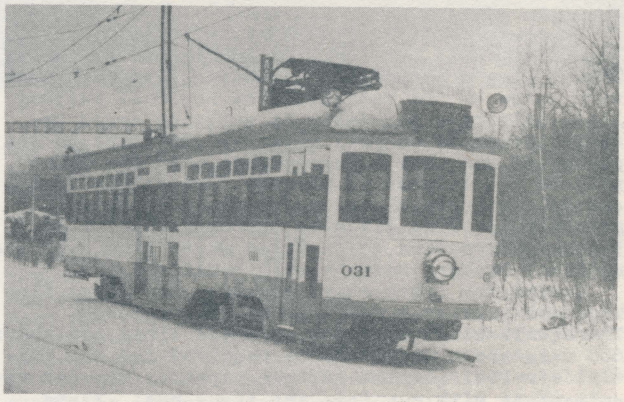
An investigation of the causes of the cracks was ordered and engineers from several consulting firms tested the uncracked girders with ultrasonic equipment for signs of metal stress.

CTA's S-606, former North Shore line car built by Cincinnati in 1923, caught fire and burned to the frame at Skokie Shops on November 26, 1977.

Shaker in the Snow



GCRTA PCC's 27 and 3, minus rock-screens and lifeguards, were parked with their poles down between blizzards at Kingsbury Run Shops on January 17, 1978. The ex-TNJ cars were given new wheels with wider tread and larger flanges, along with other minor modifications, and were roadtested before being used as trippers on Shaker Rapid. They were reportedly sidelined when track-brake problems developed.



RTA influence is reflected by the addition of the numeral "0" to former Shaker wire car 31. Now fitted with pole and pantograph, a roof platform work area, and sporting a new white, grey, red and orange paint scheme (along with blacked-out windows), this 1914 Kuhlman product is a sight to behold!

South Shore Rescued

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, the State, and four on-line counties have agreed to provide funds to keep the South Shore's electric passenger service and to buy new equipment. Indiana will not fund Conrail's (ex-PC) Chicago-Valparaiso trains, so Conrail posted the four runs for discontinuance after January 6, 1978.

--Trains

SOUTH SHORE LINE

MEXICO CITY

Mexico City has announced an expansion of its metro system. Construction has already begun on an extension of Line 3 from Tlatelolco to the city's north end bus terminal. Also planned are three entirely new metro lines in the northern part of the city. All of these new facilities are scheduled for completion by 1982.

The expansion program will add 23.3 miles to the existing 25.8 mile metro system. Of the 23.3 miles, 7.8 miles will be underground and 15.5 miles will be elevated or at grade. Subway construction will be limited to all but the most congested downtown areas because Mexico City's high water table makes tunneling difficult and expensive.

Rolling stock will be compatable with that which is in service on the existing metro system and will use rubber tires. It is expected that Canadian or French car builders will get the contract for the new cars since they are experienced with this type of equipment.

Unfortunately, Mexico City is growing at such a rapid rate that the expanded metro will fall far short of serving the city's mass transit needs. By 1990 the population of the city and its surrounding area may reach 40-million persons. The existing metro is saturated in the rush hours and police have to control the flow of passengers into stations to prevent overcrowding.

Recognizing the limitations of the metro with its small rubber-tired cars, Mexican officials began looking into mass transit alternatives. This resulted in the approval of plans for the establishment of a high-capacity regional railway network. The first phase of this project involves about 45-miles of track which will be electrified at 25 kV 60 Hz.

Four of the first five lines will be radial, but Line 4 will run for 17 miles in the median of Mexico City's outer ring highway and will connect with three of the radials. The regional railway lines will have terminals in outlying areas because there are no rail rights-of-way through the center of the city. Interchange with the metro will be established to provide connections to the central business district. Because of this, priority is being given to the construction of the new metro line to La Villa where Line 3 of the regional railway network will terminate.

Except for three short tunnels, the first five regional railway lines will be above ground. There will be 37 stations on these lines and about 600 cars are expected to be required for the initial service. As the network expands, the car requirements will run into the thousands. Plans call for operating 12-car trains of large vehicles with a capacity of 4,000 passengers per train. Signalling will be designed to allow close headways.

While it may seem strange to funnel passengers off the high-capacity regional railway trains into the overburdened metro, transit officials are hopeful that the regional railway system will divert other passengers away from the metro. It is for this reason that Line 4 of the regional railway system was designed to carry commuters around the center of the city from the residential areas in the southeast to industry in the northwest. Eventually Line 4 will completely encircle the city. Long range plans call for extensions to several proposed satellite towns and to a new international airport which is scheduled to be built at Zampango.

--Engineering News Record, Railway Gazette Int.

Guadalajara

Although the Mexico City metro has been widely publicized, transit developments in Guadalajara, the second largest city in Mexico have largely been overlooked by the media.

There are many parallels between Mexico City and Guadelajara. Both are experiencing a rapid population growth; both have older central areas with narrow congested streets and both now have subways using rubber-tired vehicles. Unlike Mexico City, however, the vehicles used in the Guadelajara subway are trolleybuses.

The need for some form of rapid transit in Guadalajara was evident for many years. Buses were constantly snarled in traffic in the downtown area and a journey of just a few miles could consume more than an hour. In fact, the high concentration of buses was in itself a contributor to the city's growing problem of air pollution.

Plans for a subway were approved and on January 9, 1977 the new facility was opened to revenue service. The 3.25 mile subway has five underground stations and one at each portal on the surface. Two trolleybus services operate through the subway and the route layout basically forms the letter "H" with the subway comprising the horizontal link between the two vertical segments. The two lines are cross routed through the subway so that a maximum of only one transfer is required to reach any destination on the system.

The subway was designed to be a rail facility, but was modified for trolleybuses due to a searcity of funds to acquire suitable rail vehicles. At the time that work was getting underway on the subway, Guadalajara transit officials were able to acquire at reasonable prices a fleet of 124 trolleybuses that had been retired by the Chicago Transit Authority. The vehicles were extensively refurbished by workers in the Guadalajara shops prior to entering service.

Tickets are sold at change booths in the subway stations and the vehicles have fareboxes which accept tickets or the exact fare. The drivers carry no change.

Transit officials have not announced a target date for the conversion of the subway to rail operation. Their decision on this matter will no doubt be governed by their limited financial resources and the availability of rail vehicles. It is possible that some of the PCC cars which are being replaced by light-rail vehicles in Boston, San Francisco, Toronto and Shaker Heights may find their way to Guadalajara. If this happens, the subway may be incorporated into an extensive network of light-rail lines operating on rights-of-way in the medians of wide roadways in the outlying areas of the city. This was the concept envisioned by Guadalajara officials when plans for a subway were first drawn up many years ago.

PHILADELPHIA - Trolley service was restored to SEPTA's Route 6- Ogontz Avenue line on January 30. At the same time, Route 23 was cut back to Mermaid loop for an indefinite period to permit sewer reconstruction along Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill. Plans also call for the rebuilding of the approaches to the loop at Bethlehem Pike. This will eliminate the need for cars to make left turns entering and leaving the loop by reversing the direction of travel through the terminal.

SAN FRANCISCO - The city government has just announced that it will spend $10 million on a program to upgrade service and safety on the cable car system. They have promised not to change the looks of the famous cars.