

The Bulletin



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The Bulletin

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For general inquiries, contact us at nydiv@electricrailroaders.org or by phone at (212) 986-4482 (voice mail available). ERA's website is www.electricrailroaders.org.

Editorial Staff:
Editor-in-Chief:
Bernard Linder
News Editor:
Randy Glucksmann
Contributing Editor:
Jeffrey Ertlitz

Production Manager:
David Ross

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MYRTLE AVENUE "L" STRUCTURE IS 90 YEARS OLD

Trains started running on the new elevated structure between Wyckoff Avenue and Fresh Pond Road and the new ramp east of there 90 years ago, February 22, 1915.

This line has an interesting history. On July 20, 1889, trains started operating from Broadway to Wyckoff Avenue on a two-track structure with island platforms at Broadway, Evergreen Avenue, Central Avenue, Knickerbocker Avenue, and Wyckoff Avenue. A contract delivered on July 22, 1914 provided for the rebuilding of the above stations. Side platforms were built at Central Avenue and Knickerbocker Avenue, an express station with two island platforms was constructed at Wyckoff Avenue, and the Evergreen Avenue station was closed on May 3, 1917.

The contract for the connection from the Broadway "L" to the Myrtle Avenue "L" was delivered on July 18, 1913 and work was completed by June, 1914. Trains started operating on June 29, 1914.

The contract for Myrtle Avenue Additional Tracks was delivered on October 1, 1915 and the work was 99% complete on August 1, 1919. A middle track was installed from east of Broadway to the west end of the Seneca Avenue station. The middle track was tested on January 9, 1919. We have no record of passenger trains operating on this middle track. When we first rode the Myrtle Avenue "L" in 1937, the middle was partially dismantled. The turnouts leading to the middle east of Broadway were removed in 1949 and this track was subsequently removed.

On September 3, 1881, Lutheran Line dummies started operating via the present-day

private right-of-way on the surface from Wyckoff Avenue to Metropolitan Avenue. Electric operation began in August, 1895, probably with trolley cars. A year later, August 20, 1896, Flushing-Ridgewood trolley cars were also operated on this right-of-way.

On October 1, 1906, the ramp at Wyckoff Avenue connecting the elevated tracks with the trolley tracks was placed in service. Myrtle Avenue "L" service was extended to Metropolitan Avenue on the existing right-of-way. All elevated trains were equipped with trolley poles, which made contact with the trolley wire when the trains ran on the surface. Flushing-Ridgewood trolley service was cut back to the Fresh Pond Road station.

The contract for building the elevated structure from Wyckoff Avenue to Fresh Pond Road was delivered on August 28, 1913 and work was completed by October, 1914. The contract for rebuilding the line east of Fresh Pond Road was delivered on July 22, 1914 and work was completed by January, 1915. A month later, February 22, 1915, trains started running on the new elevated structure. Flushing-Ridgewood trolley service was extended on the private right-of-way to Wyckoff Avenue on October 19, 1919.

The Myrtle Avenue **M** line is a lightly traveled line. In 2003, the busiest station, Fresh Pond Road, ranked 299th while the least busy, Central Avenue, was 399th. There are 468 stations on the transit system, but only 424 are listed because transfer stations are grouped together.

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TUCKAHOE-MOUNT VERNON LINE by Bernard Linder

Owners:

STREET CARS

August, 1893	North Mount Vernon Railway Company
November 29, 1901	Interurban Street Railway Company
February 10, 1904	New York City Railway Company
May 1, 1912	New York, Westchester & Connecticut Traction Company
July 13, 1912	Third Avenue Railway Company

BUSES

January 14, 1932	New York, Westchester & Connecticut Traction Company
November 11, 1936	Westchester Street Transportation Company operated under lease from New York, Westchester & Connecticut
December 9, 1942	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

First week of August, 1893	One battery car started operating from the New Haven station at Depot Place via North 3 rd Avenue, Oakley Avenue, Gramatan Avenue, East Lincoln Avenue, and North Columbus Avenue to Locust Lane (formerly Bronxville Road, two blocks south of the Mount Vernon-Bronxville line). There were only five trips to the end of the line while the others were turned at Primrose Avenue (one block north of East Lincoln Avenue). The car house and power house were located on Third Avenue near Depot Place
October, 1893	Second battery car in service
December, 1893	Horses replaced battery cars
Just before January 23, 1897	Cars ceased operating. The company owned two cars and eight horses
February 2, 1897	The city removed portions of the tracks and annulled the franchise
January 6, 1900	The mayor and other dignitaries rode the first electric car, making a round trip between the New Haven station and the New York Infant Asylum
January 8, 1900	One car started operating on a half-hour headway from North 3 rd and Prospect Avenues to North Columbus Avenue and Burke's Corners
October 19, 1900	Extended on White Plains Road through Bronxville to the Tuckahoe line. The company added a second car
August 8, 1903	Westchester Street Railroad Company started operating through service from White Plains to New Haven station, Mount Vernon. Westchester Street's lease with Westchester Electric was called "one-sided" because the latter received three cents for every Westchester Street passenger carried on its tracks plus \$400 per annum per mile of single track for power consumed by the cars. <i>Bullinger's Monitor Guide</i> lists joint operation of Westchester Street and New York, Westchester & Connecticut cars in Bronxville and Mount Vernon
1904*	Extended to Waverly Square, Tuckahoe
1918*	Extended to Upper Tuckahoe, probably Scarsdale line
Probably 1920	Westchester Street discontinued through service between Mount Vernon and White Plains
January 14, 1932	Buses replaced street cars

Jack May furnished information regarding most route changes.

*Approximate date from ***Bullinger's Monitor Guide***

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Tuckahoe-Mount Vernon Line

(Continued from page 2)

BUS CONVERSION DELAYED

Bus conversion was delayed a year when Bronxville refused permission because of a controversy with Eastchester. On January 13, 1932, the City of Mount Vernon

granted temporary consent to operate buses on Central Boulevard instead of North Columbus Avenue. Work was scheduled to start within two days to fill in North Columbus Avenue because of construction of Cross County Parkway.

BUSES

January 14, 1932	Buses started operating from Mount Vernon to the Eastchester-Scarsdale line
March 6, 1932	Buses were through-routed with White Plains-Scarsdale buses and operated as Route F from White Plains station, Harlem Line, to Mount Vernon station, New Haven Line
About 1973	Renumbered to Route 40
June 28, 1976	Extended to Westchester County Medical Center at Valhalla

RUSH HOUR EXPRESS SERVICE

July 23, 1979	Route 41 buses started operating from Valhalla to Mount Vernon station
September 2, 1980	Extended to E. 241 st Street-White Plains Road, Bronx
September 8, 1982	Started operating Route 43, <i>The Chief Gramatan</i> , from Rye Brook to Mount Vernon station
Early 1985	Discontinued Route 43

FOOT BRAKE COMBINED WITH DEAD MAN CONTROL

The company had difficulty making a profit when prices rose during World War I. It was able to economize by converting cars for one-man operation on lightly traveled lines. To insure safe operation, dead man controls were installed. J.S. McWhirter, Superintendent of Equipment, invented and patented an unusual foot pedal brake which also included dead man controls. Operation was different from the modern brake. The Motorman released the brakes by pressing down on the pedal and set the brakes by allowing the pedal to rise. If the Motorman became incapacitated and was unable to apply pressure to the pedal, the brakes would set. This brake was tested on car 121 operating on the Chester Hill Line. One car that was equipped with the new foot brake was used to train crews in April, 1918. (Both lines — the Tuckahoe Line and the Pelham Line — were apparently called the Chester Hill Line.) In 1918, fifty single-truck cars were equipped with this brake. Nearly all of Third Avenue Railway's cars, including cars built by the company in the 1930s, were equipped with this brake.

ONE-MAN CARS

Effective June 1, 1918, cars were operated by one man.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

We do not have a complete record, but were able to record the following details from newspaper articles:

There was a great deal of litigation because New York, Westchester & Connecticut and Union Railway, a Third Avenue Railway subsidiary, were competing for a franchise.

On October 7, 1899, NYWCT workers tried to extend the Chester Hill Line through Bronxville. They were ordered to stop, but they refused and were chased away

by the police. Then the Village Trustees obtained an injunction. NYWCT received a franchise five years previously, but it was declared forfeited because it did not build by January 1, 1897. The new franchise issued to Union Railway did not include Bronxville.

NYWCT employees started laying tracks again on October 14. There was another fight after 200 yards of track was installed. A compromise was reached and the company was allowed to lay tracks on the west side of White Plains Road. Meanwhile, Union Railway employees laid tracks in Tuckahoe as far south as the Bronxville line.

On October 19, the Supreme Court in Poughkeepsie issued an injunction ordering NYWCT to stop laying tracks in Bronxville. The injunction was dissolved on November 1 and the court ruled that NYWCT was allowed to lay track in Tuckahoe. The next day NYWCT men removed 1,100 feet of track that Union Railway had installed in Tuckahoe in accordance with the franchise it acquired when it bought the North Mount Vernon Railway Company. On November 7, two injunctions were issued against NYWCT — one in Scarsdale against removing Union Railway's tracks and the other in Eastchester to prevent NYWCT from building the road. Deputies guarded Union Railway's tracks in Scarsdale to prevent NYWCT men from tearing them up. The 60 NYWCT workers sleeping in a barn nearby did not attempt to challenge the deputies. Tracks laid by NYWCT in Bronxville on October 29 were covered with earth by the residents so they could drive over the road. On November 30, another injunction was issued against NYWCT laying tracks on Old White Plains Road or any other streets in Eastchester.

We do not know how this dispute was settled, but we know that the line was eventually extended through Bronxville, Tuckahoe, and Eastchester.

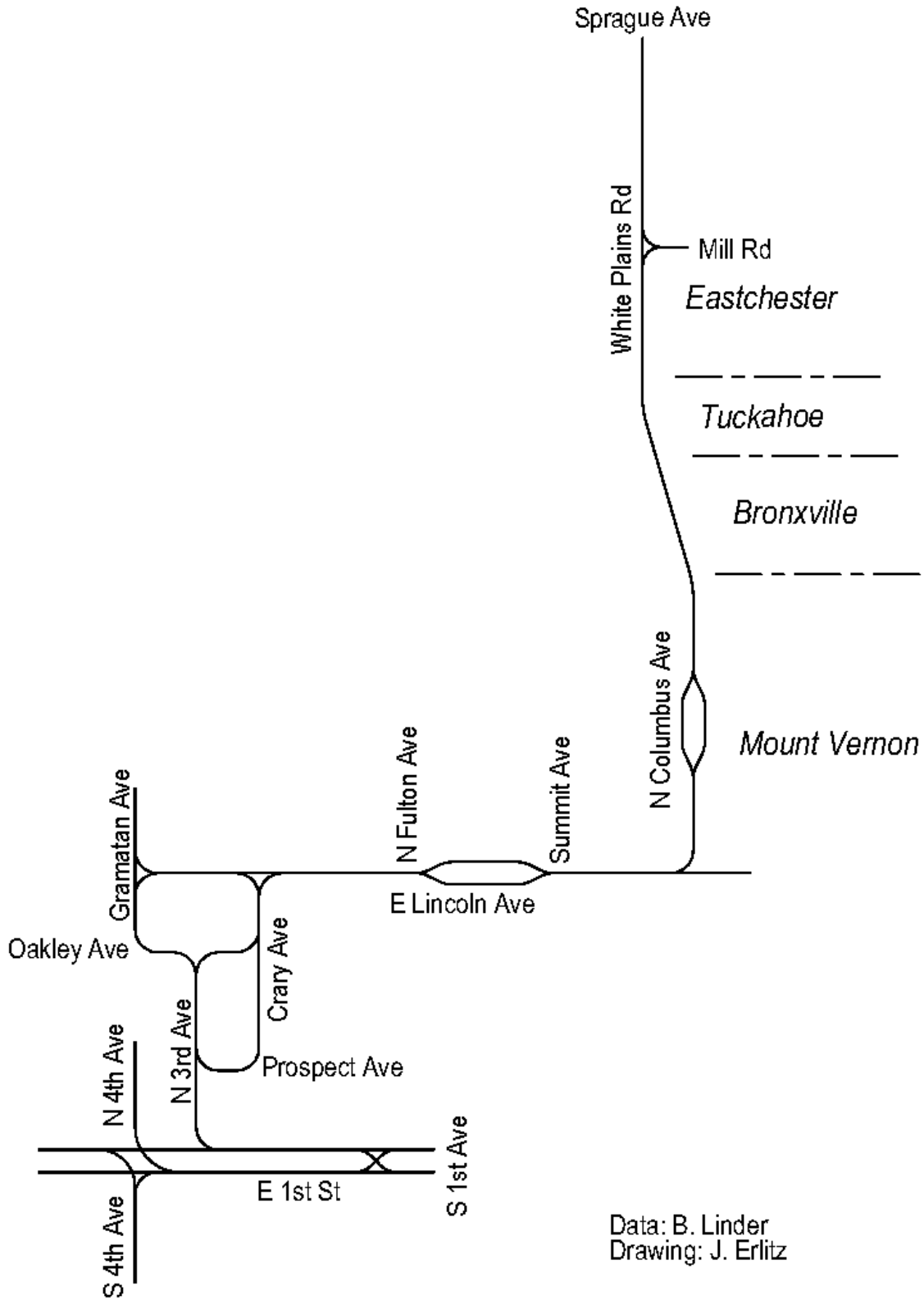
(Continued on page 4)

Tuckahoe-Mount Vernon Line

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Tuckahoe-Mount Vernon Line

1929



Data: B. Linder
Drawing: J. Erlitz

Myrtle Avenue "L" Structure is 90 Years Old

(Continued from page 1)



A typical Myrtle Avenue "L" station change booth. The Agent collected a nickel and released a turnstile.
Bernard Linder collection



A steam dummy operated by the Bushwick Railroad, predecessor to Brooklyn City Railroad Company. Photo taken March 30, 1888. Dummies, which looked like trolley cars, were used to avoid scaring horses when running via the street, but we are told that this did not work.

Bernard Linder collection



The private right-of-way at Fresh Pond Road, looking west.
Bernard Linder collection



The Metropolitan Avenue station, circa 1910.
Bernard Linder collection

(Continued on page 6)

A RIDE ON THE RiverLINE by Bob Wright (ERA #5489) Photographs by the author (Continued from January, 2005 issue)

Last month, we took a ride on NJ Transit's new RiverLINE diesel light rail service between Camden and Trenton. In this article, several aspects of the service will be explored.

OPERATIONS

The LINE runs in public streets in downtown Camden, and this represents the only entirely new portion of the route. The remainder of it, except for a short stretch at the Clinton Avenue station in Trenton, is existing railroad right-of-way.

In the street-running portion in Camden, the LINE's tracks are set in concrete paving where it occupies segments of Delaware Avenue, Cooper Street, and 4th Street. In these streets, the tracks are in traffic lanes and have no exclusive space of their own (on 4th Street, the tracks occupy the entire roadway width). Even in those areas in which the right-of-way is separate, such as the corridor near the Entertainment Center, the diagonal from 4th Street to the Walter Rand Transportation Center and the segment alongside M.L. King Boulevard (Mickle Street), the tracks are set in concrete. East of the Hadson Avenue crossing, the tracks become standard railroad open-ballast construction.

The LINE's cars have tail/brake lights and turn signals, which are useful when the cars operate in mixed traffic.

Traffic signals along the LINE operate in preferential mode, giving priority to the LRVs. In railroad right-of-way areas these are tied to the crossing protection devices (flashing lights and gates in some cases) and they pre-empt crossing and turning traffic. These become critical especially in the stretches where the LINE closely parallels River Road, St. Mihiel Drive, Broad Street, and other highways. This was often the subject of public controversy prior to the LINE's opening, and it has continued to date, with concerns about speeding LRVs, pedestrian and driver safety, the interface at crossings, and similar issues.

There are 50 public and 5 private grade crossings along the LINE. As of the end of 2004, there have been no grade crossing accidents, despite the public's con-

cern about the fast LRVs.

At several locations, patrons must cross the LINE at grade to access or leave platforms. In general, surprisingly (given the amount of public concern about safety), these on-foot crossings are not protected by warning devices. The LRVs can give audible warnings, both horn and bell, to alert pedestrians if necessary in these situations.

In railroad territory, the LRVs operate by the usual railroad rules using railroad block signal protection. For the most part, railroad operations shut down during the LINE's operating hours, so there is little potential for conflict.

STATIONS

The stations are primarily functional, with fairly simple architecture. Because of the route's history as the first railroad in New Jersey (the Camden & Amboy began service along this route in 1834), considerable effort was placed on preservation. There are lots of replica cupolas on the shelter structures, with seashore bird artwork atop them serving as impromptu weather vanes.

Since there was not much remaining from past railroad operations that could be incorporated into the LINE, except bridges and similar infrastructure, other aspects were considered for preservation and replication. One is the unique railing used at stations and walkways that mimics a Pennsylvania Railroad design. Some of the light posts and arms also recreate those used in the past, but with modern functionality. As is typical on NJT, much of the station "furniture" is painted black.

The LINE features a good deal of artwork, mainly produced by local artists. Each station has several tiles which represent New Jersey themes, such as farms, river, boats, fish, gardens, and insects. The platforms are simple and raised to the car door floor height. As can be expected, all platforms are fully ADA-accessible and lighting is generously provided.

Many stations have park-and-ride facilities. Several, including 36th Street (375 spaces), Pennsauken (457),

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A car loads at the Trenton-bound platform of the Entertainment Center stop.

A Ride on the RiverLINE

(Continued from page 6)

Burlington South (415), and Florence (625), are quite large. Other lots with 200-300 spaces each are located at Cinnaminson, Riverside, Beverly/Edgewater Park, Roebling, and Bordentown. Several other stations have smaller parking areas. The park-and-ride lots have generally not yet been used to their full potential despite the lack of a parking charge.

SERVICE

From opening day in March, 2004, the base headway has been 30 minutes 7 days a week. The LINE operates 6 AM-9 PM Monday through Friday and Sunday, and 6 AM-midnight Saturday. Shuttles operate on the Camden portion of the line (Entertainment Center-36th Street) after 9 PM on weekdays and Sundays. Two early northbound runs, which started at Bordentown in the original schedule, have been extended to start from Florence as of the September 7, 2004 schedule. Presumably these deadhead from Trenton.

As of the schedule effective June 21, 2004, 15-minute headways are provided in the peaks (6-9 AM and 4-8 PM). Before then, several extras were typically operated, particularly in the evening peak, on runs observed to be crowded. With the shorter headways, operation has reverted to strictly single-car service. Through experience, it was found that certain runs had to be carded for 2-car trains when 30-minute headways were in effect. When this was done, cars were usually picked up or dropped at the Entertainment Center, with cars deadheading between there and the 36th Street base.

With the current track and sidings configuration, the 15-minute headways are about as good as can be expected. There is also a fleet constraint to the service. With the 15-minute headway, a minimum of 12 cars (of the current fleet of 20) is needed on the LINE.

CARS

The diesel LRVs, built by Adtranz/Bombardier, have a roughly 70% low-floor arrangement, with the high floor at the extreme ends. The cars are double-articulated, with the short center section, which houses the diesel engine. It has no seats and consists merely of an aisle with glass doors at each end of the section. Passengers can pass through the section while the car is in operation.

Passenger accommodations are decent, with comfort-

able seating. This comes in handy, as a ride from end to end on the 34-mile LINE takes 70 minutes. Flip-down seating is provided in the wells to either side of the door areas for use as needed. While this is a good idea in concept, the occupied seats tend to hinder loading/unloading, especially when the car is crowded.

The cars have space for bikes to stand upright, with front wheel restraint. This feature is well-used. It was observed that this feature is so popular that bike riders at intermediate stations were often unable to be accommodated on certain days this past summer, since the bike restraints were all in use.

The cars are quiet and smooth-running. The doors that enclose the center section do a good job in the reduction of the diesel noise, and the difference is very noticeable when the doors are opened during operation.

The car doors are equipped with buttons that patrons can press to open a particular door once the car has stopped. These buttons were not used for the first six



A Camden-bound car approaches the Walter Rand Transportation Center stop.

months of operation, and all platform-side doors were opened at each stop. Effective September 29, 2004, this has changed, and now passengers must activate the buttons to open doors. Whether this was started as a precursor to winter temperatures is not known.

Announcements are made frequently, both visually and verbally. A message board at each end of the car provides verbal notice of approaching stations as well as reminders to hold on if you are standing. The verbal

announcements are pre-recorded and use the voice of Michaela Majoun, a local radio personality.

FARE

A flat rate of \$1.10 has been in effect for an "introductory" period, to entice riders. No information has been forthcoming on how long this "introductory" offer will be made. The proof-of-payment system is used for fare collection. Tickets must be purchased and validated at stations prior to boarding. Currently, police are used as fare inspectors.

Several options are available for NJT bus transfers, add-on/step-up fares with bus and rail passes, and other deals. There is no joint fare with PATCO, however. PATCO had permitted a free transfer only for riders going to Philadelphia for the first 2-3 weeks of service, but that has not continued.

In this author's personal experience with the joint NJT bus ticket, it is advertised for riders transferring to Phila-

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A Ride on the RiverLINE

(Continued from page 7)

delphia-bound buses in Camden, but it is not clear whether riders can use this from New Jersey-bound buses coming out of Philadelphia to transfer to the LINE. This author did it once, but was advised it is not available in the New Jersey-bound direction a few other times. The fare is vaguely advertised for the “to Philadelphia” option, although it is not clear whether a rider starting his/her trip in New Jersey could buy two such tickets at a machine and use the second for the from-Philadelphia trip.

The LINE’s monthly pass appears to be popular, especially as commuter use has increased.

EXPANSION

There are no immediate plans for the LINE’s expansion, although a continuation of track from the current terminal in Trenton to the State Capitol Complex has been at least discussed. This would follow the line of Clinton Avenue for roughly a half-mile or so if it were built. There is no funding for it. (Keep in mind that all funding for the LINE to date came from New Jersey – no federal dollars were sought.)

Any service frequency expansion may be difficult with the current track layout. As mentioned, 15-minute headways are the best that can be offered at this point because of the single track and siding limitations. The LINE did build a 5-mile “runaround” track north of Burlington to separate freight trains serving on-line customers and allow no disruption of the LINE during operating hours, but this was an exception, not the rule.

A possible connection to NJT’s Atlantic City Line has been discussed. The lines intersect in Delair, where the Atlantic City Line passes over the LINE. A joint station has been proposed, but this would likely require additional LINE trackage in this now single-track segment to avoid service disruptions (and there is little available space for either a station or a second track). A joint station would be difficult since it would require two levels – the LINE at grade, Atlantic City trains on overhead structure – and connections between the two would have to be fully accessible.

Since the Atlantic City Line is also single-track in this area, it would also create a bottleneck on the busy Delair railroad bridge. The present suggested passenger connection is indirect, via PATCO, and makes a rider transfer twice – the Atlantic City Line from Atlantic City

to Lindenwold, PATCO from Lindenwold to Walter Rand Transportation Center, and the LINE from there.

EFFECTS SO FAR?

It may be too soon to tell the actual effects of the LINE as a transit service. Ridership is growing slowly, with about 6,000 one-way riders on weekdays, 4,600 on Saturdays, and 3,600 on Sundays. The one-millionth rider was registered on October 15, 2004, after just over 7 months of operation.

The LINE was touted early on as an economic generator. The US 130 corridor, which the LINE serves, is an economically depressed one, with several empty big-box stores, closed strip malls, and older “inner-ring” suburban towns that are being left behind as people move to new developments. Camden is one of the country’s most distressed cities and many jobs have left. The LINE was seen as a way to jump-start some opportunities, but the current economic times have not been the best for this.

Also, for the most part in the Camden-Burlington stretch, the LINE is over a mile from US 130, thus bus transfers are needed to travel between the LINE and US 130-area jobsites. Burlington County has started several connecting services (BurLINK) specifically for this purpose, using minibuses supplied by NJT.

Traditionally, the corridor has had strong bus service. The successors of Public Service’s busy routes in this area, NJT’s Route 409 (formerly PS’s Route 9A) on US 130 and Route 419 (PS’s Route 9) on parallel River

Road, have been slightly adjusted to not compete directly with the LINE. The 419 has had its northern terminus cut back from Trenton to Burlington to avoid duplication of service with the LINE. The bus routes charge normal NJT zone fares, which makes the LINE cheaper, at least for now.

Ridership appears to be the strongest at the extreme ends – those commuting to Camden or Trenton from nearby bedroom towns. Camden has a small employment magnet in its central city, with some projected growth in the central riverfront area that is directly served by the LINE. In Trenton, it is harder and more costly to park, so the remote park-and-ride lots on the LINE have become attractive. The joint-fare combinations for NJT’s Northeast Corridor trains present new opportunities for those who travel to and from northern parts of the state.

Camden attractions have helped to grab weekend

(Continued on page 19)



3519 has finished unloading at the Entertainment Center stop after a trip from Trenton. It will enter the tail trackage, reverse, and cross over to the Trenton-bound track for another trip to the state capital.

TECH TALK

by Jeffrey Erlitz

By mid-January, Long Island Rail Road M-7s as high as 7366 had been delivered and cars as high as 7358 were in service. In other LIRR news, the terminal at West Hempstead became fully interlocked, controlled from Valley Tower in Valley Stream, on December 31, 2004. The branch is still operated, however, under manual block signal rules. West Hempstead is the only electrified line with no signal protection and, of course, no automatic speed control.

Many years ago, the Long Island Rail Road had automatic train stops, as the subway does, installed on the Atlantic Branch from Flatbush Avenue to Jamaica, in the East River Tunnels, and at all drawbridges in electrified territory. The last train stops were removed from service on January 31, 1970 between East New York and Jamaica and on April 4, 1970 between Flatbush Avenue and East New York, when they were replaced with automatic speed control.

Work continues on the Automatic Train Supervision contract (S-32333) on the IRT. The ATS circuits were placed in service at Dyckman Street between July 20 and 24, 2004, not June 29-July 3 as originally stated. Between July 26 and August 28 the ATS circuits were placed in service at the 168th Street Relay Room on the Broadway Line and the 110th Street, 141st Street, and Lenox Avenue Yard Relay Rooms on the Lenox Avenue Line. As was done earlier, all of the new code systems were energized, but the operation of these controls from the Rail Control Center is temporarily disabled. In addition, the ATS circuits were placed in service at Burnside Avenue on the Jerome Avenue Line between October 4 and 30.

Train Operators are continuing their training in CBTC operations midday weekdays on the Canarsie Line between Rockaway Parkway and Broadway Junction. The test trains operate in between regular service.

The structural rehabilitation of the White Plains Road Line continues under contract C-34574. On December 11 of last year, Track M was returned to service from south of 219th Street to south of Nereid Avenue. On January 10, 2005, northbound local Track 3 was returned to service from south of Bronx Park East to south of 219th Street. Over the weekend of January 15-17, the temporary platforms that were removed from over Track 3 were installed over Track 2 at Nereid Avenue, 233rd Street, 225th Street, and 219th Street. Track 2 is scheduled to be out of service until July 15.

Over on the Concourse Line, the express Track C3/4 from south of Tremont Avenue to north of 145th Street was returned to service on October 5, 2004. Also on that day, it was removed from service from north of Tremont Avenue to north of Kingsbridge Road. Finally, on December 6 the express track was completely returned to service in time for the resumption of rush hour Concourse **D** express service later that day.

The next historic IRT interlocking on the Broadway Line is 137th Street. A long time ago, there were two interlockings each at Cathedral Parkway and 116th Street and one interlocking at Manhattan Street (now 125th Street), but these were eliminated possibly as early as the 1930s and I do not yet have any data for them. Like at 100th Street last month, 137th Street has the typical IRT single-headed home signals as well as two triple-headed signals that are also unique to the IRT. The last triple-headed home signals in existence are still in service today north of E. 180th Street. When this interlocking was replaced under contract S-104 in 1966, it was consolidated with the interlocking at 145th Street and an auxiliary control panel was installed. See the drawing on the following page.

In my continuing series of track diagrams of subway lines not built, this month we finally get to the Queens Super Express Bypass, Route 131-B. This was to have been the "missing link" between the 63rd Street and Archer Avenue Lines. At the west end of this line I have included the one section of the 63rd Street Line that was never constructed, Section 8. This section was going to go from the intersection of 41st Avenue and 29th Street to a point just east of the proposed Northern Boulevard station. As proposed, the Super Express Line would have been built on an extension of the Long Island Rail Road embankment on the north side of the right-of-way. After rising to the surface somewhere in Sunnyside Yard, it would have paralleled the railroad from Sunnyside Yard through Woodside, Elmhurst and Rego Park to a point west of Yellowstone Boulevard in Forest Hills. There, it would have gone back underground following Yellowstone Boulevard the short distance to Queens Boulevard. This route was going to have its own bi-level station underneath the existing 71st-Continental Avenue station, resulting in a three-level station with the Queens Line on top. See the drawing on page 11.

Jeff may be contacted via e-mail at jbe456@optonline.net.

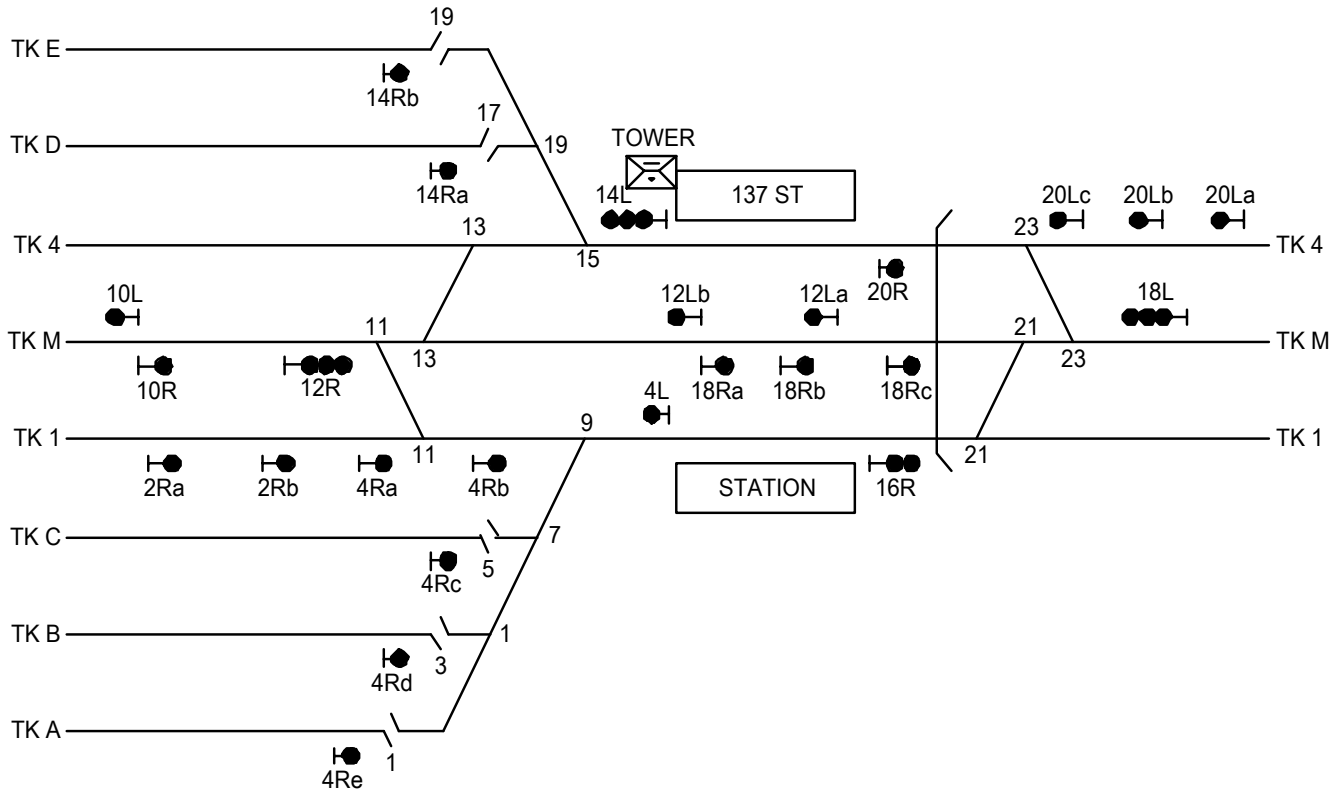
(Continued on page 12)

Tech Talk

(Continued from page 11)

IRT BROADWAY LINE 137 ST CONTROL

← NORTH



Legend		
●●●—	}	Home signal
●●—		
●—		
●—		Dwarf signal

US&S MODEL 14
8 LEVERS FOR SIGNALS
12 LEVERS FOR SWITCHES
3 SPARE LEVERS?
23 LEVER FRAME?

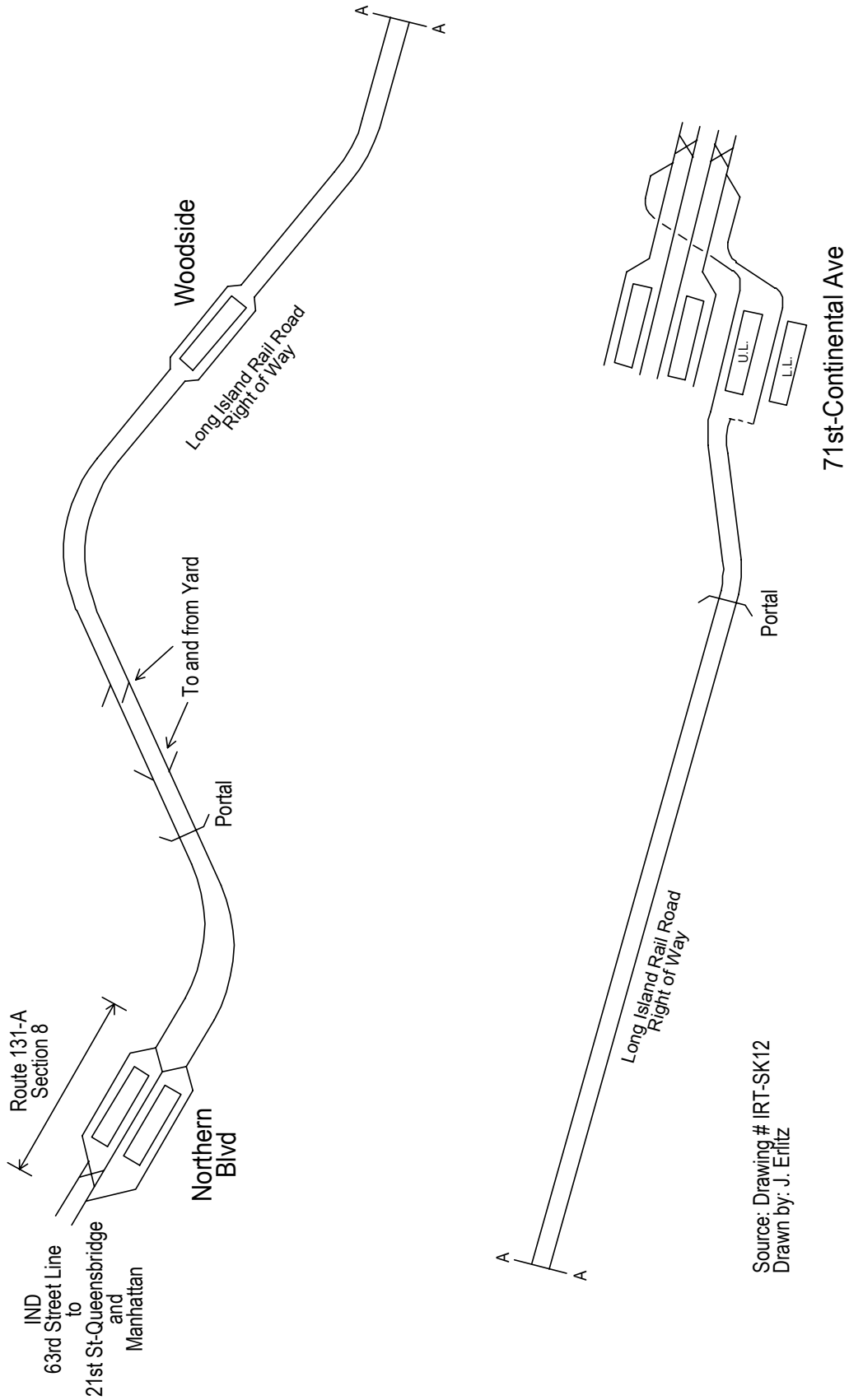
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Tech Talk

(Continued from page 12)

**IND Super Express Bypass Line
Route 131-B**

8-26-1977



Source: Drawing # IRT-SK12
Drawn by: J. Erlitz

Commuter and Transit Notes

by Randy Glucksman

MTA Metro-North Railroad (East)

Because Christmas Day occurred on a Saturday in December, 2004, no special timetable was issued for that weekend; however, for New Year's weekend, they were issued in the usual format. One side listed the trains for Friday, December 31 (New Year's Eve) and New Year's Day morning between 12 AM and 6:20 AM. On the other side were Saturday and Sunday, January 1 and 2, 2005.

There was a complete re-issue of timetables on January 18. Gone from this edition are the references to the Christmas/New Year's holiday period, as well as Martin Luther King Day. Only the Hudson and New Haven Lines retain their October 31, 2004 issue date, while the Harlem's is December 5, 2004, but all three carry the wording, "Revised January 18, 2005." On the Harlem Line, there were additional changes to address some of the problems with the October 31, 2004 timetables that were not satisfactorily addressed with the December 5 edition.

Fares went up January 1 by 5.5% on the Connecticut-controlled portions of the New Haven Line. The least expensive monthly ticket between Grand Central Terminal/Harlem-125th Street and Greenwich went from \$225 to \$237, while the most expensive ticket, Grand Central Terminal/Harlem-125th Street to/from New Haven, went from \$370 to \$394. July 1, 2003 was the last time that fares in Connecticut were increased.

The 2005 edition of *Manhattan Getaways* was available during early January.

MTA Metro-North Railroad (West)

At the western end of Metro-North's service territory in Port Jervis, a new railroad company has come into existence. On December 31, 2004, the Central New York Railroad Company leased the Southern Tier Line from Norfolk Southern (successor to Conrail) between Port Jervis (MP 89.9) and Binghamton (MP 213). The new company will be responsible for maintenance and provide local freight service, while NS retains trackage rights, as will the NYS&W. The NS is allowing the Central New York Railroad to remove line side signals (dependent on Federal Railroad Administration approval) and the second main track, between MP 178 and 190.

Connecticut Department of Transportation

The placing into service of the former Virginia Railway Express cars has not exactly gone according to plans. It was intended that the deal would be for all 38 Mafersa cars and several locomotives, but then VRE decided to retain the locomotives and five of the cars, the cars arrived later than expected, and there were new rules on state contracts, adding to the delay. As of late Decem-

ber, 2004, only 26 cars had been delivered. In spite of the orders of Governor Jodi Rell that the cars be put into service with their VRE markings, only six cars have entered service. CDOT, however, still needed additional locomotives to power these cars, and a contract for additional units was expected to be signed soon. The VRE cars would be assigned to Shore Line East service, replacing the Bombardiers, which would be moved to the New Haven Line, where similar cars already are being used. Thanks to member Karl Stricker for the report from *The New York Times*.

MTA Long Island Rail Road

In its December, 2004 edition of *Keeping Track*, the Long Island Rail Road advised its passengers that much work had been done on projects that would make the railroad better for its riders. Work continued at Jamaica and Flatbush Avenue, with both projects expected to be completed in 2005 and 2006, respectively. New M-7s continue to arrive, with 300 in service, and by the end of this year there should be nearly 500. The revised November 15 schedules (January *Bulletin*) provided 14 early afternoon trains on December 23 and 24 (Christmas Eve), and on December 30 and 31 (New Year's Eve), the nine standard extra holiday trains were operated. There were also 17 additional westbound New Year's Eve and 6 post-New Year's eastbound trains.

NJ Transit

Because Christmas and New Year's Days fell on weekends last year/this year, NJ Transit altered its rail service. On Thursday, December 23, 2004, the regular schedule was operated, with 8 additional trains on the Northeast Corridor, North Jersey Coast, Morris & Essex, Main/Bergen, and Port Jervis Lines. Selected trains were extended beyond their normal terminals on the Raritan Valley and Port Jervis Lines. As usually happens, the two Getaway trains caused cancellation of three later trains on the Pascack Valley Line. For Friday, Christmas Eve, an "Enhanced Weekend Schedule" was operated. What this meant is that there were 27 additional trains over what is usually operated. These extras were on the Northeast Corridor, North Jersey Coast, Port Jervis, and Raritan Valley Lines. The Montclair/Boonton and Pascack Valley, lines which have no weekend service at all, operated a limited schedule as follows: Lake Hopatcong/Hoboken – 5:38, 6:38, and 7:38 AM; Montclair State University/NY Penn – 6:35, 7:35, and 8:35 AM; and Spring Valley/Hoboken – 6:20, 7:20, and 8:20 AM. Return service from NY Penn departed for Montclair State University – 3:51, 4:51, and 5:51 PM; Hoboken to Lake Hopatcong – 4, 5, and 6 PM; and Ho-

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boken to Spring Valley – 2:17, 4:17, 5:17, and 6:17 PM. Normal weekend schedules were in effect on December 25 and 26.

New timetables were issued for the Northeast Corridor and Morris & Essex Lines effective January 16. The reason for this was the discontinuance of the four *Saturday Shopper* trains in each direction. The October 31, 2004 schedules remain in effect for the Atlantic City, Main/Bergen, North Jersey Coast, Montclair-Boonton, and Pascack Valley Lines. NJ Transit issued revised editions of the Atlantic City and Main/Bergen Line timetables with November, 2004 dates.

Regular weekdays schedules were in effect on January 17, Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Too many years after the project was first proposed, the NJ Transit Board of Directors voted to go ahead with the Pascack Valley sidings project. When first published in the May, 2000 *Bulletin*, there were to be six; however, due to opposition from nine towns along the line, there will only be four. In the intervening years, these sidings have been renamed, and the remaining three are: Pond (south of Nanuet); Cole (Teterboro); and Sack (in Hasbrouck Heights). It remains to be seen how useful this project will be because without Golf Siding in Oradell a train would have to wait south of Nanuet for a train that enters the single track at the siding south of North Hackensack, and there are nine stations between these two. Vale Siding in Montvale is the other siding that has been dropped. Long Siding will be built as part of the Meadowlands Rail Link to the Xanadu Project. Once a contractor is selected, work is expected

to begin this spring, and the entire project should be completed sometime in 2007.

Another future project that made the news during January is "THE Tunnel", or the Trans Hudson Express Tunnel, a project estimated at \$5 billion for the tunnel alone. (Further details may be found under Metropolitan Area.) The ancillary projects, e.g. additional tracks to tie in to the existing lines in order to provide a one-seat

ride for Bergen, Rockland and Orange Counties would add another \$1 billion to the cost. This is a second rail tunnel that would be constructed under the Hudson River, parallel to but north of the existing tunnels that are used daily by NJ Transit and Amtrak trains. The Port Authority has indicated that they would commit up to \$2 billion, with the other funding coming from the federal government. At this



In the January, 2005 issue it was reported that eight PCCs were going to HBLRT for a proposed route to the Bayonne Military Ocean Terminal. The first car, 13 (above), arrived at HBLRT's maintenance facility on January 11. One week later, a second PCC, 4, arrived at Communipaw from the City Subway. They are shooting for a one-a-week schedule, at least until things warm up. The cars are being wrapped with a tarp and placed in the lower yard below the barn.

Bulletin staff photograph

time, the environmental review process is underway, and is expected to be completed by the middle of next year and the tunnel in 2014. To show how rail traffic has grown in just 10 years, NJ Transit reported that there were 88 eastbound peak-hour trains. By 1999 there were 124, and now that number is 186.

Under a new agreement between NJ Transit and the US Coast Guard, Portal Bridge, which spans the Hackensack River between Newark and Secaucus Junction on the Northeast Corridor, will no longer be subject to frequent openings during peak hours. During a 90-day trial period that began December 13, 2004, the bridge does not open from 6 to 10 AM or from 4 to 8 PM, except in emergencies. Prior to December 13, Portal Draw was only restricted from opening between 7:20 and 9:20 AM and 4:30 and 6:50 PM.

Norfolk-Southern has filed for discontinuance (not

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abandonment) of 10 miles of trackage in Essex and Hudson Counties. They are the Newark Industrial Track between MP 4.3 and 8.1, spanning the Meadowlands up to the Passaic River Drawbridge (just short of Newark) and the ex-Boonton Line between MP 2.2 (West End) and MP 8.4 (Forest Hill) in Newark proper. Both lines join in the Meadowlands at MP 4.3, DB Junction. NJ Transit retains the right of first refusal should NS move to officially abandon the line, which it last used in September, 2001, when the Montclair Connection opened. Thanks to NJ-ARP for this report.

In the August 2003 *Bulletin*, I presented a timeline listing some of the highlights of Metro-North's first 20 years, so in recognition of NJ Transit's 25th anniversary (the actual date was July 17, 1979) in the table below, is some of what has happened in this past quarter century.

1979	New Jersey's Legislature passed the 1979 New Jersey Transportation Act
1980	Acquired Transport of New Jersey and several other bus carriers
1982	Electrification from South Amboy to Matawan
1983	Assumed full responsibility for operation of rail service from Conrail
1984	Re-electrification of the Morris & Essex Lines (600 volts DC to 25,000 volts AC)
1987	Meadows Maintenance Complex opened
1988	Electrification extended from Matawan to Long Branch
1989	Service began operating between Lindenwold and Atlantic City
1991	Waterfront Connection opens
1993	Atlantic City service extended from Lindenwold to Philadelphia
1994	Boonton Line service extended to Hackettstown
1996	<i>Midtown Direct</i> service from Dover and Gladstone
1999	Hamilton Station (Northeast Corridor Line) opened
2000	Hudson-Bergen LRT initial segment opened
2001	PCC cars retired and replaced by Kinki-Sharyo LRVs Newark International Airport Station (Northeast Corridor Line) opens
2002	Montclair Connection opened Union Station (Raritan Valley Line) opens
2003	Secaucus Junction (Transfer) opened
2004	River Line began operating between Trenton and Camden Ramsey Route 17 (Main/Bergen Line) and Montclair State University (Montclair-Boonton Line) opened

There have also been large investments in rolling stock with the purchase of 162 Comet IIs, 49 Comet IIIs, 99 Comet IVs, and 200 Comet Vs. This has allowed retirement of all of the post-WW II equipment. The Comet Is, Comet IIs and Arrow IIIs have been overhauled. In the motive power department, 32 ALP-44s, 29 ALP-46s, plus dozens of diesel-electric locomotives have been purchased. Still to come are 100 multi-level passenger cars and 38 PL 42-AC diesel-electric locomotives. NJ Transit has also upgraded much of its infra-

structure, including stations, and there is significantly more service now than there was in 1979. In fact, some of the lines that had service at that time and lost it prior to 1983 are now candidates for a restoration of service. Please see the January, 2005 *Bulletin* for details.

Late-night service on the Newark City Subway was increased by four trips on January 8. Under these schedules, the last car arrives at Grove Street in Bloomfield at 12:10 AM, rather than at 10:01 PM. This turn of events came about after the Federal Railroad Administration approved NJ Transit's request to modify the waiver which governs freight service on a 1,100-foot section of the Orange Branch between Branch Brook Park and Grove Street. In exchange for giving up these two hours each night, Norfolk Southern will be permitted to operate on the shared trackage during off-peak hours. NJ Transit does not anticipate any major impacts to service, and the transit agency gains some savings as it no longer needs to store equipment overnight at Penn Station.

Recently I had an opportunity to ride HBLRT's extension to Lincoln Harbor. Leaving Hoboken, the line parallels NJ Transit's Hoboken Division to approximately East End and then curves north on its own right-of-way, stopping at 2nd Street and 9th Street (in Hoboken) and terminating at Lincoln Harbor in Weehawken, where passengers are discharged. The car then proceeds out of service to Port Imperial, where it turns back and returns. This process takes just a few minutes. I re-boarded the same car and when we arrived back in Hoboken, I asked the operator about the relay move. He informed me that the line and station are complete; however, at the present time there is no safe way for pedestrians to access the ferry terminal, and so passengers are not carried north of Lincoln Harbor. During my visit, two cars were in use, and service ran on a 15-minute headway. In the three-track section, we used the center track on the northbound trip. One other item – since my last visit to Hoboken (January, 2004), the TVMs and ticket validators have been moved from the wall next to the ferry terminal closer to the platform from where the cars arrive and depart.

NJ-ARP reported that three new stations are being considered for the RiverLINE. They would be located in Camden's Cramer Hill neighborhood, Cinnaminson, and northern Burlington Township. And NJ Transit is even looking at filling in a "hole" by constructing a transfer station to connect with the Atlantic City Line and double-tracking the section north of the 36th Street Station. Double-tracking on the southern end would enable an extension of nighttime service.

Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation

One of my co-workers who is a regular PATH rider told me that he has seen the new dual-mode *QuickCard/MetroCard* turnstiles at several stations. At 9th Street, he found that the polished chrome railings that had been

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previously installed next to the uptown track were replaced by a very unglamorous chain link fence.

Because my commute into Manhattan takes me via Secaucus Junction, I do not have much occasion to ride PATH. However, the day that I rode HBLRT's northern extension (please see the news item above, under NJ Transit) I used PATH to reach Hoboken. On entering 33rd Street, I noticed that the Hoboken service was operating off of Track 2 (middle track) because the usual track, Track 1, was occupied by a work train. It was the first time that I saw the motive power, which was diesel-powered and carried the number PMC 50. The builder's plate showed that it was constructed by the Plasser American Company in 2003 and has serial number 3188. UTV-2 appears under the PMC 50. This car is also equipped with a crane, and was pushing one flat car into which a work gang was loading bags of debris.

Metropolitan Area

The Rudin Center for Transportation and Policy Management, which is part of New York University, issued a report that without a major expansion of commuter and rail access to midtown and lower Manhattan, job growth will stagnate. Two of the four projects that were cited as having the potential to relieve overcrowding, the Second Avenue Subway and LIRR East Side Access, have the support of the MTA. The other projects are new tunnels under the Hudson River and the East River. A plan for a second tunnel under the Hudson River is a key component of the Access to the Region's Core (ARC), a group that was originally composed of the MTA, NJ Transit, and the Port Authority. Unfortunately, the MTA has withdrawn its support for this project, and NJ Transit has taken the lead. Engineering and environmental studies are underway at this time. With regard to the Lower Manhattan East River Tunnel, Governor Pataki came out in support of this last year, but no funding has been identified for this project. According to the report, not since 1964, when the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge was completed, has New York City added any new "capacity." Before you get out your checkbooks, just be aware that the cost of the four projects has been estimated at \$32.6 billion.

Of late, *The New York Times* has been relentless with regard to the State and City of New York's lack of financial assistance to the MTA. In an Editorial which appeared on December 25, 2004, the *Times* described this as "Half a Loaf on Transportation." The subway system, it said, has fallen victim in the past to a political law of nature: elected officials love building new projects but find it hard to get excited about routine maintenance. They were, of course, alluding to remarks that MTA Chair Peter Kalikow made a few days earlier, that he would not build the new projects, the LIRR East Side Access and Second Avenue Subway unless there was

also funding for keeping the existing system in a state of good repair. "Mr. Kalikow is an appointee of Governor Pataki, who has been systematically withdrawing support for mass transit, just as Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg cut back on city support." When the MTA offered a method of raising revenue, by increasing some state business, real estate and fuel taxes, Governor Pataki vetoed that idea. In closing, the *Times* supported Mr. Kalikow by writing that he has taken the wisest course to keep the current system in good repair.

Although it is not passenger rail, nonetheless it is worth mentioning that the 8-mile Staten Island Railway will be rebuilt. The *Staten Island Advance* reported that the line, which connects the Howland Hook's New York container facility and other West Shore industrial sites with New Jersey over the Arthur Kill lift bridge, has been dormant since New York City purchased the line from CSX 10 years ago. \$72 million will be spent on this project, which when completed is expected to remove 100,000 trucks from area roads each year.

It has been over 40 years since trains last ran over the Ozone Park Branch to the Rockaways. Only the portion south of Liberty Avenue has been used. On December 14, 2004, *The New York Times* reported that Community Board 14 adopted a resolution calling for the city to create a bicycle path on the 1.5-mile stretch of the property running through Forest Park and south through Woodhaven and Ozone Park. North of Rockaway Boulevard, the line is now owned partly by the Parks Department and partly by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services. A bikeway with planted trees is envisioned for this structure. Meanwhile Community Board 6 plans to study a similar proposal for its segment of the Rockaway Beach Branch in Rego Park and Forest Hills. The executive director of the Greater Woodhaven Development Corporation, Maria Thomson, acknowledged that "turning the Rockaway Beach Branch into parkland would give the added benefit of preventing its resurrection as an active train line." Over the years there have been proposals to reactivate the line, but they been defeated by central Queens residents.

Amtrak

As was reported in the December, 2004 *Bulletin*, on October 28, 2004, an *Acela* train derailed in New Haven. Member Todd Glickman, who made a roundtrip on an *Acela* during December, reported that the trainset that was involved has been returned to service, minus one car, the First Class car, and was the equipment in which he rode. Because of this, passengers who had paid for First Class were advised by the Conductor to go to the ticket window to get a refund of the surcharge. For the record, the consist is: 2025 (engine), 3521 (business/quiet car), 3501 (business), 3311 (cafe), 3535 (business), 3404 (business), and 2023 (engine). What

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makes this an unusual trainset is that at the engine end of 3521, there is now a piece of painted plywood sealing the end of the car, instead of the door set.

Todd also sent a report that University of New Hampshire students at Durham have become a significant part of the ridership on *Downeaster* trains. The number of passengers on the Durham-Boston route rose from 9,144 to 21,241 riders in the latest fiscal year. Ridership between Durham and Portland also grew, from 1,620 to 2,795. Revenue is up 98 percent for the Boston leg and 62 percent on the Portland leg. High demand prompted the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority to start daily service from Durham in January last year, a change from weekends-only stops. An \$800,000 grant has been secured by the University to construct a station at Durham.

Other Transit Systems*Boston, Massachusetts*

Todd Glickman sent a report about how MBTA services operated on the Christmas and New Year's weekends. For Christmas Eve, which was a Friday, a Saturday schedule was in effect on the Red, Orange, and Green Lines. The Blue Line (no doubt because it serves Logan Airport) ran a regular weekday schedule. Commuter rail was also on a weekday schedule. All lines ran a Sunday schedule on Christmas Day; when a Sunday schedule is in effect, no service is provided on the Needham, Stoughton, and Fairmount Lines. The following weekend, New Year's Eve, MBTA commuter rail trains operated on a normal Friday schedule with a few modifications and some extra service. Post-New Year's Eve, extra trains were operated to Newburyport, Rockport (via a bus connection at Beverly), Haverhill, Lowell, Fitchburg, South Attleboro, Kingston, Middleboro, Needham, and Worcester. A Sunday schedule was in effect on New Year's Day. The Blue, Green, Orange, and Red Lines operated a weekday schedule on December 31, but added service leading to rush-hour levels from approximately 7 PM through the conclusion of the "First Night" events until approximately 2 AM. One other item: after 8 PM, service was free!

Due to construction, two Green Line routes swapped terminals on January 1. Inbound B (Boston College) cars now terminate at Government Center instead North Station and inbound C (Cleveland Circle) cars terminate at North Station instead Government Center.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

After the January, 2005 *Bulletin* went to press, news was received that the State of Pennsylvania had given \$18.8 million to 31 transit agencies, including SEPTA and PAT. These funds will hold the line on any service cuts or fare increases, but just until the end of this month. Gov. Edward G. Rendell had requested that a meeting be held with legislative leaders in early January

to find a long-term solution to providing dedicated funding for public transit.

From member Lee Winson comes an interesting report from the environs of Philadelphia. "The SEPTA 'Metro' page announced on January 6 that renovation work at the Melrose Park station (main Reading Company trunk line, just outside of Philadelphia) is near completion. Work that was done included a new station building, large canopy, parking improvements, and high-level platforms. Historically, the Reading Company side of the system did not have any high-level platforms, while the Pennsylvania Railroad side had them at major stations and a few commuter stops. The first high-level platform on the Reading side was when the Hatboro line was extended to Warminster in 1974 and a new station (was) built there. SEPTA announced it will build high level platforms at (the) North Broad, Wayne Junction, Elkins Park, Jenkintown, and Glenside stations, all on the main Reading Company trunk line. At one time North Broad and Wayne Junction were major stations serving as transfer points between express and local trains and nearby factories. However, the former local stops (i.e. Nicetown, Tioga, and Spring Garden) were closed and factories are gone. Today North Broad Street* and Wayne Junction are themselves now local stops. The Temple University stop (formerly Columbia Avenue) was relocated to be closer to campus and upgraded to an express stop. *The Reading Company built a handsome station building to serve North Broad Street, but declining patronage caused it to be closed. I understand it is now in use as a prison halfway house. The Reading's North Broad Street station is a few blocks away from the Pennsy's North Philadelphia station. North Philadelphia also was once a major local and through train station but now is only a local SEPTA stop with very limited Amtrak service. Even the North Philadelphia Broad Street Subway station is only a local stop, though built as an express stop."

Member David W. Safford sent a few news items from PATCO from **Connections**, the Delaware Port Authority's newsmagazine: The electronic message station signs are being upgraded to allow central posting of canned emergency messages, obviating the need for manual message input. The Dispatcher or Customer Service Agent will be able to post messages from a menu to all or selected stations, allowing passengers to be aware of the nature and projected duration of delays. (Manual messaging will also continue to be available, but this is too time-consuming for emergency use.) PATCO (which is a third rail system) maintains a special three-car "Ice Train" for winter use. The end cars have modified third rail shoes to cut ice from the contact rail, and the center car has a 275-gallon tank of de-icing fluid, about enough for three round trips over the length of the system. The fluid is directed onto the contact shoe, to the right or left of the car as selected by the

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operator depending on the location of the rail at any given time.

Washington, D.C. area

MARC has placed a number of ex-Metra Gallery cars into service. Member Steve Erlitz reported that they are usually on Train #P875, the 4:25 local and Train #P877, the 4:55 PM express, mixed with a single-level or two plus a cab car. All the new bi-levels are off the Brunswick Line except for a three-car stray that has a new bi-level cab car that flops between the Camden and Brunswick Lines. He has not seen them, but supposedly they do wrong-way turns on the Camden (on Train #844 in the morning and Train #853 in the afternoon), but the passengers ride in the single-level cars. Because Gallery cars cannot use high-level platforms, these trains can only utilize Tracks 7, 8, 15, and 16 of the "upper" portion of Washington Union Station.

South Florida

Due to the success of the Colorado Railcar DMU, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority has placed orders that will total five units. The first ones are under construction. Thanks to member Karl Groh for this report.

Cleveland, Ohio

New timetables were issued for Route 66X (Airport-Windermere) on September 22, 2004 and 67AX (Shaker)/67X (Van Aken) on June 6, 2004. There is a note on the cover of the Route 66X that the West 65th/Lorain/Eco Village station was now open. In the December 14, 2003 timetable, this station, located between West 25th/Ohio City and West Boulevard/Cudell, had a notation that it was closed for renovation until mid-2004. It was, however, served by three bus routes. Thanks to member Jim Beeler for sending copies.

Chicago, Illinois

Jim also sent copies of three recently published METRA timetables: METRA Electric (November 1) and BNSF – Aurora (November 22) and SouthWest – Orlando Park (December 22). On December 20, the new Palos Heights station opened. Located between Worth and Palos Park, Palos Heights on the SouthWest Line was previously only served by a bus.

Work has been completed on the Chicago Transit Authority's \$483 million rehabilitation project of the 6.6-mile 54th/Cermak branch of the Blue Line. With the new year came additional weekend service and faster trips to the Loop. Running times have been cut from 45 to 25 minutes or less, due to track repairs that removed slow-speed zones, some of which required trains to operate at speeds as low as 15 mph. There are now eight newly renovated, fully accessible stations. The rehabilitation project began in 2001. Service is provided every day between 4 AM and 1 AM, with 15-minute headways on Saturday, and 20-minute headways on Sundays. In or-

der to achieve the additional weekend service for the 54th/Cermak branch, Blue Line trains alternate between the Forest Park and 54th/Cermak branches. The schedule on the Forest Park branch was adjusted to accommodate less frequent service during those hours. The CTA continued its tradition of offering penny rides on New Year's Eve. Riders on CTA trains and buses paid only a penny from 8 PM New Year's Eve, Friday, December 31, until 6 AM New Year's Day, Saturday, January 1. Some lines had their operating hours extended. The last trip on all Brown, Orange, and Green Line trains left downtown at 1:30 AM; Blue and Brown Line trains operated between Belmont and Kimball until 2:25 AM; Purple and Yellow Line trains operated until 2:20 AM from Howard to Linden and Dempster, respectively; while Blue Line trains on the Cermak (Douglas) branch ran from downtown until 1:30 AM. Red Line trains and Forest Park-O'Hare Blue Line trains operate 24 hours daily. Thanks to Bob Hansen for these two reports.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

According to **The StarTribune**, because of the success of the Hiawatha Line, the Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee voted on January 11 to purchase one rail car with \$3.15 million left on the rail project's budget, and two others using \$6.3 million from Hennepin County. The order must be placed with Bombardier prior to January 23, because of a planned production shutdown. Bombardier manufactured the 24 existing cars. The funds that are being "borrowed" from Hennepin County were designated to purchase an additional two cars for the as-yet-unfunded "Northstar" commuter line project, which would require more cars when the line is extended by four blocks. If the project receives funding it will connect Big Lake (cut back from Big Lake last year) and Minneapolis and be in operation by 2008. The car crunch comes because higher-than-expected Hiawatha ridership has required Metro Transit to run more trains farther and longer each day than planned, making it difficult to find time for maintenance. At press time, transit officials were awaiting a speedy answer from the Federal Transit Administration, which must approve the purchase.

For the first week (December 6-12, 2004) of ridership since the line was extended almost four miles to MSP Airport and the Mall of America, ridership was 135,100. For comparison purposes, the average weekly ridership in November was 90,600; after the extension, *weekday* ridership was 99,600. Thanks to member Neil Carlson for these two reports.

St. Louis, Missouri

Any of our readers who has ever been in St. Louis Union Station appreciates just what a magnificent building it is. During the golden years of railroads, many railroads used this facility. Twenty-six years ago, Amtrak moved its operations several blocks away to 550 South 16th Street. On December 21, 2004, Amtrak opened a

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new station building at the same location, replacing the older station building. Note that Amtrak is calling this an interim station, as it awaits the construction of a permanent station which is being financed by the City of St. Louis. At that time, this new building will be converted into a base for operating crews and mechanical forces.

Las Vegas, Nevada

The Monorail, which opened on July 15, 2004 and shut down on September 8, 2004, re-opened on December 25. Todd Glickman reported "after a number of fits and starts, the Las Vegas Monorail is now in operation. For its first three days, it was free of charge. I was lucky enough to be there on its last day of free operations, December 27. The fare structure is: Single ride - \$3.00; Two-rides - \$5.50; Unlimited Day Pass - \$10.00 (valid for 24 hours from purchase time); Ten-ride ticket - \$20.00; and Three-Day unlimited pass \$25.00 (valid for 72 hours from purchase time). Tickets are sold through vending machines that accept cash and credit/debit cards. Change is returned in dollar coins. Children under five ride free, but there are no reduced fares for youngsters, seniors, etc. The Monorail operates daily from 8 AM to 2 AM, on a two-track system. Transit time from one end to the other is about 15 minutes; the trains achieve a good rate of speed. Food and drink must be in closed containers, and there is no smoking. There is NO 'no photo' rule; I saw many taking photos without hassle from security.

"Station stops include (from north to south):

- Sahara Avenue
- Las Vegas Hilton
- Las Vegas Convention Center
- Harrah's/Imperial Palace
- Flamingo/Caesar's Palace
- Paris/Bally's
- MGM Grand

"The right-of-way is about a half-block from 'The Strip,' and covered walkways are provided to/from most major hotels. As one who has been in Las Vegas many times for conventions, this will be a superb service for those who need to go to the Convention Center from Strip hotels. If the service can stay 'on track,' it will be well-used."

Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Mid-Region Council of Governments has ordered five MP-36 diesel-electric locomotives from Wabtec Corporation for \$12.7 million. These units are similar to those that are operating in Caltrain service and will be used to power the Bombardier bi-levels that were ordered for the commuter service between Belen and Bernalillo (December, 2004 *Bulletin*). Delivery is expected later this year. Thanks to member Bob Kingman for the news.

Seattle, Washington

If funding can be found, Sound Transit will construct a 1.7 mile line that would serve SEATAC Airport. Although it was part of the original 21-mile system, this portion was dropped due to cost overruns and changes in airport plans. In 2001, the plan was scaled back to be a 14-mile line from downtown Seattle to Tukwila. Service to Tukwila is set to begin by mid-2009. Aside from the funding issue (it could cost \$225 million), it is part of a plan to reconfigure access to the airport that requires the addition of another eastbound lane to Highway 518, the freeway that delivers most traffic from the airport to I-5. Pending resolution of these issues, service to SEATAC could begin six months later. In the interim, a shuttle bus service would operate.

San Francisco, California

Progressive Railroading reported that CalTrain had four consecutive months of increases leading to more than 31,000 daily riders in September, which were attributable to the new schedules and introduction of *Baby Bullet* express service.

Los Angeles, California

On October 28, 2004, when I learned that Metrolink was leasing cars from Sound Transit, I sent an email asking the railroad to provide the specifics. I did receive a response, but it was on January 4, after the report appeared in last month's *Bulletin*. Here is the complete list: Cabs — 210, 213 and 232; trailers — 210, 213, 231, 232, 237, 238, 239, and 240; and locomotive 901. The coaches had 6000 added to their Sounder numbers (for example, 210 became 6210).

San Juan, Puerto Rico

You can fill in the table on Page 13 of the December, 2004 *Bulletin* with December 19. That was the date that Tren Urbano service began. It was intended that rides were only to be by "complimentary pass", but because so many showed up, it was free. A total of 41,000 were carried on less than peak headway (actual 12 or so minutes versus future planned 5 peak). The current plan is to run free service for three Sundays, three Saturday-Sundays, and four Friday-Saturday-Sundays. Full revenue service was to begin at the end of February. Efforts were being made to integrate bus system and Publicos. The following day, there were reports that some intended passengers attempted to enter the stations because they had seen trains running the previous day. They were turned away.

From the History Files

70 Years Ago: On February 10, 1935, the Pennsylvania Railroad began electric operations between New York City and Washington, D.C.

10 Years Ago: On February 27, 1995, *Coaster* service was initiated by the North Coast Transportation District between Oceanside and San Diego. On Day One, there were four peak and one reverse peak trips scheduled in each direction, weekdays only. In the intervening years

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Summary of Car Assignments and Changes in 2004

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On May 17, 12 Phase II R-32s were reassigned from Jamaica to Coney Island (from which they had been removed on March 12, 2003). Consisting solely of mismatched cars 3348/3549, 3382/3831, 3418/3863, 3420/3645, 3530/3741, and 3617/3776, the available 10-car train was first used on **B**, then immediately removed for lack of proper signs (still reading **B** 6th Ave.-West End). After a brief appearance on **W**, it was moved to **C** as of May 24, where it could be seen at all hours, including nights and weekends.

With the November 14 schedule changes, four of the so-called "Sigma" R-32s (3880/3881 and 3936/3937) were transferred from Pitkin to Jamaica. Originally rebuilt by General Electric at the same time that company was rebuilding the R-38s, they have been modified and are regular mixed into trains of Morrison-Knudsen-rebuilt R-32s. At the same time, Phase II R-32s 3478/3479, 3546/3547, 3559/3904, 3926/3927, and 3942/3943 were reassigned from Jamaica to Coney Island, making for two trains in service on **C**. The week of December 6, four more General Electric R-32s (3892/3893 and 3934/3935) were transferred from Pitkin to Jamaica. The last two General Electric-overhauled R-32s, 3594/3595, are still assigned to Pitkin for **A** and **C** service as of January, 2005.

As of December 13, the following changes took place: eight standard Phase I R-32s (3424/3425, 3454/3455, 3538/3539, and 3870/3871) were shifted from Pitkin to Jamaica, and 18 more Phase II R-32s (3368/3369, 3482/3483, 3560/3561, 3564/3565, 3596/3597, 3684/3685, 3693/3693, 3832/3833, and 3908/3909)

were transferred from Jamaica to Coney Island. This created a fleet of 40, which yields three trains for **C**, four if all goes right. R-42s 4934-4939 were also moved from East New York to Coney Island, where they were quickly absorbed into the existing array of R-40M/42 mixtures. These transfers combined to allow R-68s 2776-2795 to be forwarded from Coney Island to Concourse, where they relieve a car shortage. We observed three trains of R-42s laid up in Rockaway Parkway Yard on our January 1 excursion, signed up for **L** service. The older equipment will continue to serve **L** pending resolution of the R-143 situation (the cars are being retrofitted to operate under Communications-Based Train Control).

OTHER SIGHTINGS

Mixed trains over the past year were very infrequent, but the following were spotted:

August 14 (laid up on line)-August 15 (removed): Slant R-40s 4422/4423 in Conductor's position in a train of R-40Ms on **B**

November 9: train consisting of 4 R-32s on south end and 6 R-38s on north end on **A**

November 19: train consisting of 6 R-38s on south end and 2 R-32s on north end on **C**

Note: these are no longer seen with any frequency.

Also, on several weekends when **G** was extended to Coney Island due to a General Order, an R-32 train was seen in this service.

The R-143 train outfitted with Siemens propulsion equipment (8205-8212) was sent to Kawasaki Railcar in November, 2004 to be retrofitted with a contract-standard Bombardier propulsion group.

A Ride on the RiverLINE

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riders. Both the New Jersey State Aquarium and the Battleship New Jersey are close to the LINE. The Aquarium, however, closed in September 2004 for a rehabilitation project which will keep it shuttered until this May. It had generated numerous class trips which were able to use the LINE instead of school buses. Venues such as the Entertainment Center and Campbell's Field, which provide evening activities, have proven to be more difficult to attract LINE riders because of the limited nighttime service.

RAILFANNING

Railfanning the LINE is not easy. The extreme ends, in Camden and Trenton, are easy to walk, but the remainder of the LINE is not. The 30-minute headways make casual rides with photo stops at several locations difficult. There are some places where schedules allow one to leave a car in one direction, get some quick photos and then board a car in the opposite direction. The waits with 30-minute service will no doubt discourage same-direction 'fanning. There are good photo opportunities at either end and in the street-running segment in Camden.

Fan trips become a little easier during peaks, with the 15-minute headways. Unfortunately, this is not the ideal time for many fans to do their riding and photographing.

Commuter and Transit Notes

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service has been expanded so that there is frequent service throughout the day, and four round trips on Sat-

urdays.

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

Around New York's Transit System

Increased Rush Hour Service

The new weekday schedules, which went into effect on November 15, 2004, provided for increased rush hour service on the former BMT Southern Division. AM and PM rush hour service from Brooklyn on **B**, **D**, **N**, and **A** was increased from a 6½- to a 6-minute headway. The duration of this peak service was about 48 minutes in the morning rush and 30 minutes in the evening rush. On the above lines, additional service was provided at the beginning of the evening rush. One additional train was scheduled for **B**, **D**, and **N**, while two additional trains were required for **A** service. Bronx **B** and **D** service and Astoria **N** service were not changed.

Alternate morning rush hour, three evening rush hour, and two Saturday morning **D** trains are put in service from Coney Island Yard, making their first stop at 25th Avenue. These trains were formerly put in service at Stillwell Avenue. Four southbound **D** trains discharge passengers at Bay Parkway and are laid up after the morning rush.

There are **R** put-ins leaving 57th Street-Seventh Avenue southbound at 6:43, 6:55, and 7:07 AM on weekdays, 7:24 AM on Saturday, and 11:31 AM and 12:09 PM on Sunday, but there are no layups at this terminal. There are more evening layups than early morning put-ins at 95th Street. Therefore, we concluded that several layups probably run light from 95th Street to 57th Street.

Southbound **N** trains run express from 36th Street to 59th Street 40 minutes later on weekday evenings as

well as mornings, afternoons, and early evenings on weekends. These trains formerly made local stops, probably because **R** trains were laid up on the express tracks.

R-68/68As Lose Power in 60th Street Tunnel

Recently, southbound R-68 and R-68A trains were losing power in the 60th Street Tunnel because trains were operated in the switching position for up to 30 seconds or more. If the Master Controller is kept in switching position too long, high power or brake currents on E-Cam propulsion systems can cause an overload condition. Therefore, Train Operators on all SMEE-type cars must not hold the Master Controller in the switching position for more than a few seconds.

"General Order" Defined

To authorize work to be done on the tracks and/or infrastructure elements of the system, the Division of Rapid Transit Operations issues General Orders whose purpose is to notify operating personnel of changes to the operation of the railroad.

These orders, which are issued by the Assistant Chief Transportation Officer of Rapid Transit Operations Subdivision "C" or his/her designee, cannot be modified without proper authorization from Rapid Transit Operations.

Most General Orders are issued for single-track operation, removing tracks from service, slow speed areas, and in-house work on tracks, infrastructure, and stations affecting train service, special equipment, work trains, and Movie, Excursion, or Inspection Trains.

SUMMARY OF CAR ASSIGNMENTS AND CHANGES IN 2004 by Bill Zucker, with assistance from George Chiasson

On January 19, 2004, the 12 remaining modified R-40s (4530-4533, 4536-4541, and 4548/4549) held over in East New York were finally transferred to Coney Island.

Effective with the February 22 service changes (Manhattan Bridge service to Sixth Avenue restored), R-68s 2740-2775 were transferred from Coney Island to Concourse. As it turned out, one more train was needed as a put-in on Saturday than was laid up the night before. Thus, a train of Coney Island-assigned R-68s or R-68As was regularly used on **D** on weekends, especially on Saturdays, and appeared occasionally on **B**.

R-42s 4940-4949 were transferred from East New York to Coney Island and no more could follow pending complete R-143 availability. R-40 and R-40M/42 trains were used mainly on **B** and **W**; three or four trains also

appear on **N** on weekdays, while as many as six have been seen on weekends. They were used on **A** only during weekend General Orders (via tunnel) before the February 22 changes and on **D** only as occasional baseball specials serving 161st Street-Yankee Stadium.

With the May 23 schedule changes (reopening Stillwell Avenue to **F** and **A** service), two trains of Coney Island R-68s or R-68As (sometimes more) were used weekends on **D**. In late August and through September, they were used here weekdays as well, but this has subsequently lessened. They started to reappear from time to time on **B** and even on **W** (by way of those special first and last trains which are through-routed to Coney Island).

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