

# The Bulletin



***New York Division, Electric Railroaders' Association***

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## ***The Bulletin***

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## **PROPOSED NYC TRANSIT CAPITAL PROJECTS — FISCAL YEAR 2005 (Conclusion)**

*In the July and August, 2004 Bulletins, we published a list of projects for which the MTA is seeking federal funding. This is the concluding installment, in which we list the following that were omitted because of the lack of space.*

**REHABILITATION OF TUNNEL LIGHTING—CLARK STREET TUBE:** NYC Transit expects to install modern tunnel lighting from Borough Hall via the Clark Street Tube to Chambers Street. Compact fluorescent lighting fixtures will be installed in the tunnel and blue lights will be placed at each emergency exit.

**TUNNEL LIGHTING—BOWLING GREEN TO BROOKLYN BRIDGE:** New 277-volt compact fluorescent fixtures at 40-foot intervals staggered 20 feet on the opposite wall will be installed in the tunnel between Bowling Green and Brooklyn Bridge. Receptacles rated at 20 amps, 120 volts will be installed at 80-foot intervals. Blue lights will be placed at each emergency alarm bay and the fixtures at each emergency exit will be replaced. Existing lighting fixtures, conduits, and transformers will be removed.

**TUNNEL LIGHTING — JAY STREET TO CHAMBERS STREET:** NYC Transit expects to install modern tunnel lighting from Jay Street via the Cranberry Street Tunnel to Chambers Street. Compact 277-volt fluorescent lamps and fixtures and 20-ampere power receptacles spaced 80 feet apart will be installed on the tunnel wall. Emergency lighting will be placed at specified locations and blue lights will be installed at all telephones.

**REHABILITATION OF JORALEMON STREET TUN-**

**NEL:** The portion of the tunnel between Bowling Green and Nevins Street, including the Joralemon Street Tube, will be brought to a state of good repair. Work includes repair of spalling concrete in the tube under the East River, repair of water infiltration within the two-mile limits of the project, reconstruction of the collapsed duct banks, and provision of d.c. power.

**REHABILITATION OF EMERGENCY EXITS:** To ensure passengers' safety, the 50 most seriously deficient emergency exits will be rehabilitated. Structural defects, emergency lighting, and backup power feeds will be upgraded or repaired.

**207<sup>TH</sup> STREET OVERHAUL SHOP EXTENSION:** NYC Transit will provide a rehabilitated Overhaul Shop that has equipment needed to meet future production requirements. The existing shop, which will be extended approximately 100 to 200 feet at the north end, will accommodate the new Air Conditioning Shop, the newly configured Truck Shop, and the new north Car Repair area. The existing Battery House, Hazardous Materials Storage Building, Boiler House, Oil House, and other small structures, which are on the site of the proposed extension, will be demolished. A new Hazardous Material Building and a new Boiler House will be constructed.

**38<sup>TH</sup> STREET YARD—HEAVY EQUIPMENT SHOP RECONSTRUCTION:** An enclosed facility to repair one-, three-, and ten-ton cranes, pay loaders, jet snow blowers, and forklifts will be constructed. The existing shop, which is be-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## NORTH PELHAM VIA THIRD STREET LINE by Bernard Linder

Owners:

### STREET CARS

December 28, 1893	Westchester Electric Railroad Company
January, 1899	Third Avenue Railroad Company
April 13, 1900	Metropolitan Street Railway Company
January 18, 1908	Third Avenue Railroad Company
January 1, 1912	Third Avenue Railway Company

### BUSES

May 3, 1931	Westchester Electric Railroad Company
November 11, 1936	Westchester Street Transportation Company
December 17, 1956	Fifth Avenue Coach Lines, Incorporated
December 12, 1969	Bus Associates, Incorporated, whose principal stockholders were Arthur and George Bernacchia and Raymond Murphy. In 1973, Liberty Coaches' principals had equal ownership in two New York City operations — Pelham Parkway and Pioneer Bus (whose name was subsequently changed to Command Bus) — and had a 25% interest in the operation of Westchester Street and West Fordham through a holding company, Bus Associates
About mid-1982	Liberty Coaches, Club Transportation, and Westchester Street were merged to form Liberty Lines Transit, Incorporated

Route:

### STREET CARS

December 28, 1893	West Mount Vernon horse cars were extended via S. Fourth Avenue and E. Third Street to the Pelham line
June 1, 1894	Electric cars started operating from the crossover on W. First Street between S. Third Avenue and S. Fourth Avenue via S. Fourth Avenue and E. Third Street to the Pelham line
Unknown date	Extended via Wolfs Lane to New Haven station
June, 1899	Cars operated northbound on S. Fourth Avenue and southbound on S. Fifth Avenue between W. First Street and E. Third Street
December, 1899	Extended via Fifth Avenue to Mayflower Avenue
November, 1913	Extended on Pelhamdale Road to the middle of the Hutchinson River
July 18, 1918	Cars were operated by one man
May 3, 1931	Buses replaced street cars

### BUSES

May 3, 1931	Route D buses started operating from Prospect and Gramatan Avenues to Pelhamdale Road and New Rochelle Road over the same route as the trolley
November 3, 1935 to December 28, 1935 And since November 1, 1938	Extended via New Rochelle Road to Parkway Plaza
About 1973	Renumbered to Route 53
1986	A few rush hour buses operated via W. First Street and White Plains Road to E. 241 <sup>st</sup> Street
June 18, 1990	Discontinued E. 241 <sup>st</sup> Street service

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Proposed NYC Transit Capital Projects

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yond its useful life, will be demolished.

**YARD TRACK REHABILITATION:** This project provides for the replacement of approximately 405 panels of yard track attached to the 32 yard switches that will be replaced. Locations were based on a Yard Condition Sur-

vey. Panels will be replaced at the following locations: 207<sup>th</sup> Street Yard - 307 panels, Coney Island Yard - 81 panels, and Culver Yard - 17 panels.

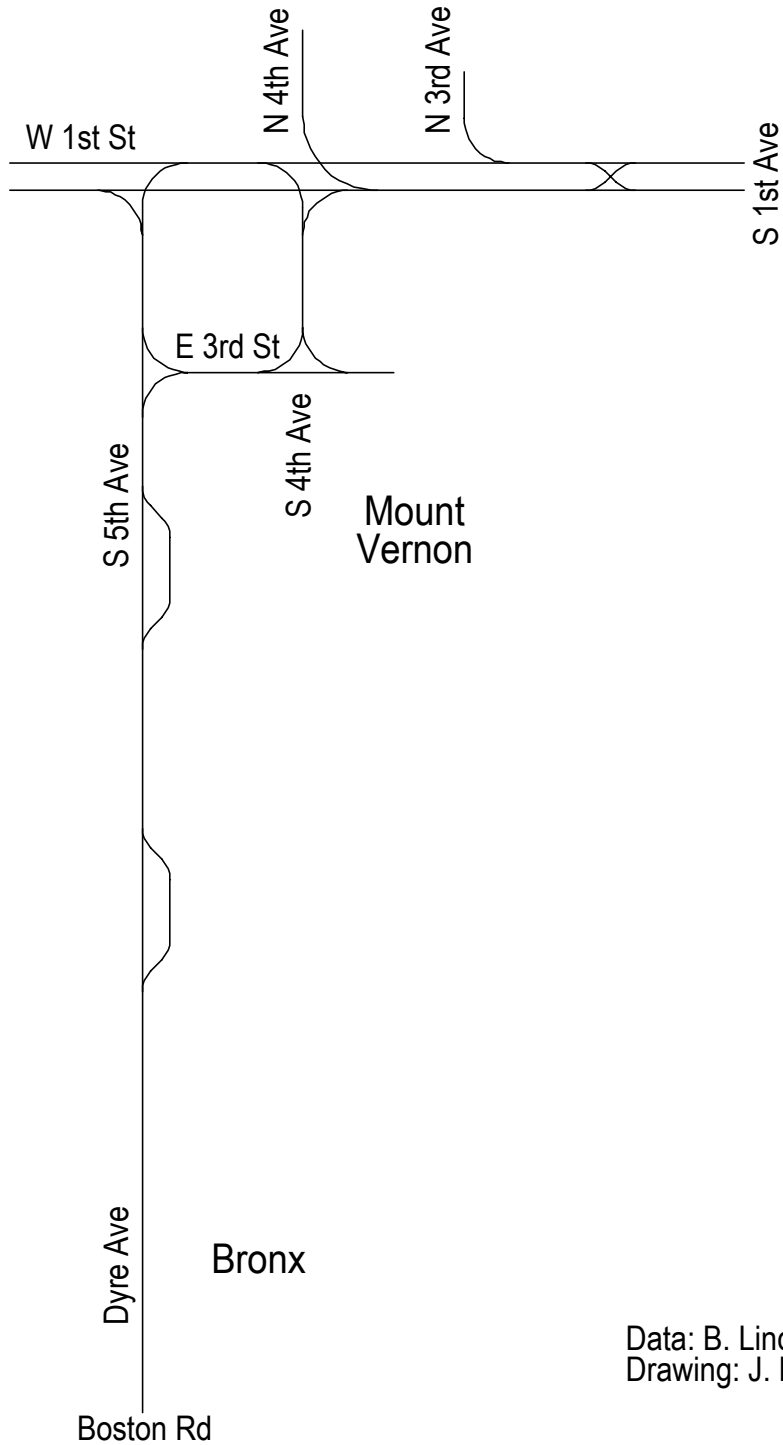
**YARD SWITCH REPLACEMENT:** At selected locations, 32 yard switches, approximately 3.6 percent of the 878 yard switches, will be replaced at the following locations: Coney Island Yard - 28 switches, Stillwell Yard - 1 switch, and 207<sup>th</sup> Street Yard - 3 switches.

North Pelham via Third Street Line

(Continued from page 2)

Fifth Avenue - Mount Vernon

1929



Data: B. Linder  
Drawing: J. Erlitz

## TECH TALK

### by Jeffrey Erlitz

The station rehabilitation project at the Essex Street/Delancey Street transfer complex is nearly complete. New mosaic tile work was installed on the one wall along the southbound platform of the Essex Street station in a style very reminiscent of old BMT mosaics. This is similar to the work that had been done at both Broad Street and Fulton Street stations on the Nassau Street Line. Did BMT-style mosaics exist at Essex Street in years past? If someone out there knows, please let me know and I will pass it on.

The new signals at the Canal Street station on the Eighth Avenue Line were placed in service on southbound express Track A3 over the weekend of May 29-30. This work was done under the Concourse Line signal job (contract S-32308-R).

On Tuesday, July 20, the diamond crossover between Tracks GD1 and GD2 in the 60<sup>th</sup> Street Connection south of Queens Plaza (switches #59 and 61) was permanently removed from service. Since May, 1987, when **R** trains were rerouted to Forest Hills from Astoria, these crossovers had never, to my knowledge, been used in service during a General Order (during, for example, a midnight 60<sup>th</sup> Street Tube single-track operation). During the short time that the Forest Hills-bound **R** ran all night, whenever there was a single-track operation, **R** service was either suspended or short-turned in Manhattan. Even with 20-minute headways during the midnight hours, there was never sufficient time to run both **N** and **R** services in a single-track operation. Since the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street Connection opened in 2001, there was no longer a reason to maintain these switches. It is easy to operate the **R** via 63<sup>rd</sup> Street rather than 60<sup>th</sup> Street if necessary.

The new signals on Track J4 of the Nassau Street Line were finally placed in service over the weekend of June 26-27, including the new interlocking at Canal Street. Northbound **J** and **M** service, however, is still operating via Track J1.

Last month I mentioned that Judlau Contracting is repairing the thru spans at 219<sup>th</sup> Street, 225<sup>th</sup> Street and 231<sup>st</sup> Street under contract C-34574. They are actually repairing the thru spans at all of the stations on the White Plains Road Line from Bronx Park East to 241<sup>st</sup> Street. This \$78.8 million project started back in December, 2002 and is scheduled to be completed by April, 2007. Over the weekend of June 5-6 the temporary platforms that had been installed over southbound Track 2 from Burke Avenue to Bronx Park East were removed and reinstalled over northbound Track 3 in the same area. Northbound **2** trains will operate via express Track M from north of East 180<sup>th</sup> Street to south of 219<sup>th</sup> Street until January 7, 2005. Starting Monday, August

16, the Burke Avenue station is closed in both directions until November 22 to allow renovation work to be performed on the mezzanine. In addition to the thru span work, mezzanine support hangars, top and bottom flange angles on track stringers, rocker pins, column bases, and other structural elements will be repaired or replaced as needed.

The second high-speed crossover, between Tracks 1 and 2, has now been installed at Queens Village on the Main Line of the Long Island Rail Road. In addition, Amtrak's Track Laying Machine is now being used at that location to aid in the installation of concrete ties. By the beginning of August, westbound Hempstead Branch Track 1 had its concrete ties installed through the length of the Bellerose station.

The next historic interlocking diagram in my current series is Marcy Avenue on the BMT Jamaica Line. By the mid-1950s Marcy Avenue was one of only three interlockings left on the entire BMT equipped with a Union Switch & Signal electro-pneumatic interlocking. The other two were Kings Highway (Brighton) and Fresh Pond (Myrtle Avenue). At one time, the interlockings at Park Row, Bridge Yard, Sands Street, Navy Street, Grand Avenue (Myrtle Avenue), Wyckoff Avenue, and Franklin Avenue (Fulton St) were all US&S electropneumatic interlockings. By 1960 this interlocking was reconfigured and the middle track (J3-4) then stub-ended in the station. The crossovers were relocated from the west end of the station to the east end. This tower was removed from service on May 7, 1995, when the entire Jamaica Line was being re-signaled under contract S-32304. It is now remotely controlled from East New York Yard. (See next page for diagram)

Next month, we will take a look at Grant Avenue Interlocking on the Fulton Street "L" and see what it looked like just before service was ended on the line in 1956.

We now continue with my new series of track diagrams of subway lines that were never constructed. The Long Island Expressway route was also part of the grand MTA 1968 plan for various new subway routes. This line, construction Route 131-C, would have diverged off the Queens Boulevard Line under the Woodhaven Boulevard station and turned east along the expressway to a point almost 1/2-mile east of Kissena Boulevard. The lay-up tracks beyond the Kissena Boulevard station were to be on two levels, the reason for which I do not know. At first glance, one would question why there would be a station at 99<sup>th</sup> Street rather than 108<sup>th</sup> Street, especially since 99<sup>th</sup> Street does not even cross the expressway (there is a pedestrian overpass there). 108<sup>th</sup> Street is a much more important through street and supports what would be a

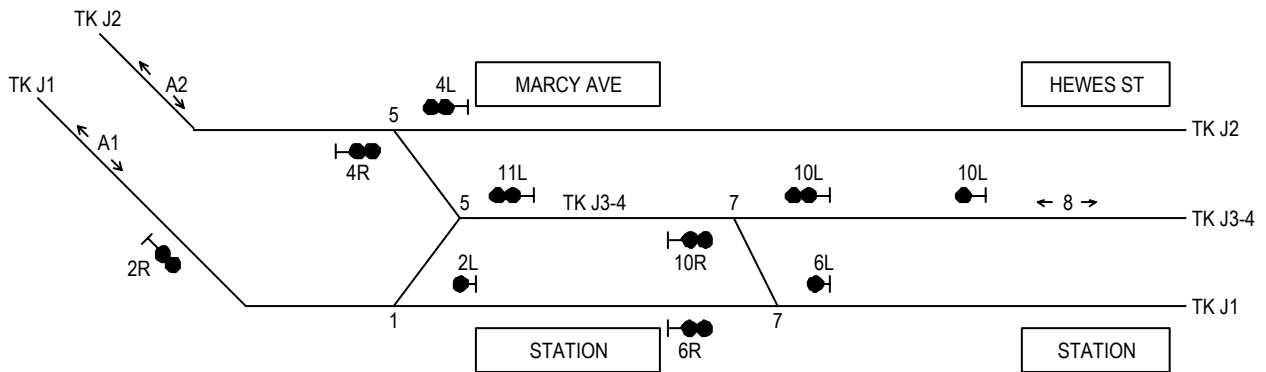
*(Continued on page 5)*

**Tech Talk**

(Continued from page 4)

### JAMAICA LINE MARCY AVE CONTROL

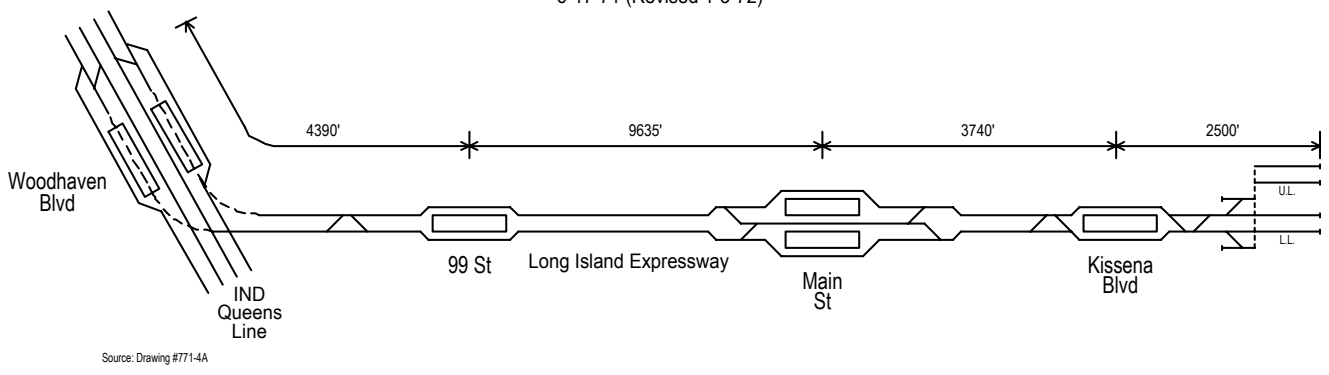
← NORTH



Legend	
●●	Home signal
●	Approach signal
●	Dwarf signal

US&S MODEL 14
5 LEVERS FOR SIGNALS
3 LEVERS FOR SWITCHES
1 LEVER FOR TRAFFIC
2 SPARE SPACES
11 LEVER FRAME

### IND Long Island Expressway Line Route 131-C 6-17-71 (Revised 1-3-72)



Source: Drawing #771-4A

feeder bus route (the Q23). However, there are a huge amount of apartment buildings in the 99<sup>th</sup> Street vicinity (Lefrak City and Park City, among others). The data for

this track diagram are from Drawing #771-4A, dated June 17, 1971 and revised January 3, 1972.

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# Commuter and Transit Notes

by Randy Glucksman

## Metropolitan Transportation Authority

On July 28, the MTA announced that it would be seeking fare increases to close an anticipated budget gap. Fares went up an average 15% at all MTA facilities in May, 2003. Please see the Long Island Rail Road section for details on the affect that this could have on the LIRR.

## MTA Metro-North Railroad (East)

A Metro-North train that was en route to its first stop at New Rochelle pulled down the overhead wires on all four tracks, shutting down the New Haven Line. This incident, which occurred at about 8:30 AM on July 21, came one day after a power failure on the section of the Northeast Corridor between New York and Newark (please see story under NJ Transit). While service was restored to Metro-North service after 5 PM, traffic and transit reports at about that time kept reporting Amtrak delays.

While I was waiting for the elevator to take me up to ERA Headquarters to help with the mailing of the August *Bulletin*, the door to the lower level of Grand Central Terminal was open, and on Track 115 I saw a train of ACMUs. With these cars running their last miles, this would be a good time to list all 61 cars that were on the roster.

1102, 1105, 1107, 1109-1110, 1113-1115, 1117-1128, 1130-1133, 1135-1136, 1138, 1140-1141, 1141-1146, 1148-1150, 1153-1160, 1163-1169, 1171-1172, 1175, 1178-1180, 1182-1183, 1185

34 M-7 cars were in service at the end of June.

One proposal to overhaul the west-of-Hudson Comets was received from an unnamed firm.

Member Bob Underwood reported that a new storage yard, on the site of the New Haven's Lumberton Street Shops, was opened on July 24. He heard "test train" talk on his scanner and when he passed by the next day, there was a train there. By Monday, the yard was in full operation.

NewsRadio880 reported that a new rail station will be built in Fairfield County. Unfortunately, I was unable to get any specifics, but Bob was able to fill in some details. It seems that ground was broken for what is being called the Fairfield Metro Center, which will include a corporate park, hotel/conference center, and, of course, a new station for Metro-North with over 1,000 parking spaces. Completion is set for 2007.

For a sixth year, weekend Rail/Bus service is being operated to the Berkshires. Between June 25 and September 6, there is connecting bus service from Wassaic to Great Barrington, Massachusetts, also serving Miller-ton, Copake, and Hillsdale. This route had been served by the New York Central and later Penn-Central until

1971.

Near the end of July the question of a new stadium for the New York Yankees became news once again. According to *The New York Times*, this time around the Yankees might pay most of the cost. It would be sited on the north side of E. 161<sup>st</sup> Street, directly across the street from the existing stadium. Also on the accompanying map is the "proposed Metro-North station." Without some sort of shuttle bus/van, it is my opinion that the distance, an additional two blocks, would be too great to be viable.

## MTA Metro-North Railroad (West)

At the end of June, one Pascack Valley and five Port Jervis Line trains were equipped with Comet Vs, and delivery of the first part of the 65-car order (5 cabs and 25 trailers) was complete. Delivery of the balance of the order, 10 cabs and 25 trailers (5 of which have toilets), continued throughout the summer.

As part of its program to upgrade the Port Jervis Line, a temporary maintenance headquarters has been set up at Campbell Hall. From there, a condition assessment and live load analysis of approximately 85 fixed undergrade railroad bridges, including the Woodbury and Moodna Viaducts, will be performed. Short-term work includes installation of new continuously welded rail and wooden ties. Last year, NJ Transit was contracted to install seven miles of new CWR, and five more miles will be done this year between September and mid-November.

## Connecticut Department of Transportation

The headline in *The New York Times* (July 16) read: "Small Rail Line to Be Focus of Security Test." As of Monday, July 19, riders boarding Shore Line East trains had their bags X-rayed and tickets swiped by a gloved attendant who rubbed each ticket on a special pad that could be read in a few seconds by a microwave-sized machine. Anyone who had a ticket that gave a positive reading was questioned further. For this test, a specially outfitted car was used for boarding. Shore Line East was selected because of its relatively low ridership. This is the third of three tests being conducted by the Department of Homeland Security in the wake of the Madrid train bombings. The first took place at the New Carrollton station near Washington, D.C. in May, where passengers had to pass through a scanner, and the second, in June, was conducted in Washington, D.C., but at Union Station, where the focus was on checked luggage and cargo.

After the program went into effect, member David A. Cohen sent an article from the *New Haven Register* with a photograph. The car assigned to this task ap-

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**Commuter and Transit Notes***(Continued from page 6)*

pears to be one of the former SPVs (Constitutionliners), with all of the seats removed. In the center of the car is the scanner, much like one finds at airports and other places where these types of inspections take place. However, unlike airport screening, the scanning devices are only checking for explosives, and not for scissors or pocket knives. There is also no requirement for items such as keys, metal objects, or cell phones to be handled separately. The inspections were being done by employees of the Transportation Security Administration.

Once again proposals have surfaced for additional rail service in the Nutmeg State. This time, the mayors of Meriden and Hartford are calling for added service between New Haven and Hartford and possibly into Springfield, Massachusetts. Hearings were held in July and August on this and other plans for new rail service. Amtrak presently serves this 37-mile corridor with limited service. The mayors envision an additional 14 one-way trips each weekday, with a fare of \$3.50, a distance of 15 miles, for a Meriden/New Haven trip.

**MTA Long Island Rail Road**

General Order No. 103 went into effect at 12:01 AM July 19. Updating a news item from the July *Bulletin*, replacement timetables with the words "Revised June 22" were available for the Port Jefferson, Ronkonkoma, Hempstead, Far Rockaway, West Hempstead, and Montauk Branches, and the City Terminal Zone. This was done to correct a number of errors.

On July 28, the LIRR distributed brochures on how traveling to New York Penn would be affected during the Republican National Convention. It reviewed what had already been made public, only two entrances open (W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Seventh Avenue), Seventh Avenue closed – W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Street is converted to a pedestrian walkway to Sixth Avenue. The railroad suggested alternatives to Penn Station, e.g. Hunterspoint Avenue, Flatbush Avenue, and Jamaica. At the latter two there are connections to NYCT subways, but unlike NJ Transit/PATH (August *Bulletin*) it did not mention that LIRR tickets would be honored.

News stories had been circulating for months that the MTA was projecting a deficit for the next few years, and on July 29 the gruesome details were made public. Besides an average 5% fare increase, there were other proposals, including service cuts, which would be "draconian." Note that whenever the news is really bad, transit officials like to use this word. I decided that this would be as good a time as any to refer to a dictionary and see what *draconian* really means. Here is what I found. "Relating to *Draco*, the Athenian lawgiver; hence to (applied to laws), very severe; sanguinary (bloody)." And in this case, its use would be justified.

The LIRR is proposing to eliminate service on the

Greenport, Montauk, Oyster Bay, and West Hempstead Branches as well as dismantle the tracks, or eliminate weekend service on all of the aforementioned except for Montauk. Also, 30 peak and off-peak trains would be combined, 16 station ticket windows would be closed, car washes would be closed, and there would be a reduction in the frequency of cleaning of stations and cars. There would still be a fare increase and the proposed merger of the LIRR and Metro-North would be resurrected. Public hearings will be scheduled to discuss these proposals and the next five-year capital plan. That plan will include funding for East Side Access to Grand Central Terminal and the third track on the Main Line from Hicksville to Bellerose.

Six LIRR stations (Bayside, Freeport, Great Neck, Hicksville, Patchogue, and Ronkonkoma) were selected to test a new Audio Visual Paging System (AVPS) system, which began in July. This ADA-compliant system provides updated information on train performance and track assignments. After it is fully tested and installed, customers will be able to receive specific information for each station. Advances in technology allow the AVPS to enhance sound quality of announcements in response to ambient "on site" noise levels, as well as the brightness of the LED signs based on local light conditions.

Member Joe Gagne sent an article from *Long Island Newsday* that provided some details about the toilet problems plaguing the M-7s. According to the LIRR, the problems include defective level sensors, kinks in the flexible piping, and a seizing flush regulator. All work is under warranty from the manufacturer. The article listed other problems that the cars have had: an unspecified retrofit to correct a "swaying" problem, and of course, the infamous clothing destroyer which is attributable to the slightly longer arm rests. Despite these problems, railroad officials maintain that they are pleased with the cars overall, including the 217,084-mile MDBF (Mean Distance Between Failures). Contractually, the cars are required to operate 100,000 miles without a breakdown, but they are more than doubling that number. Contrast that to the aging M-3s, which have an MDBF of just 47,784 miles.

**NJ Transit**

Because I went to visit my mother in the Bronx, I just missed being involved in a delay that was caused by a power failure during the afternoon of July 20. According to a Customer Notice, shortly after 4 PM, NJ Transit was notified by Amtrak that there was a power problem between Newark and New York. Power was restored at 5:05 PM with the exception of the area between Secaucus and Bergen Interlocking. This required single-tracking until full power came on after 7 PM. At New York's Penn Station, announcements were made for passengers to use PATH trains, which were honoring NJ Transit rail tickets. Trains on all lines were delayed.

NJ Transit distributed its *FYI* for July which, like the

*(Continued on page 8)*

**Commuter and Transit Notes***(Continued from page 7)*

LIRR, also provided information about the RNC. Besides the *Midtown Direct* service being rerouted to Hoboken, all trains operating on the Northeast Corridor were to be inspected by New Jersey State Police and K-9 units. In addition, customers were advised that the overhead baggage racks could not be used, the number of onboard restrooms would be limited, and onboard trash receptacles were to be sealed. On August 9, I did notice that the trash receptacle at the center door of the Arrow III car in which I was riding had been "screwed shut" and an "out-of-service" sticker had been placed over it. Other details were published in the August **Bulletin**.

A special schedule, photocopied on 11x17 paper, was published for Morris & Essex service during the Republican National Convention. The following trains did not operate: #300, 306, 308, 334, 622, 6614, 331, 337, 339, 653, 657, 661, and 6341.

Following approval of a \$1.34 billion operating budget, for the thirteenth time in fourteen years there will be no fare increase for NJ Transit riders. Contrast this to a news item in **Progressive Railroading** which reported that transit agencies across the nation have raised fares over the past year or will raise fares in the coming months. This list includes Virginia Railway Express, WMATA, Metrolink (Los Angeles), GO Transit, Coaster (San Diego), and Tri-Met (Portland). The board also approved a \$1.19 billion capital program which will see funds expended on the continuing overhaul of the Arrow IIIs and rehabilitation of the Morris & Essex viaduct, station work at Newark Broad Street, Ridgewood, Trenton, and Metropark. There will also be an additional 20,000 parking spaces, with work taking place this year at Edison, Hamilton, Rahway, and Wayne.

While riding into Newark Penn Station, I passed the location which is adjacent to PATH's Harrison Maintenance Facility that NJ Transit was using to temporarily store some out-of-service Comets. Because it was close to the afternoon rush hour, several Raritan Valley Line trains obscured the view, but I did observe 5174, a Metro-North East car that came over to west-of-Hudson service in 1998. Another trip through the area two weeks later found that all of the Metro-North cars had been removed, but NJ Transit Comet Is (1604, 1605, 1701, 1717, and 1730) were still there.

Still rare are solid trainsets on NJ Transit, but there was a complete train of Comet-Ib (former Arrow-Ib) on the Raritan Valley Line with the following consist – 5158-5232-5223-5227-5233-5230.

A full-scale, 65-foot mock-up of the new multi-level car has been constructed at Bombardier's facility in La Pocatiere, Quebec, Canada. It was inspected by top NJ Transit officials, who found it had a full vestibule, upper and lower levels, working doors, lighting fixtures, in-

stalled seats, and a working bathroom. Mechanical staff and union representatives provided input into the design of the car. Some of the other amenities – the cars will have 2-2 seating with molded seat backs, wider seats that have individualized bucket styling and textured fabric seat covers. There will also be a better PA system and pneumatic doors with sensitive edges, features that resulted from feedback from customer focus groups.

Morrisville Yard, in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, was opened on March 7 of this year. A contract was recently awarded to design Phase II, which would add 10 tracks to the existing 12. This would allow storage of 120 additional rail cars. There would also be a Service & Inspection facility, a wheel truing machine, and a facility for employees.

After determining that the flaw that caused the excessive temperature on a wheel last month might be linked to the problem that caused a wheel to overheat and fall off a Main Line train in mid-June just after it dropped off its last load of passengers, NJ Transit is replacing the journal boxes on more than 300 Comets by the end of the year at a cost of \$600,000.

Did you know that on an average day, NJ Transit's electric locomotives start 42 trains? Also, trains negotiate 476 phase gaps, of which 176 involve power changeovers from 11kV to 25 kV or vice versa. There are three locations where this takes place: Swift – connection to/from Morris & Essex and Northeast Corridor; Coastline – connection with Morris & Essex Hoboken and Northeast Corridor, and on the North Jersey Coast Line – Rahway. The Morris & Essex and North Jersey Coast Line both operate on 25kv.

NJ Transit's newest station, Ramsey/Route 17, located between Ramsey and Mahwah, opened August 22. New NJ Transit and Metro-North timetables were published for the Main/Bergen and Port Jervis Lines. Other lines that also received new timetables were the Morris & Essex, Montclair-Boonton, and North Jersey Coast. As has become the practice, timetable colors were reversed. Fares charged will be the same as from the Ramsey station, which will remain open. On weekdays, 61 trains will stop there, including 16 during peak hours. The station provides parking for more than 1,200 vehicles.

A year and a half after the Montclair State University station was placed into service as a transfer station for Montclair-Boonton Line passengers to connect between *Midtown Direct* and Hoboken trains, it fully opened on August 22, along with its 1,500-space parking garage.

In answer to a question from a member of the Board of Directors at the June 9 meeting, Executive Director George Warrington said that based on historical experience, Alstom would have difficulty meeting the project schedule for the 33 diesel locomotives being manufactured at its plants in Valencia, Spain and Hornell, New York. The original delivery date for all of the PL-42ACs

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## Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 8)

was the end of this year, but at the time Alstom was 90 days behind schedule. These units will have 3620 hp AC traction motors that are controlled by IGBT technology and an 800 kW HEP (head-end power) system, and are rated for 100 mph speeds. Another feature is regenerative braking where power is supplied back to the HEP system to power the amenities in the coaches.

The October 4, 2003 #7/City Subway timetable was revised with a June, 2004 date, with a banner announcing updated holiday service information.

NJ-ARP reported that the HBLRT extension to Weehawken would begin on September 8, and if there are any ceremonies they will likely take place at Lincoln Harbor, the northern terminus. Two other stations will also open 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Street/Congress Street. No details were available as to the service plan that would be operated, i.e., would all cars serve Hoboken? Still to come sometime next year is service to Union City and North Bergen.

On-time performance of the River Line, which began revenue service on March 14, has climbed from 87.1% (for the partial month) to 92.6% in April to 97.7% in May. The goal is 95%. NJ-ARP reported that it had information that just before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, weekday ridership had exceeded 6,000, and on Friday July 2, the rough total was 9,200! And, during the week of August 9-15, the River Line offered free rides for connecting PATCO passengers. This was a switch from a promotion where PATCO offered free rides for River Line passengers in March.

An automobile driver, who, it was charged, disregarded a "No Left Turn" sign, caused an accident with a westbound River Line car on July 31. Fortunately only one of the 38 passengers was injured, as well as the driver of the car. One of our members was aboard another car at the time, and when it arrived at the Burlington South station, all passengers were transferred to a shuttle bus (MCI Cruiser). Repair crews responded and cleared up the accident scene in short order. Member Lee Winson added that this was the first auto grade crossing accident for the River Line, and the only other incidents involved encounters with a pedestrian and a deer.

### Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation

A train from World Trade Center struck the bumper entering Hoboken on July 19. Seven passengers received minor injuries in the 3:15 PM incident. The Port Authority reported that service was not affected and that the damage was minor. No information was provided as to on which track the collision took place nor the cars involved. Space is tight at Hoboken because only Track 3 can accommodate 8-car trains – Tracks 1 and 2 have a limit of 7 cars.

## Metropolitan Area

In the days before the first anniversary of the Great Northeast Blackout, NJ Transit and a host of other companies and transit providers published a booklet entitled, **Don't Get Stuck in the Dark**. Details next month.

### Amtrak

It became a little more difficult to ride Amtrak during the Republican National Convention in New York when Amtrak issued some temporary rules. All passengers had to have reservations before they could purchase tickets. Exceptions were the *Keystone* and *Clocker* trains because most riders have monthly tickets. No schedule changes were anticipated. An Amtrak spokeswoman reported that 138 trains move through Penn Station New York every day.

Amtrak's Chief Mechanical Officer, Jonathan Klein, addressed the spring meeting of the National Association of Rail Passengers and discussed the status of the fleet. Some of his remarks were reprinted in the June **NARP Newsletter**. There are over 16 different Amfleet Café car and premium class car configurations. Under the five-year plan to return the railroad to a state of good repair, there will be only three designs: Club (seats), Club-dinette (seats at one end, tables at the other), and full dinette. All of the Club seats will be wide First Class, 2-1. Club car seats will be leather-covered, like what one finds on many airlines. To alleviate a car shortage that was caused by too many wrecks, the backshop was reassembled, and in 2003, its first full year, there were 460 light overhauls, 47 medium/heavy overhauls, and 10 complete manufactures. This resulted in 21 wrecked cars being returned to service. At the Bear, Delaware Shops, workers are refurbishing as cab cars (with cabling for push/pull operations) eight of the original Metroliners, which were most recently known as Capitoliners. These cars, along with 22 P-40 locomotives, would be able to facilitate any new state-supported push/pull corridor services at minimal cost.

Amtrak President David Gunn, in an interview with a **The New York Times** reporter (Travel Section – July 18, 2004), spoke of the need to get financing to purchase new cars, which are necessary to get the railroad into a state of good repair. On any given day, fewer than 80% of the cars are available for service. New car carriers are being purchased for the *Auto Train*, and scheduled to be delivered next February. The existing carriers were acquired from Canadian National and the Santa Fe and date from the 1960s. It is hoped that new rolling stock could be purchased for the Northeast Corridor beginning in 2007 to replace the Amfleet cars, many of which are in their 28<sup>th</sup> year of service. While 28 years is not ancient for locomotive-hauled cars, they suffer from high failure rates caused by deferred overhauls.

Member Dennis Zaccardi sent a link to a website where you will find a photo of Turboliner 59 in a junkyard near Chicago: <http://www.railpictures.net/>

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**Commuter and Transit Notes**

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viewphoto.php?id=69612. The car is in derelict condition.

**Miscellaneous**

Congress and the President have still not come to an agreement over the dollars that would fund the replacement of TEA-21, so funding is being continued on almost a month-to-month basis.

Just how much of what riders pay in fares actually pays for their ride, or put another way, what is the fare recovery rate? The data was supplied by the American Public Transportation Association. As you can see, commuters in the metropolitan area pay a higher percentage than do those in other parts of the country.

TRANSIT AGENCY	POPULAR NAME/ ABBREVIATION	CITY/ AREA SERVED	%
New Jersey Transit Corporation	NJ Transit	Newark	57.8
MTA Metro-North Railroad	Metro-North	New York	56.6
Virginia Railway Express	VRE	Virginia	55.2
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority	SEPTA	Philadelphia	52.2
Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District	South Shore	Chicago	48.4
MTA Long Island Rail Road	Long Island RR	New York	45.0
Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Rail Corporation	METRA	Chicago	44.9
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	MBTA	Boston	44.3
Southern California Regional Rail Authority	Metrolink	Los Angeles	37.3
Maryland Transit Administration	MARC	Baltimore	37.2
North San Diego County Transit Development Board	Coaster	San Diego	37.0
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board	Caltrain	San Francisco	34.3
Altamont Commuter Express Authority	ACE	Stockton	28.6
South Florida Regional Transportation Authority	Tri-Rail	South Florida	27.1
Connecticut Department of Transportation	Shore Line East	New Haven	14.2
Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority	Sound Transit	Seattle	13.1
Railtran	Trinity Railway Express	Dallas-Ft. Worth	4.5

**Other Transit Systems**

*Buffalo, New York*

Buffalo's LRVs are 20 years old, and now steps are being taken to overhaul the 27 cars. The project is expected to take four years and cost \$33 million. \$17.1 million will come from the federal government, \$10.1 from New York State, and the balance from local tax revenues. A decision as to which company would receive the contract was to be made at the end of July. Three or four cars would be sent out for overhaul at a time, which would no impact on the number of cars that are required for service because only 20 are needed on

a daily basis.

*Boston, Massachusetts*

In mid-July, Steve Lofthouse was in Boston. Accompanied by his wife and some friends, they drove to the Anderson RTC (Woburn) on the Lowell Line and took the 11:19 AM train into North Station. Here is his report. "While waiting for the train to arrive, a 5-car Boston-bound Amtrak 'Downeaster' arrived on time and I got a couple of shots (there were no police in sight!). At North Station, I was able to pick up copies of the special timetables for the four lines issued for the week of the DNC when the station will be closed. There was also a general booklet describing all the closures and substitute services. 'Tents' were being set up on the platforms for tracks 10-12. These tents had carpeting, lighting, and tables and chairs. Lots of people wearing ID badges (NBC News, for example) were on hand in the station. Outside the station, a large, multi-story temporary building was being erected on the plot of land between the station and the street. An MBTA Conductor told us that the building was for the media. The stairway to the Green Line station was closed off and a sign directed riders to the new underground station two blocks to the east. Riders heading for the Science Park and Lechmere stations were sent in the opposite direction to board special shuttle buses. According to signs, this arrangement will last for another year until construction is completed.

"We walked to the new North Station station and found a line of more than 40 people waiting to buy tokens from the one token booth clerk. Amazingly, there were no machines available. Hopefully, this will be improved for the DNC delegates. On second thought, it is unlikely that many of them be using the 'T' anyway. The station is very modern with platforms on two levels. Orange Line trains both run on one (east?) side and Green Line on the other. To board the Green Line cars running towards downtown, we had to go down to the lower level. Naturally, the Green Line platform was low-level and the Orange Line was high-level. Only two of the Green Line routes (I think C and E) run as far as North Station and the other two turn at Government Center or Haymarket). At North Station, the cars come north on the upper level, unload then headed out to the north to turn and return on the lower level for boarding. We rode the Green Line to Arlington, then took a walk on Newbury Street for shopping then a visit to Prudential Center, lunch and the Copley Place shopping mall. We returned to North Station via the Orange Line from Back Bay station and took the 4:00 PM Lowell Line train back to Woburn.

"A few other comments: I observed the cars and many of the other stations to be quite dirty. Also, many of the stations were very dimly lit and dreary. At this point in time, I think the New York City subway is much more attractive. Finally, there are incessant and annoying

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

announcements about security. They are very difficult to hear due to the very poor quality of the PA equipment. In fact there was a page of letters to the editor on this subject in the previous day's **Boston Globe**."

Some final notes on the Democratic National Convention – Member Todd Glickman, who attended the July Division meeting, gave me copies of the temporary commuter rail timetables that were in effect during the period of July 23-31. There was no service at all to North Station. Fitchburg/South Acton trains discharged passengers at Porter Square, where passengers could transfer to the Red Line. Haverhill/Reading passengers transferred to the Orange Line at Oak Grove. Lowell Line riders boarded buses at Anderson/Woburn that took them to South Station, and Newburyport/Rockport trains discharged at Chelsea, where there were buses to take them to Wonderland (Blue Line). Fortunately for Todd, he arranged to be on a business trip that took him out of town. By August 11, Track 8 is back to full length, leaving Track 10 that is still out of service with the flat car/generator cars still there.

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

The **Philadelphia Inquirer** reported that Amtrak and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation announced a \$145 million improvement project, which is to be completed in the fall of 2006, to smooth rough track on the Harrisburg-Philadelphia route. Signals and power lines will also be upgraded. Last year the line carried 700,000 riders. The cost of the project is being split between the two agencies. Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell said the improvements (running time reduced from 105 minutes to 90 minutes for expresses and frequency increased from 10 trains to 14) would "take traffic off the Schuylkill Expressway and Pennsylvania Turnpike." Thanks to Lee Winson for the report.

Member David A. Safford reported that "SEPTA is beginning a program to provide high-level platforms, the length of the Center City Corridor, which seems to mean the ex-Reading Main from Glenside south to North Broad Street. Curiously, the outbound platform at Wayne Junction received a high-level platform as part of the Railworks project, but the inbound platform remained low-level. Melrose Park will be the first station to be completed by in-house forces, and was expected to be opened last month. For the FY 2005 annual service plan, SEPTA would like to raise the number of daily boardings/deboardings for station viability from 50 to 75. This may mean some more station closings. (Ed. note – from my observations, SEPTA has many stations that are in very close proximity to one another. One example where this is true is on the R-2/Wilmington/Newark Line, where there are six stations in about 3.5 miles. Those stations are: Darby (MP 6.1), Curtis Park (MP 6.8), Sharon Hill (MP 7.2), Folcroft (MP 7.7), Glenolden

(MP 8.3), and Prospect Park (MP 9.5).) Track renewal on Subway/Surface Route 11 entered a new phase with the start of construction of 14,000 feet between 41<sup>st</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Streets on Woodland Avenue. Cars are being diverted to Chester Avenue during construction. Phase I was completed ahead of schedule in June; Phase II is scheduled for completion this month.

New timetables were also issued for the Broad Street Subway and Market-Frankford Lines on June 13 and for the #100/Norristown, 101/Media, and 102/Sharon Hill on June 14. Thanks to member Gregory Campolo for sending copies.

**Lindenwold, New Jersey**

PATCO issued new timetables on April 26 and then also on June 19. Thanks again to Greg.

**Washington, D.C. area**

Metrorail's operation of two-car trains during late-nights (after 10 PM) was harshly criticized by riders who could not squeeze aboard the already crowded trains. This project lasted a total of five nights, which began on June 27. General Manager Richard A. White announced that once again 4-car trains would be used. By running two-car trains, it had been hoped that there would have been savings of \$1 million annually.

Severe flooding on July 27 knocked out Metrorail service on the Red Line between Glenmont and Takoma. All Silver Spring trains were turned back at Rhode Island Avenue and trains that turned there were signed for that station, as were the station status signs. As of August 3, service not been restored to Silver Spring and short turns were still using Rhode Island Avenue, causing delays on the entire line. Thanks to member Steve Erlitz for the report.

HEP units are being replaced on Virginia Railway Express locomotives to insure that lighting and air-conditioners continue to operate normally. Under this program, one unit is sent out each month for rebuilding. As of June, five have been completed, and all should be done by next spring. Each requires about a week of downtime while the old unit is removed and the rebuilt one is installed. Once removed, the unit is placed on a flatbed truck for its trip to Yonkers. Thanks to New York Division Chairman Bill Erland for these reports from

**Commuter Weekly****South Florida**

It looks like you may be able to finally retire those August 14, 2000 timetables. Member Joe Gagne sent an article from the **South Florida Sun-Sentinel** reporting that on August 2 Tri-Rail would be adding a new northbound train in the morning and one southbound in the afternoon. These are the first tangible results of the ongoing double-tracking project. To create these trains, 5:43 AM Miami Airport and 3:26 PM Mangonia Park, one six-car train will be split up. For a portion of the AM and PM rush hours there will be a 30-minute headway. Karl Groh sent an article from **The Palm Beach Post**

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

indicating that because of the additional train, the Palm Beach County School District agreed to split up a group of 1,300 students who formerly traveled on the 6-car train. There are plans for two more trains in January as more sections of double-tracking are completed. As of July, 14 miles of this project have been completed, with 30 miles to go. It is Tri-Rails' goal to operate trains every 20 minutes during peak hours by March, 2006. Weekday ridership in June, at 187,686, topped last June's 166,542, an increase of 12.7%. On the downside, more than half of the trains were late.

Midday "Bus Bridge" shuttles between Mangonia Park and Boynton Beach were ended on July 9. This operation, which was begun on February 1, was undertaken to allow the contractor on the double-tracking project to have a larger window to work. It was not entirely successful due to federal regulations that require the tracks to be cleared of workers and equipment about 10 minutes before and after trains pass through a construction area. Due to unscheduled freight trains and off-schedule Amtrak trains coming through the area, workers were not able to make as much progress as they had planned.

**Miami, Florida**

Elected officials in Miami have hired an engineering firm to determine the feasibility of building a light rail line. The project would be financed out of Dade County's share of the half-cent sales tax. Miami's Mayor, Manny Diaz, believes that the city can build an initial "demonstration" phase relatively quickly and inexpensively. It would be planned and built separately from the existing Metrorail, and be focused on being a local neighborhood service. Thanks to member Jorge L. Gutierrez for sending the article from *The Miami Herald*.

**Chicago, Illinois**

METRA placed an advertisement in *Progressive Railroading* which offered for sale 13 out-of-service F-40C diesel-electric locomotives. EMD delivered 15 of them in 1974, and they were replaced with delivery of 27 model MP-36-PH-3S locomotives built by Motor Power Industries.

The Chicago Transit Authority has reopened the California and Damen stations on the Cermak (Douglas) Branch of the Blue Line. Both have new elevators, escalators, wheelchair-accessible turnstiles, TTY telephones, tactile edging, and Braille signs. The reopening of these makes all 11 stations on this branch accessible. Prior to the start of the rehabilitation project, three stations along the branch were accessible: Polk, 18<sup>th</sup> Street, and Cicero. Around the same time, Blue Line riders protested proposed cuts in Blue Line service. CTA President Frank Kruesi told the group that two budgets would be submitted for approval in October,

one that would expand service and the other that would cut service. Which budget will be approved, will depend on how much funding the State of Illinois provides.

I reported several years ago that work had been underway to convert the Skokie Swift Line from catenary to third rail. According to a CTA press release dated July 28, work is being done on weekends, with installation to be completed by the end of the year. Once officials are satisfied with the operation using third rail, the overhead wires (and poles?) will be removed. For the record, 23,000 feet of aluminum composite rail is being installed. The Federal Transit Administration, Regional Transportation Authority, and Illinois Department of Transportation are funding the \$6.3 million project. Thanks to Bob Hansen for these reports.

**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Although they were not there on Opening Day, members Bob and Judy Matten were in Minneapolis during the first week of operations to attend the NRHS Convention. Revenue service began on June 26. Although the *Hiawatha Line*, or Route 55, as it is called, presently does not reach the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport, it will this December. In the meantime, riders use a shuttle bus, which takes about eight minutes to reach the temporary terminus, Ft. Snelling. This bus also serves the Mall of America. Presently eight of the twelve miles are in operation. Base fares are \$1.75 in rush hours (6-9 AM and 3-6:30 PM) and \$1.25 at other times. There are discounted fares for seniors, children, and the disabled. Transfers are good for 2½ hours, including back-riding. Bob wrote that two-car trains were being operated, and that before and after baseball games at the Metrodome, ridership was heavy. If there is one criticism it is this: at the downtown terminal, Hennepin Avenue (named for the County of which Minneapolis is a part), because two trains were in the station, there was some congestion. This is due to the placement of the switches, which instead of being located adjacent to the station, are one block away (just like Jamaica on the LIRR). Trains on both tracks to the terminal have to go back and forth on the same track, much like a single-tracking operation. If the proposed *Northstar* commuter line is constructed, the trolley will be extended to its terminal, four blocks away. This would solve the problem. At Ft. Snelling, there is a third relay track beyond the station, instead of a double crossover in front, something that Bob called "smart," because when the full line is open, cars could be short-turned here. Under consideration is a line that would connect the downtowns of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Member Ray Berger, who was there on Opening Day, told me that cars 101-118 were the first group to be delivered, and 119-124 are expected soon. Bombardier built these cars.

**Seattle, Washington**

A Memorial Day fire, which was determined to have

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## NOSTALGIA CORNER

This month we look at E. 105<sup>th</sup> Street on the Canarsie Line, which sported the only grade crossing of mainline

track in the New York City Transit System until its elimination in 1973.



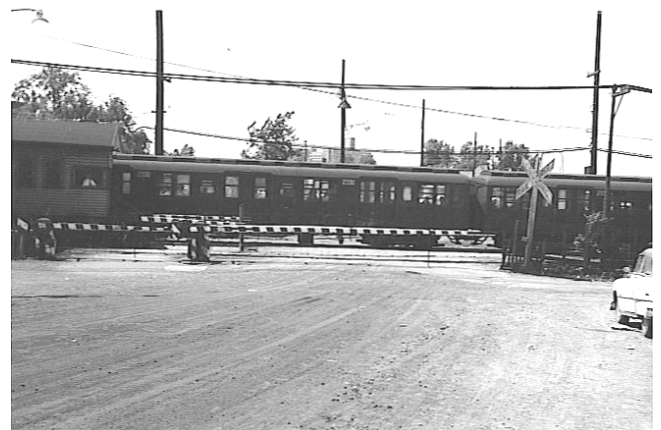
A train of "Standards" has just passed through the grade crossing on May 25, 1959.  
Bernard Linder photograph



The gates are up, but there is no automobile traffic in this lightly-traveled area (May 25, 1959).  
Bernard Linder photograph



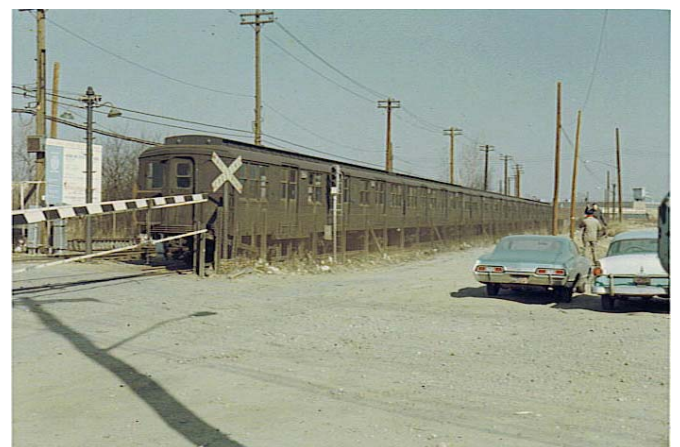
A head-on view with the gates up (May 25, 1959).  
Bernard Linder photograph



Another train of "Standards" passes through the trade crossing (May 25, 1959).  
Bernard Linder photograph



"Bluebirds" also served the Canarsie Line.  
Bernard Linder collection



It's February 22, 1968. The "Standards" soldier on, and so does the grade crossing, but the days are numbered for both.  
Bernard Linder collection

## Around New York's Transit System

### Pump Train Consist

In each pump train unit, there are one pump car containing four pumps, two or three hose and reach cars, and a flat car. The consist of these trains is as follows:

PC01-P7571 (R-22)-P6899 (R-17)-F144

PC02-P7432 (R-22)-P7629 (R-22)-P7121 (R-21)-F145

PC03-P7413 (R-22)-P7376 (R-22)-P7346 (R-22)-F143

Pump trains are stored on Track 22, 38<sup>th</sup> Street Yard, Track 24, 207<sup>th</sup> Street Yard, and Track 4, Westchester Yard. These trains must be kept on their designated storage track, ready to be coupled to a diesel locomotive. No other equipment is to be stored in front of the

pump trains. The #1 end of the pump car must be on the open end of the consist and the #2 end of the pump car must be coupled to the #1 end of the hose and reach car. At the scene of a flood, the pump car must be at the head end. The train must be positioned adjacent to subway walls or catwalks. The train must not be stationed on middle tracks.

Within the next year, nine new hose and reach cars will be built. One car will be out of service for approximately 30 days. During this transition period, pump trains will be operated with only two hose and reach cars.

### Commuter and Transit Notes

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been caused by a broken driveshaft and a combination of subsequent events, caused the shutdown of Seattle's 42-year old monorail. Thanks to member Karl Groh for the report.

#### *San Francisco, California*

Karl Groh forwarded this up-to-date report from one of San Francisco Muni's more well-known operators, Peter Ehrlich, about happenings on Muni's F line and the vintage cars. Cars that had been out of service should already be running, including Muni B-Type 130, Milan 1811 in a historic Milan yellow and white paint scheme, and 1807. The latter, ex-Milan 1507, is the last of ten Peter Witts acquired in 1998 to enter revenue service--some two years after the last previous one, 1888. In addition, 1807 will have an air gong and whistle! Reportedly, 1811 is supposed to get these, too. 1811 had been out of service since it plowed into a Breda at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street on the J line private right-of-way on April 15, 2002.

Also add PCC 1060 in Philadelphia 1938 livery, replacing 1054, which was expected back in mid-August. 1007 (Red Arrow) has already returned carrying "PHILA. SUBURBAN TRANS. CO." on its letter boards. When repainted in 1997, it had been planned to do this, but time and the chronic car shortage prevented that from happening. Work on Melbourne W-2 496 should also be completed. 496 returning to service with its new LVPS system for radio, Vetag, headlights and farebox will free up the track in the Electronics shop for the next car to go through this program - Muni B-Type 162. 496 will also have air whistles, a CPUC requirement. As for the 162, the air system has been tested, and, while not everything is perfect yet, the car is operational. And finally, Blackpool "Boat" 228 was tested with new brake shoes, and after a preventive maintenance check it was back in service. When 1807 and 1811 leave Track 19 in Geneva Shops, Brussels 7037 will be moved in, and work will

begin on that car. So, you can see things are really looking up for the F line...thanks, Peter!

#### *Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

My wife and I attended another wedding this summer, and this one was in Toronto. It gave me an opportunity to visit the Sheppard Extension, which opened on November 24, 2002. At the present time, the five-station line (if you count its separate upper level station) is served by four-car trains that shuttle back and forth to Don Mills. My visit occurred on August 2, which was a civic holiday, and all trainsets were composed of Bombardier T-1s. I did observe a few trainsets of Hawkers in Davisville Yard. The T-1s, unlike new cars being delivered to other transit systems, still allow one to stand at the front (storm) door. Many years ago, when I was a Conductor and Motorman, I took note of the fact that the TTC provided a hook in the cab where the crewmember could hang his or her coat. In the T-1, there is now a cup holder as well. One bus note: there were still plenty of "fishbowls" running in Toronto.

I stopped by Union Station to pick up copies of GO Transit timetables, which were dated April 24, 2004. They are certainly more colorful than the last edition, which I have from 2000. Although the photo on each "corridor" is the same (an engine and a motor coach), each has its own color: Georgetown - Green, Lakeshore - Red, Milton - Brown, and North - Blue.

#### **From the History Files**

*65 Years Ago:* On September 24, 1939, the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad closed its 28<sup>th</sup> Street station.

*10 Years Ago:* On September 24, 1994, 10 years ago, NJ Transit retired its last U-34CH diesel-electric locomotive. These units and the first-generation Comets (now Comet Is), when delivered in 1971, replaced the Erie's Stillwell and the Lackawanna's Boonton cars. With deliveries of Comet Vs, many of the Comet Is are also becoming "history."

*News items and comments concerning this column may be emailed to NYDnewseditor@aol.com.*