The Bulletin

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The Bulletin

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For general inquiries, contact us at bulletin@erausa.org. ERA's website is www.erausa.org.

Editorial Staff:
Editor-in-Chief: Bernard Linder
Tri-State News and Commuter Rail Editor: Ronald Yee
North American and World News Editor: Alexander Ivanoff
Contributing Editor: Jeffrey Erlitz

Production Manager: David Ross

WORLD'S FAIR OPENED 75 YEARS AGO

The World's Fair, which opened at the end of April, 1939, was located in Flushing Meadow Park just south of the Willets Point Boulevard station, Flushing Line. Because the Fair opened before Unification, there was competition between the privately owned Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT), the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation (BMT), and the city-owned Independent System (IND).

IRT provided the majority of the service to the Fair. The company's trains furnished direct service on the Flushing Line to Grand Central and Times Square, where passengers could make a free transfer to the Lexington Avenue and Seventh Avenue Lines respectively and another free transfer to elevated lines in the Bronx. Elevated trains provided part-time service via Second Avenue to Manhattan's Lower East Side.

BMT trains, which stopped at Willets Point Boulevard, operated between Main Street and Queens Plaza under trackage rights with IRT in accordance with an agreement dated March 20, 1913. Fares were collected by IRT and apportioned between the companies in the ratio of the number of passengers carried by each company to the total number carried over the jointly operated route in accordance with the July 27, 1927 agreement, which superseded the original agreement (details in May, 1993 ***Bulletin***). At Queens Plaza, passengers could make a free transfer to full-time Fourth Avenue Locals and part-time Brighton Locals and several free transfers to BMT trains in Manhattan and Brooklyn. BMT's Flushing-Ridgewood trolley also stopped at the Fair. Cars operated from Myrtle and Wyckoff Avenues to Main Street, Flushing over nearly the same route as today's Q58 bus, but did not give free transfer to most Brooklyn trolley cars.

Because IRT and BMT were privately owned companies, passengers paid an additional nickel when transferring between lines operated by different companies. But they could avoid paying the extra fare if they were not in a hurry and decided to ride to Queens, where there was joint operation. When this service began, the President of IRT visited the 33rd Street station and concluded that the company could lose several nickels if fare evaders transferred there. To curb this practice, turnstiles were relocated. There was one group near the eastbound stairway and another near the westbound stairway at the 33rd, 40th, and 46th Street stations. Passengers who were determined to save a nickel could ride to 52nd Street, where there was only one set of turnstiles.

Because the Queens Boulevard IND was not near the Fair, the city built a two-track, 1.53-mile extension from the Jamaica Yard near the Grand Central Parkway to the center of the Fair. Passengers exiting from the new World's Fair station paid an additional nickel and passengers entering paid ten cents. The new station opened at 11 AM April 30, 1939 and closed at 6 AM November 1, 1939. It opened again on May 11, 1940 and closed at 6 AM October 28, 1940.

When the Fair was open, GG service was extended to the Fair at all times. GG trains arriving at 71st Avenue were routed through the Jamaica Yard leads and the new extension to the World's Fair station. Headways were as follows:

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NEXT TRIP: CORONA YARD TOUR, SATURDAY, JUNE 7

SOLVED! THE CASE OF THE MISPLACED ELEVATED CARS
by Stephen L. Meyers

It has often been said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Well, during World War II, a well-meaning railfan inadvertently reported something about the Illinois Terminal's war-workers special trains that was not only incorrect but became embedded as dogma in traction lore. Now, 70 years later, it is time to set the record straight. But first, some perspective about those dark days of World War II when transit companies faced a major problem.

With gas and rubber tires rationed, traffic was expanding at breakneck speed, but transit equipment was limited, elderly, and barely maintained. In addition to their woes, some lines found themselves serving vital war production plants. In many cases the carriers were able to recondition older, out-of-service streetcars and buses. Some lines were able to find surplus rail equipment and modify it for their own use. For example, Atlanta's Georgia Railway & Power had major plants along both its Marietta and Stone Mountain interurban lines. Since their interurban service was performed by Cincinnati "rubber stamp curved side" cars, it managed to shop around and fill in its roster with a varied but compatible fleet of second- and third-hand cars.

In northern California's East Bay area, a much more dire situation existed. Major shipyards were teeming with war workers, but local transportation access to them was virtually nonexistent, so the United States Maritime Commission and the Key System, the local street railway, took matters into their own hands. Utilizing some minor freight tracks, some rail and overhead obtained from the recently abandoned Interurban Electric Railway, the San Francisco & Napa Valley, and the somewhat moribund Pacific Electric, they built a brand new electric railroad from a terminal in Emeryville (Oakland) to the shipyards in Richmond, a number of miles away. Their quest for rolling stock was fulfilled when the Maritime Commission purchased 90 antique open-platform, gated, motorized elevated cars, built between 1881 and 1897 for the Manhattan Railway, operator of New York City's four Manhattan elevated routes. USMC contracted the Key System to rebuild the cars and, under contract, had it operate these trains for shipyard workers. The line, which was built only to operate until the war's end, was officially called the Richmond Shipyard Railway and closed down in September, 1945.

Somewhere between those two extremes was the Illinois Terminal's specific contribution to moving war-plant workers. IT had the line and the power. What it did not have was sufficient rolling stock to move the workers. And so the United States government went shopping. It eventually ended up in New York City and purchased from the New York City Board of Transportation 55 surplus elevated cars. And here starts our story.

A 1946 issue of Ira Swett's remarkable newsletter, ***Interurbans***, carried a photo and a story. The picture showed an IT class B motor, 1578, duly noted as painted in red, white, and blue livery, pulling a train of rather nondescript passenger cars. The narrative went on to state that the cars were ex-Sixth Avenue Elevated cars reconditioned by the St. Charles plant of the American Car & Foundry Company. Unfortunately, the tale was not quite correct and started a legend that several books about IT managed to perpetuate. For it seems that the cars in question were not only NOT transplanted Sixth Avenue Elevated cars but were, in fact, rebuilt editions of New York City's original subway stock!

More of that in a moment, but first, in ***Interurbans'*** October, 1946 issue, New York juice fan Herman Rinke totally refuted the original story, giving chapter and verse of what those cars were all about. Unfortunately, Mr. Rinke's rebuttal was apparently universally unread. So let us see what this misrepresentation was all about and how it really started. In the original article an obviously non-New Yorker reported IT's use of the cars. Since the Sixth Avenue Elevated line had recently been abandoned and torn down, it seemed logical to conclude that the New York elevated system now had surplus cars, and it followed that those cars were now available for sale. This conclusion was only half true. New York's elevated system in Manhattan was composed of four separate and distinct rail lines; the Second Avenue Line, the Third Avenue Line, the Sixth Avenue Line, and the Ninth Avenue Line. Each of them started either in upper Manhattan, the Bronx, or Queens and terminated either at South Ferry or, on the Second Avenue and Third Avenue Lines, some trains ended their runs at City Hall. Originally all of the routes were steam-operated and double-tracked and offered only local service, but after they were electrified in 1902-3 traffic took a tremendous jump upward. The Manhattan Railway, which owned the elevated system, had been taken over by the Interborough Rapid Transit Company, which had built and operated New York's original subway route, opened in 1904. This line ran from the same South Ferry but in a subterranean tunnel up to City Hall and then under Fourth Avenue (Park Avenue South) to 42nd Street, where it swung west to Broadway, which it followed north to 242nd Street in the Bronx with a branch terminating at 145th Street and Lenox Avenue. The original subway line was an outstanding success and the Interborough, flush with money, decided to expand its elevated services. So it designed an elaborate scheme

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Solved! The Case of the Missing Elevated Cars

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to add a third track to three of its four lines, excluding the Sixth Avenue Line. This singular elevated structure route had been built to a unique design and was unable to be expanded and was deemed too weak to handle other than existing rolling stock. The Second Avenue, Third Avenue, and Ninth Avenue structures were more sturdy and were able to handle not only a third, express track but also raised express stops, which were built above existing stations. By 1916 these structural changes and improvements were in place and the three elevated lines inaugurated greatly successful single-directional express service designed to travel in the direction of rush hour demand. In most cases the equipment used on these lines utilized standard open-platform, reasonably light elevated cars in either motor car or trailer configuration. However, traffic increased so quickly that additional cars were needed and, providentially, the IRT subway lines had them. When IRT designed its original subway one of the major considerations was safety, both in the form of preventing car fires and in using cars sturdy enough to minimize damage to structure and passengers in case of collisions. So in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Railroad, it had a steel car designed for subway service. The prototype became PRR's MP-41 design. When both the Pennsy and IRT went to the major carbuilders to order steel electric cars, the manufacturers demurred. The new technology was too complicated, they said, and because they had neither the production lines nor the trained labor force to build steel cars, it would take too long to construct the large fleets required (IRT requested 500 cars in its original order). So IRT went back to the drawing board and came up with a compromise, the Composite car. Since there was limited heavy duty rapid transit car technology, the Composite car was a major development. George Gibbs, the renowned electrical engineer, developed two prototype cars, each with the same dimensions and power but with different interior configurations. The cars were motorized with two 200 horsepower motors on a single truck, with the other truck non-motored. The controls were designed for MU operation and each motor car had folding Motorman's cabs at each end. The cars were 51 feet long overall, including an enclosed platform at each end with mechanically operated sliding doors. The cars were constructed with extra heavy duty anti-collision posts. The wooden side panels were covered with thin copper sheets and the body line above the lower window was canted inwards to give maximum leg room within the tunnel dimensions. Since no single car manufacturer was equipped to build a single run of 500 cars, the order was split among four manufacturers: Jewett, Stephenson, St. Louis, and Wason. The car order originally called for 160 trailers and 340 motors. When delivered, the cars were a smashing success, yet the eventual acceptance of steel car manufacturing techniques early on doomed them to premature replacement. Once all-steel cars started being delivered, many Composite motors were rebuilt as trailers to be interspersed between steel motors in regular subway service. Later, a subway accident caused the New York Public Service Commission to outlaw the use of all wooden cars, including the Composites, from subway service. These now surplus Composites looked like the perfect match for the elevateds' new express service. However, the remotored cars turned out to be too heavy for the existing elevated structures. After much experimenting, a solution was found. The cars would have their motor trucks replaced with much lighter maximum traction trucks, with but a single motor on each truck. And since weight was still a factor on the rebuilt elevated lines, it was determined that the cars would only operate empty on the local tracks while the newer express tracks could handle fully loaded trains. So empty trains were run to be positioned for their express runs. The Ninth Avenue Line was never able to handle the Composites, but, like its sister Sixth Avenue route, ran the open platform gate cars and their rebuilt versions with MU door controls until those lines were scrapped. When the Sixth Avenue Line was abandoned just prior to World War II, the cars were transferred to other lines or stored on the Jerome Avenue middle track until World War II was over. When the Second Avenue-Queens service was discontinued in June, 1942, the 800– and 900-series gate motors were considered surplus and were sent off to Oakland. Other gate motors and trailers were sent to many other defense plant locations, where they were hauled behind steam locomotives. Once the Board of Transportation cleared its ex-IRT yards, it realized that it now had surplus Composites to offer for the war effort. As far as can be determined, Illinois is the only location to use them. When they were used there, the cars were modified to run as trailers behind either IT's class B locomotives or some of the heavier interurban cars of the 280-series. The cars had one of their high-level vestibules modified with steps while the other platform retained its high-level configuration. Also, to increase passenger loads, long, backless benches were placed in the car aisles. When the war ended, the service was quickly terminated, and the cars were taken out of service. At least one found its way to Galesburg, but its subsequent use, if any, is unknown. So, to summarize, IT never used former Sixth Avenue New York elevated cars. However, they did use America's pioneer high-speed rapid transit subway cars and, to be technical, they really were, finally, "L" cars.

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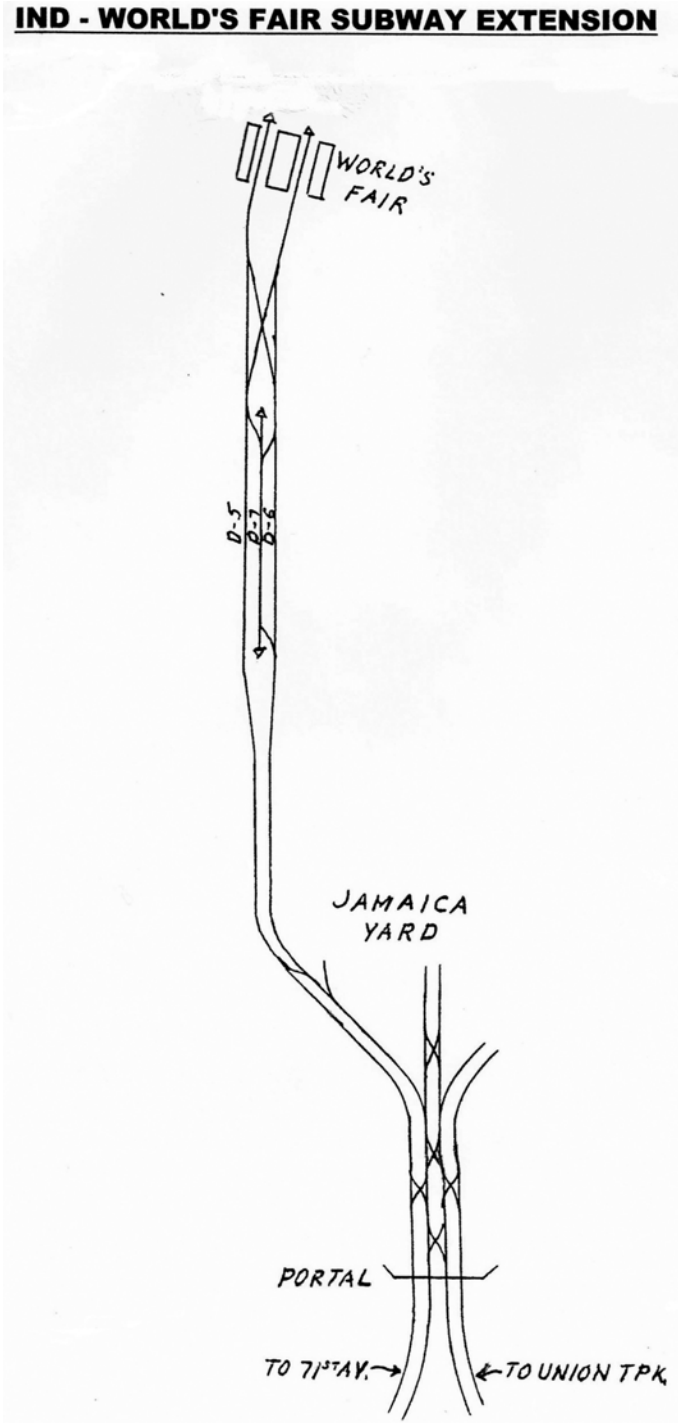
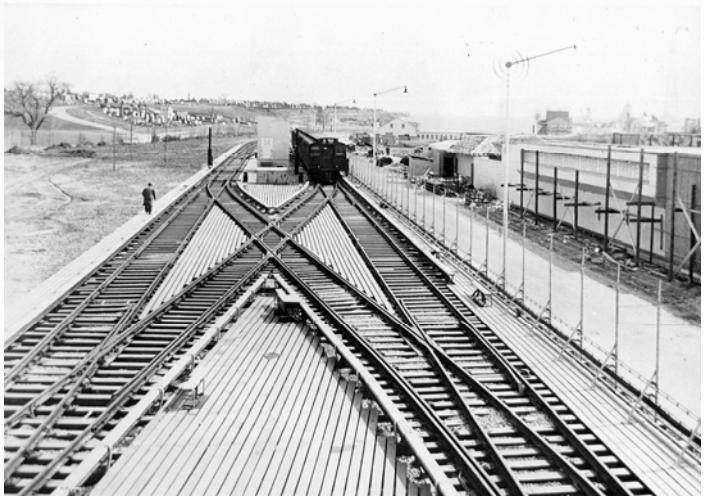
World's Fair Opened 75 Years Ago

(Continued from page 1)



South of World's Fair station looking south, GG approaching World's Fair station.
Bernard Linder collection



South of World's Fair station looking south, train leaving World's Fair station.
Bernard Linder collection

World's Fair station.
Bernard Linder collection

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Solved! The Case of the Missing Elevated Cars

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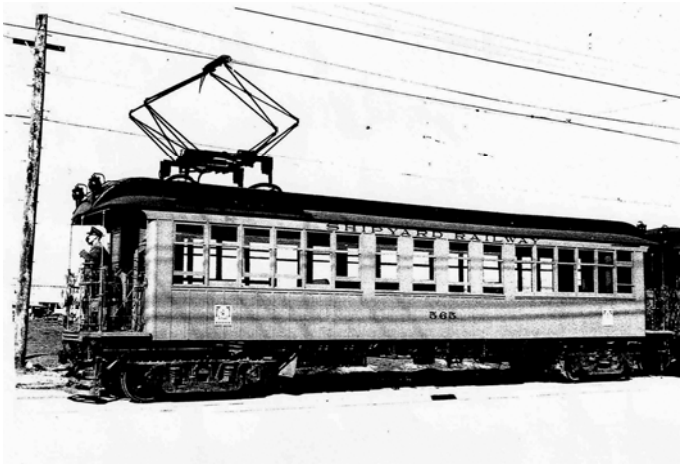
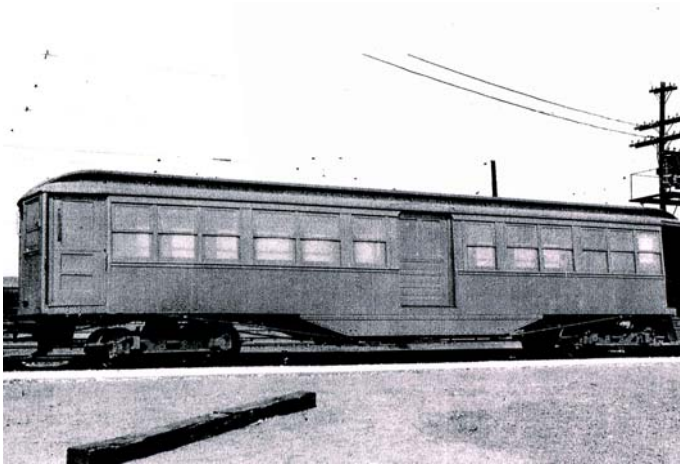
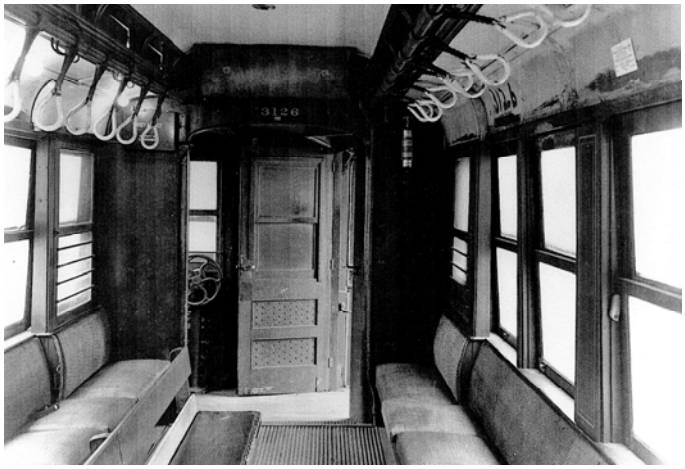
All photographs Stephen L. Meyers Collection



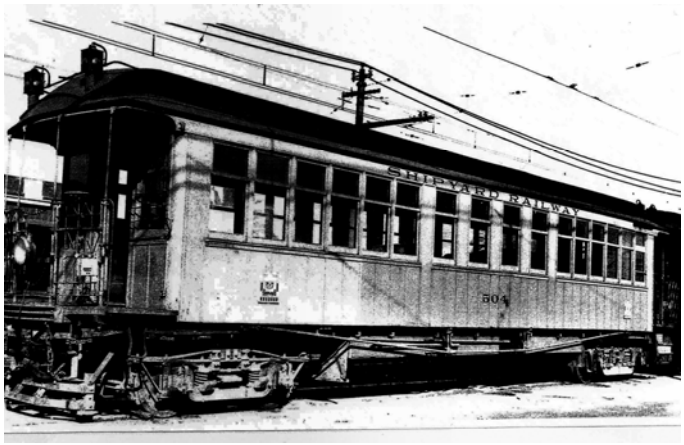
Car 565 (IRT 941) (Wason, 1890) in early service. Cars later had folding steps added at inner end of paired cars, only one of which had a pantograph.



Former IRT Composite car, number unknown, in wartime service on the Illinois Terminal Railroad System.



Composite car with bench added in center aisle.



Car 504 (IRT 822) (Pullman, 1881) as modified. Note the folding steps at right end of car.

Illinois Terminal Locomotive coupled to Composites.

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World's Fair Opened 75 Years Ago

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WEEKDAYS EFFECTIVE MAY 13, 1940		SATURDAY EFFECTIVE MAY 11, 1940		SUNDAY
Midnight	12	Midnight	12	N/A
AM Rush	10, 8 (A)	AM Rush	10, 8 (A)	
Midday	5	Morning	5	
PM Rush	4	After-noon	5	
Evening	6, 8	Evening	6, 8	

(A) 5, 4 minutes alternating to 71st Avenue and World's Fair

Additional evening service was operated from Chambers Street on Ⓔ. Ⓢ Special trains made local stops in Manhattan, express stops in Queens, and operated only in the evening. Weekday service was cancelled May 8, 1939, probably because of low ridership. In 1939, weekend Ⓢ trains operated in the evening when the Fair was open. In 1940, weekend Ⓢ trains also operated when the Fair was open. Hours of operation were: leave World's Fair 8:24 PM-1:29 AM; arrive World's Fair 9:49 PM-2:49 AM.

Headways were 6 minutes early evening, 8 minutes late evening, and last five trains after midnight 12 minutes.

After the Fair closed, the tracks and station were removed permanently. There is probably no trace of this extension.

There was also a Long Island Rail Road station near the Fair. The company tried to attract riders by advertising ten minutes and ten cents from Penn Station.

World's Fair subway extension.
Bernard Linder collection

Solved! The Case of the Missing Elevated Cars

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Out-of-service Composite cars.

Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 305

by Ronald Yee and Alexander Ivanoff

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

After 22 years, MTA is changing advertising agencies from Korey Kay and Partners to a team made up of Pulsar Advertising and the Arcade creative group. The contract runs for three years with an option for two additional years. Pulsar has experience at the transit systems of Atlanta, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Korey Kay and Partners was the firm that coined the phrases "SubTalk", "Going Your Way," and the post-9-11, "If you see something, say something." (***The New York Times***, February 7)

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

The Transit Oriented Development of the area immediately surrounding the Ronkonkoma station received strong support from union members, while some residents and officials of the Town of Islip expressed their concerns about the impact of such development on the region's schools, roads, and parking. The proposed TOD hub is projected to cost $475 million and bring up to 1,450 apartments and nearly 200,000 square feet of retail space as well as office and medical facilities to 50 acres of land around the train station. (***Long Island Newsday***, March 7)

A second Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) has been convened in an effort to prevent a strike on LIRR. The first PEB recommended a contract that was amenable to the unions but rejected by MTA as being too expensive in terms of wage increases of 17% over six years (just under 2.5% per year on average) with little in the way of givebacks to save costs. MTA took a position that such a contract could require service cuts or another fare increase. A strike could have occurred in mid-March, 2014, but the appointment of a second PEB has pushed back the earliest strike date as July 20, 2014, the heart of the summer travel season to the Hamptons, on the east end of Long Island. (***Long Island Newsday***, and ***CBS***, February 21)

John Samuelson, president of TWU Local 100, representing 38,000 MTA New York City Transit subway and bus employees, has gone on record as supporting LIRR rank and file employees should their current labor dispute result in a strike, either in March or July, dependent on further developments in the labor mediation process. Samuelson went as far as stating that his members may not make themselves available for overtime work if MTA were to attempt to provide shuttle bus services to select key locations on the NYCT subway system to partially replace LIRR services during a strike, further complicating strike contingency plans by MTA and potentially making the commuting misery worse for strike-bound LIRR commuters. This level of support by the unions representing another transit agency would be unprecedented, as noted by Anthony Simon, head of LIRR's largest labor organization. The timing of a strike, should one occur, could complicate the re-election prospects for New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, whose father, Mario, ironically, was Governor during the last strike on LIRR in the 1990s. (***New York Daily News***, February 21)

LIRR issued new timetables effective Monday, February 24 through Sunday, May 18. On the Babylon Branch, two trains that were victims of the 2010 budget cuts were restored. The 4:37 PM train from Penn Station to Babylon will revert to its former status as an express from Penn, first stop Rockville Centre, then all stops to Wantagh. The 4:39 PM train from Atlantic Terminal to Babylon will be restored to the schedule. The 4:57 PM express train from Penn Station will be restored to the schedule, operating express from Penn to Merrick, then all stops to Wantagh. The 5:03 PM train from Penn Station will continue to operate express to Rockville Centre, but will drop the stops at Merrick, Bellmore, and Wantagh that were added in 2010 when the 4:57 PM train was discontinued. On the Oyster Bay Branch, the 7:13 AM train from Oyster Bay to Long Island City will have an added stop at Hunterspoint Avenue due to many customer requests. Midday eastbound Long Beach, Far Rockaway, and Hempstead Branch trains will depart 30-36 minutes later to accommodate single-tracking on those branches as part of recovery work from Hurricane Sandy. On the Babylon, Ronkonkoma, and Port Jefferson Branches, there are minor schedule adjustments, while buses will replace a midday round-trip on the mainline between Riverhead and Greenport to allow for tie replacement. The 11:37 AM out of Riverhead and the 12:31 PM out of Greenport will be bused. (***LIRR***)

Up to 20,000 LIRR riders may be affected by future schedule changes that will force them to change trains at Mineola and Jamaica if the plans for new shuttle-type services come to fruition. LIRR feels that efficiencies can be made if the Oyster Bay Branch trains operate as shuttles or "Scoots" between Mineola and Oyster Bay. Ditto for trains between Ronkonkoma and Greenport, as well as between Jamaica and Atlantic Terminal. The trade-off in the loss of direct service is expected to be the ability to offer an increased service level on those lines using dedicated shuttle trains made up of railcars that would be far more energy-efficient than the DE-30 and bi-level push-pull coaches now in use. LIRR has set aside $37 million to buy new "scoot diesel" trains for use in the railroad's non-electrified territory east of Ronkonkoma. Diesel multiple unit (DMU) trains could be used on this line. This proposal would also free up track

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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time slots for the coming Grand Central Terminal East Side Access, which is now slated for some time after 2020 and will result in up to 65% more trains operating on the railroad. (***Long Island Newsday***)

LIRR scheduled 14 extra trains for Monday, March 17 — 6 AM westbound and 8 PM eastbound — to accommodate the expected St Patrick's Day parade crowds. Like sister railroad Metro-North, there was also a heavily enforced ban on alcoholic beverages. (***LIRR***, March 13)

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

Metro-North operated a reduced schedule equivalent to 75% of normal service during the February 13 snowstorm in anticipation of up to 14 inches of snow. Some trains were combined, with the goal of getting customers to Grand Central Terminal within 10-15 minutes of their normal arrival times. Metro-North operated a Saturday schedule on Friday, February 14, which turned out to be inadequate. Additional trains were operated during the afternoon/evening peak to better accommodate the crowds that showed up. (***Fairfield Sun***, February 12)

Metro-North's Danbury Branch has been experiencing issues with its grade crossing protection circuits, causing delays to trains operating along the branch line. The underlying cause is now under investigation, with particular focus on the computer-controlled train detection systems installed in November, 2013. The railroad is working with Alstom, the designer of the signal system, as well as Siemens, the manufacturer of the timing device for the system. This system was installed concurrent with the Metro-North/Connecticut Department of Transportation installation of centralized train control (CTC) and cab signals on the line in 2013, replacing the traditional manual block signal system that used train orders to govern train movements. This provides the ability to add more train service on this single-track branch, much like how the Upper Harlem Line saw service improvements once CTC was installed north of Southeast. For an interim period during February, Danbury tickets were cross-honored on the Harlem Line starting February 21. An interim Danbury Branch schedule was issued March 1 with adjusted running times to reflect the slower operation of trains resulting from the required "stop and warn" actions by the train crews for all 29 grade crossings on the line while a solution is found and applied to this ongoing problem. Weekday morning peak-hour trains will leave Danbury at 5:28 AM, 6:06 AM, 6:38 AM, 7:18 AM, and 7:44 AM. Afternoon trains, starting with the 3:08 PM through the 7:12 PM from Grand Central, will operate on their current schedule at all stations through Redding, but will arrive 8 to 11 minutes later at Bethel and Danbury. Off-peak trains are replaced with buses. This interim schedule will provide customers with more realistic travel times. (***WCBS-2 New York***, February 20; ***The News-Times***, February 26; ***CDOT***, March 3)

With all of the mishaps besetting the Metro-North Railroad in the past nine months, with the last major event turning deadly and tragic, Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy has called for the exploration of all options in providing an operator for the New Haven Line. While he acknowledges that divorcing the New Haven Line from Metro-North would not be easy to accomplish (because of track ownership and rights to operate over them, maintenance of track and equipment, operating personnel and supervision, revenue issues, etc.), the Governor has made it known that "MNR is not the only game in town." He is looking at the option of contracting out the operation of the line to a private vendor, just as Boston has recently negotiated with Keolis, a French quasi-public company. (***WNPR***, February 12)

Adding to the woes of the New Haven Line, this winter has dealt the new fleet of Kawasaki-built M-8 cars an issue that is sidelining a significant portion of the car fleet. A ventilation fan that cools the inverters whenever the cars are drawing d.c. power from the third rail is ingesting fine powdery snow. When the fan accumulates enough snowpack, it stops and the inverters start overheating. The overheat condition alerts the systems overseeing the railcar's operation and the on-board computer takes the car off-line, effectively making it a "dead car." The result is a mad scramble by the operating and mechanical departments to keep enough M-8 cars active to meet the needs of service. When the cars are not under the wire, this inverter is not in use, as the catenary feeds a.c. power. As a historical note, similar issues were seen with the intakes for the cooling systems for the traction motors on the 1968–72 M-1 multiple unit cars on Metro-North and its predecessor railroads as well as at LIRR. A simple, low-tech solution was applied in that case; fine Irish linen was used to cover the intakes of the traction motors to prevent the ingestion of snow. The 1983 M-3 model featured a design improvement by relocating the traction motor cooling air intake up to the window level, up and away from the blowing snow kicked up as the train operates at speed. This is also reminiscent of the fine powdery snow issues that crippled the Pennsylvania Railroad's famed GG-1s back in the early 1960s, resulting in a modification that re-located the air intakes for cooling the motors to fin-like additions at the Engineer's level just behind the nose. Member Randy Glucksman reports that at the February MTA Board Metro-North Committee meeting, Metro-North Senior Vice President-Operations John Kesich stated that Kawasaki has identified a solution for this issue and that the M-8 fleet will be retrofitted in time for next winter

The National Transportation Safety Board issued a recommendation to Metro-North Railroad that it install

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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speed limit signs along the tracks at critical locations as well as install outward facing as well as inward facing cameras to provide video and audio recordings of activities in front of the train as well as in the operating cab. Similar measures have been called for following other incidents around the nation, but there is now mounting political pressure to finally implement it. (***Associated Press***, February 18)

Metro-North President Joseph Giulietti ordered a reorganization of the safety functions at the railroad, reestablishing the post of safety officer and the formation of a safety committee. (***CBS***, February 24)

Metro-North submitted a 100-day plan to improve safety. It focuses on the reestablishment of a strong culture of safety throughout the railroad. Included in this plan are outward and inward facing cameras to record conditions ahead of the train as well as within the operating cab. Alerter devices, standard in the dual-mode Genesis locomotives and M-7A and M-8 electric multiple unit (EMU) trains, will be retrofitted onto the fleet of M-3A and Bombardier-built cab control push-pull coaches. The New Haven Line's M-2, M-4, and M-6 EMUs are slated for retirement by the end of 2014. Signal modifications to enforce speed restrictions for the five movable bridges will be expedited for completion by May 1. Restoring reliable service and improving communications were other important goals for this 100-day timeframe. (***CBS***, March 4)

Metro-North trains will be operating slower for a long time to come. In the 1950s, the New Haven Railroad carded the express run from Stamford to Grand Central Terminal at 47 minutes. In 2000, Metro-North increased speeds to allow the run to be made in 46 minutes. Since the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) mandated speed restrictions to insure safety, the run now takes 63 minutes. The run from New Haven to Grand Central Terminal used to take 1 hour 47 minutes; it now takes 2 hours 4 minutes, an increase of 17 minutes. (***Westport Now***, March 3)

Effective March 1, the Enhanced Employee Protection System, a new procedure to protect workers on or about the tracks, was implemented. Once a track is taken out of service for maintenance, it cannot be placed back into service by Rail Traffic Controllers (RTCs) without a special code known only by the person requesting the track outage. Similar to the existing blue light regulations protecting Mechanical Department employees working about or under rail equipment, this should go a long way to preventing the circumstances that led to a RTC trainee placing a track back in service by accident. (***Journal News***, March 2)

New Metro-North President Joseph Giulietti announced that new schedules will be issued on or around May 18, 2014 on the three east-of-Hudson lines that will have lengthened running times to account for the impacts of the speed restrictions and operating rules placed into effect following the series of tragic wrecks and derailments last year. These schedules will be based upon an ongoing detailed review and study of current train movement records. While the trains will operate slower, safety will be the driving force behind the timings set by the new schedules. He did not expect the elimination of any of the over 700 daily trains to accommodate these changes. (***Journal News***, February 27)

(Editor's Note: Due to the pressing need to quickly implement the automated enforcement of speed restrictions at critical locations by the cab signal/automated speed control systems already used by the trains, a simplified application of speed code reductions was applied to the existing signal blocks. As a result, many of the speed reductions occur far in advance of the actual speed-restricted area, making the running times even longer. Ideally, in the future, when time and budgets permit, signal engineers can re-examine the actual distance in advance of the actual speed restriction needed to safely slow down an approaching train and add new signal blocks to allow trains to maintain higher speeds until they get closer to the slow zone.)

Veteran Metro-North Conductor Mike Shaw issued a written apology to his passengers on Monday, February 24 for a snafu that left many stranded on cold, snowy platforms. On Friday, February 21, Shaw's train operated with a shorter-than-assigned consist, which resulted in the train quickly becoming overcrowded. He then instructed passengers at stations farther down the line to wait for the next train, which he expected would be an express that would closely match his train's arrival time at Grand Central Terminal. Unbeknownst to him, that relief train had been cancelled by operations management, and the folks he had advised to wait were left stranded. As Shaw is a senior ranking Conductor on the roster, he was the everyday Conductor of this train and most of the passengers knew him by face and name. Out of a personal feeling of responsibility for his regular customers, he took it upon himself to produce and issue — at his own expense and time — 500 copies of an apology letter, which he placed on many of the train's seats the following Monday. While it was met with understanding by almost all of his regular customers, Metro-North management took a dim view of his unauthorized apology letter and was poised to discipline him for his actions. Luckily for him, he had already become a folk hero amongst the ridership, and the railroad simply instructed him to refrain from similar gestures in the future and to let the railroad's Corporate Communications Department handle such matters. But, in the eyes of the riders, he was seen as being more genuine and forthcoming than the railroad management in recent months. (***New York Post***, ***Wall Street Journal***, February 25)

In yet another tragedy to strike Metro-North, James

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Romanoff, 58, an eight-year veteran in the Power Department, was killed while on duty on the Park Avenue Viaduct near E. 106th Street at CP3 at around 1 AM Monday, March 10. He had been working as part of a three-man work gang to restore a track that had been out of service for weekend maintenance and was struck by a passing Hudson Line train to Poughkeepsie. Metro-North and MTA Police as well as NTSB and FRA are investigating the cause. (***New York Daily News***, ***Metro***, March 10)

Metro-North service was suspended on all three lines from just before 10 AM until 3:45 PM on Wednesday, March 12 due to a gas explosion that leveled two buildings adjacent to the Park Avenue Viaduct at E. 116th Street. Hudson Line trains terminated at the Yankees-E. 153rd Street station with customers transferring to and from NYCT 4 and D at the 161st Street station. Harlem and New Haven Line trains terminated at Woodlawn with customers transferring to and from NYCT 2 at 233rd Street. Once the New York Fire Department gave the approval for Metro-North crews to clear off the debris on the tracks and had structural engineers verify the integrity of the viaduct's structure, tracks, signals, and third rail, Harlem and New Haven Line services were restored to Grand Central Terminal at 3:45 PM and Hudson line service was restored at 4:45 PM. Initially, only two tracks farthest from the scene of the explosion were restored, as FDNY officials were standing on the westernmost track to observe and direct firefighting operations. As conditions permitted, the other two tracks were eventually reopened to train traffic, albeit all four tracks were limited to 30 mph to reduce their vibrations from the viaduct to the on-going rescue and recovery efforts. During the service disruption, MTA New York City Subway cross-honored Metro-North tickets as did NJ Transit Rail Operations on the Main, Bergen County, Port Jervis, and Pascack Valley Lines. Normal service was resumed later that evening, and Thursday morning's peak period ran its full schedule, with some delays from the ongoing slow speed order in the area. (***New York Daily News***, ***Long Island Newsday***, March 13)

A report from ERA member Stanley Reid on the diversions of Metro-North passengers onto NYCT described a scene of extreme overcrowding, with E. 233rd Street being gridlocked with police there assisting diverted passengers to the subway. Jerome Avenue was bumper-to-bumper from Woodlawn Terminal to E. 233rd Street. The Henry Hudson, Bronx River, and Saw Mill Parkways were moving at a crawl.

Metro-North M-8 count as of March 3, 2014: 336 cars delivered, 306 conditionally accepted by MNR for service, 30 undergoing acceptance testing by Kawasaki Railcar Inc. (Bill Zucker/Randy Glucksman 3/14)

(Editor's note: The total order of Metro-North/Connecticut Department of Transportation M-8s is 405, composed of 380 EMU pairs plus 25 non-powered coaches. The single non-powered coach will be an M-8 styled carbody with a pantograph only for HVAC and lighting and would be inserted between M-8 pairs to make up an odd-numbered car consist such as 5, 7, 9, or 11 cars. Efficiencies would be gained by providing the option of adding just one car instead of a pair if ridership dictates it.)

On March 14, the Federal Railroad Administration released the results of its comprehensive investigation of Metro-North operations, called "Operation Deep Dive." It was quite scathing in nature, highly critical of a poor safety culture where on-time performance had become the primary goal at the expense of safety. Practices in track maintenance, training, operations, and dispatching were all called into question, with serious deficiencies highlighted. The report has directed that Metro-North immediately place safety as its top priority, and, within 60 days, come up with concrete plans to make significant improvements to the training programs and increase the effectiveness of the Safety Department. Track and signal inspection and maintenance programs were deemed inadequate, with insufficient time provided for the work to be performed properly with the constant pressure by dispatchers to clear up and allow train traffic to flow unimpeded. Train and engine crew supervision and certification were deemed inadequate as well, with poor monitoring of individual employee performance by officials charged with maintaining performance standards; some of these officials were determined not have been properly trained for their jobs as well. With over 1,500 employees being hired in the 2013–4 timeframe to replace a wave of retirements, the quality of training was deemed vitally important. FRA noted the highly fragmented and uneven levels of training for field employees, with poor recordkeeping of certifications for the trainers as well as the trainees. In response, Metro-North President Joseph Giulietti has promised an immediate change in the corporate culture with an emphasis in safety above all other goals, issuing a statement to that effect the same day. He did mention that the December, 2015 deadline for the implementation of positive train control (PTC) will unlikely be met, no different from other railroads struggling to meet the deadline, although he expected Metro-North to be well along on the road to full compliance by that date. (***Federal Railroad Administration***, March 14)

NJ TRANSIT

NJ Transit Executive Director Jim Weinstein stepped down on March 2 after four years at the helm. He is most well known for the NJ Transit/ Hurricane Sandy debacle when hundreds of coaches, EMUs, and locomotives were stored in Hoboken and the Meadowlands Maintenance Complex in Kearny and were damaged by the storm surge that flooded both locations. The agency

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has since procured new rail yards on higher ground in Linden and Garwood to protect its rolling stock in the event of another major storm. Weinstein was also at the helm of the agency during the Super Bowl debacle, in which 33,000 riders overwhelmed the resources that had been assigned to handle it. He took the blame for not being able to react in time to handle the incoming crowds, which far exceeded expectations during the pre-game period. During subsequent investigations and hearings, it was determined that NJ Transit was not totally at fault as NFL and security concerns prevented any change in the operating plan during the event, giving New Jersey a black eye with regard to transportation logistics. Weinstein will be succeeded by Veronique "Ronnie" Hakim, the current Executive Director of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, which runs the Turnpike and Garden State Parkway. (***Metro***, March 3)

Within a week of Veronique Hakim's start on the job as the new Executive Director of NJ Transit, its Directors of Rail and Bus Operations, Kevin O'Connor and Joyce Gallagher, were forced out. (***Star-Ledger***)

NJ Transit issued new timetables on March 2. On the Raritan Line, five new through trains during the midday off-peak periods will operate to and from New York Penn Station, fully utilizing the dual-power capabilities of the ALP-45-DP locomotives. The through train numbers are: 5126, 5132, 5134, 5170, and 5176 (eastbound) and 5121, 5123, 5125, 5175, and 5179 (westbound) designated with a "NY" notation. (***Randy Glucksman***, March 1)

NJ Transit reported its worst on-time performance for the month of February, 2014 with just 87.4% of trains arriving within six minutes of scheduled arrival time. Weather was not the only reason for the delays. Other factors included aging infrastructure, such as the century-old Portal Bridge, and capacity constraints in the twin-tube Hudson River Tunnels as well as power and signal issues and unrelated events such as a massive gasoline tanker fire that damaged power and signal cables near Newark on March 13. (***Star-Ledger***, March 14)

PORT AUTHORITY TRANS-HUDSON CORPORATION

PATH has closed the Exchange Place-World Trade Center segment of its system on weekends starting February 12 to begin installing PTC and to make permanent repairs to the tunnels damaged by Hurricane Sandy in October, 2012. These weekend outages are expected to take more than one year; the work will then shift to the 33rd Street Line. Newark trains will operate only as far as east as Journal Square and require passengers to transfer to 33rd Street via Hoboken trains to reach Manhattan. (***Times Herald-Record***, February 12)

The World Trade Center station's Platform A, the first of four platforms at the permanent replacement station, was placed in service on February 25. The primary motif of the platforms as well as the mezzanine is white marble, and the station features new lighting and speakers, stairways, and glass enclosed elevators, and Italian-designed mosaic artwork. However, the use of white marble for the flooring of both mezzanine and platforms may turn out to be a poor choice, both from an aesthetic maintainability standpoint as well as a safety issue, given that marble flooring is notoriously slippery when wet. (***WCBS-880 AM***, February 25)

NORTH AMERICAN COMMUTER RAIL

WEATHER EVENTS

The snowstorm on Thursday, February 13 forced VRE and MARC to cancel all services. Amtrak's Northeast Corridor operated on a modified "snow" schedule. The Baltimore MTA LRT experienced 30-minute delays and Washington Metrorail maintained close to normal operations. On Friday, February 14, VRE operated on its "Schedule S." The March 3 snowstorm resulted in the same service cancellations and modifications for VRE and MARC while Amtrak operated a modified schedule on the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C. and New York City as well as on the *Keystone Corridor* while operating all scheduled services north of New York City. Normal services were restored on Tuesday, March 4 on all lines. (***Al Holtz Transit Blog***)

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The Yawkey station expansion opens March 10. Three inbound trains and four outbound trains have been added to the weekday schedule on the Worcester-Framingham Line. The last outbound train of the day will now leave South Station at 11:10 PM, a move that transportation officials hope will encourage ridership. The rebuilt Yawkey station, located next to Fenway Park, has two 700-foot-long platforms that meet all ADA requirements, an open mezzanine, and a new main station lobby. (***Boston Globe***, March 10)

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) awarded Keolis North America a $2.6 billion, eight-year contract to manage, operate, and maintain the commuter rail service replacing longtime operator Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad (MBCR) on July 1, 2014. However, MBCR has taken legal action to block this deal, claiming Keolis received unfair help from MBTA. It is seeking a nullification or re-bidding of the contract, an uphill battle at best. MBTA is the fifth-largest rail system in the U.S. It serves about 127,000 passengers daily with 13 lines, 671 track miles, 134 stations, and 500 daily trains. (***Boston Globe***)

Funding of $5 million has been included in the bill to re-start the design assessment process on the proposed North Station-South Station Rail Link. During the design and construction of the Central Artery/Tunnel project, provisions were made to allow space for a rail connection linking South and North Stations. There is additional incentive to revive this idea and bring it to

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fruition, as Boston is hoping to be the host city for either the 2024 Summer or 2026 Winter Olympics.

Videos of the MBCR Test Train with the new MPI HSP-46 engine 2001 and unaccepted Rotem cars running on the Lowell Line can be seen at: http://bit.ly/1gvtsGR by "Signal Hill Productions" and an additional video of the new locomotive rolling by the Ayer station can be seen at http://bit.ly/1m9cy4E, courtesy of DpL films. (Todd Glickman

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

New Mexico's *RailRunner* will open its newest station at Montaño Transit Center on April 7, serving the North Valley and Montaño/Montgomery river-crossing corridor. (***New Mexico RailRunner Express March 2014 Newsletter***)

DENVER, COLORADO

The Denver Regional Transportation District was to celebrate the groundbreaking for the 18.5-mile North Metro Rail Line Thursday, March 6. This line will use EMU equipment on the route, which will run from Denver Union Station through Commerce City, Thornton, and Northglenn to Highway 7 in North Adams County. This line will have eight stations. (***Trains***, March 5)

FLORIDA

The first phase of SunRail, a 31-mile route running from DeBary, through downtown Orlando, to south Orange County, will begin operation May 1. If SunRail receives another $236 million from the federal government, it can extend the route an additional 29 miles, 17.5 miles south to Poinciana and 12 miles north to DeLand. Nearby Interstate 4 is expected to undergo $2 billion worth of work starting in late 2014 or early 2015 and the work is expected to last five to six years. Beginning April 15-18 and 21-25, the public will be able to take sample rides on otherwise empty SunRail trains as they complete their training and shakedown runs prior to the anticipated May 1 opening date. Initially, trains will operate every half-hour during rush hours and every two hours midday and evenings. SunRail is designed to provide motorists with an alternative means of transportation on the I-4 corridor. TriRail was created 25 years ago as a transportation alternative for long-term heavy repair work on adjacent I-95 between Miami and West Palm Beach. (***Orlando Sentinel***, March 5 and ***SunRail***)

The new station at Winter Park, Florida opened on March 3. It currently serves the Amtrak *Silver Service* trains and, starting in May, will be a stop for SunRail commuter trains. (***Trains***)

Jack Stephens has been named Executive Director of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA), succeeding Joseph Giulietti, who became president of MTA Metro-North Railroad. Stephens steps up from his role as SFRTA's Deputy Executive Director, which he has held since May, 2003. Last month he was named Interim Executive Director. (***Railway Age***, March 5)

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WMATA's seven "Metro 2025" capital improvement initiatives include 8-car trains systemwide, adding 35% capacity to the network, along with signal, power, shops, and infrastructure improvements to support such growth in fleet; 15 designated "key" stations receiving enhancements to accommodate ridership that has either reached or exceeded original design limits; and new Blue Line connections to eliminate the bottleneck at Rosslyn where the Blue, Yellow, and Silver Lines converge. A possible solution may be the construction of a second Rosslyn station. Rounding out this list are the construction of "pocket" and "turnback" tracks to increase flexibility on the mainly two-track system, improved communications systems, and improvements to the bus system. (***PlanitMetro.com***)

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Funding for an eight-mile branch coming off the South Shore Railroad mainline at Hammond and running south to Dyer has been approved by the Indiana House and will go onward to a House-Senate Conference in Indianapolis. Operated by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), this $571 million line is expected to carry 4,510 passengers aboard seven daily trains to and from Chicago. Plans for NICTD lines to Valparaiso and Lowell have been shelved until this line is built. (***Al Holtz***)

TEXAS

The proposed TEX Rail commuter line from downtown Fort Worth to Grapevine and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport has been awarded a $50 million start-up grant by the Federal Transit Administration. However, the line is expected to cost a total of $810 million and supporters still hoping for a service start date of 2017. (***Al Holtz***)

CALIFORNIA

Ridership on Caltrain commuter trains between San Jose and San Francisco set a new high in 2013. Average weekday ridership reached 48,630, surpassing the 47,060 seen in 2012. Ridership has steadily increased since the 2004 introduction of the "Baby Bullet" limited-stop service between main stations on its line. Caltrain has 29 regular stops; one football only stop, Stanford Stadium; and two weekend-only stops, Broadway and Atherton. The service is operated with 29 locomotives and 118 passenger cars. (***Al Holtz***, March 12)

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

Canadian National has sold, for C$97 million, the entire 21-mile, 12-station Deux Montagnes Line, including the 3.2-mile Mount Royal Tunnel, to Agence Métropolitaine de Transports (AMT). Rail Journal notes this will enable AMT to add capacity and reduce congestion. (***Trains***, March 3)

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2013 Transit Ridership Review

Americans took 10.7 billion trips on transit vehicles, the highest ridership in 57 years and the eighth year in a row that more than 10 billion trips were taken on public transportation systems nationwide. While vehicle miles traveled on roads (VMT) went up 0.3%, public transportation use in 2013 increased by 1.1%. 2013 ridership breakdown: Heavy rail (subways and elevated trains) ridership increased by 2.8% across the country as 8 out of 15 transit systems reported increases. Heavy rail in Miami saw an increase of 10.6%. Other heavy rail systems with increases in ridership for 2013 were in the following cities: Los Angeles (4.8%); New York (4.2%); and Cleveland (2.9%). Commuter rail ridership increased by 2.1% in 2013 as 20 out of 28 transit systems reported increases. Commuter rail in Salt Lake City saw an increase of 103.3% with the opening of a new line to Provo, Utah in December, 2012. Five commuter rail systems saw double-digit increases in 2013: Austin, Texas (37.3%); Harrisburg-Philadelphia (33.9%); Anchorage (30.0%); Lewisville, Texas (23.0%); Stockton, California (19.9%); Minneapolis (12.5%); and Portland, Oregon (10.3%). Light rail (modern streetcars, trolleys, and heritage trolleys) ridership increased 1.6% in 2013 with 17 out of 27 transit systems reporting increases. Systems that showed double-digit increases in 2013 were located in the following cities: New Orleans (28.9%); Denver (14.9%); and San Diego (10.4%). Ridership in the following cities also saw increases in 2013: Seattle (9.8%); Pittsburgh (7.5%); Salt Lake City (6.8%); Los Angeles (6.0%); San Jose (3.6%); and Philadelphia (3.5%). (***APTA***, March 12)

Amtrak

During 2014, Amtrak will proceed with several improvement projects, which include continuing the installation of Positive Train Control (PTC) as well as starting construction of infrastructure upgrades needed to support an increase in top speeds on *Acela* trains from the current 135 mph to 160 mph over a 23-mile segment of the Northeast Corridor between Trenton and New Brunswick, New Jersey. Improvements to enable the higher speeds include upgrades to catenary, power supply, signals, and track. Also planned for 2014 are projects aimed toward the eventual replacement of bottlenecks and century-old structures such as Baltimore's B and P Tunnels, Susquehanna River Bridge in Maryland, New York's Pelham Bay Drawbridge, and the Connecticut River Bridge from Old Saybrook to Old Lyme, Connecticut. Included in the 2014 construction schedule is the provision of a concrete casement under the Hudson Yards development west of New York Penn Station to allow for the planned Gateway Hudson River Tunnel if funding for it is finally secured. Amtrak will continue to improve station accessibility to bring 29 stations up to ADA standards as well as begin the design work to bring another 61 stations across 20 states into compliance. In coordination with state-supported projects, Amtrak will make improvements to tracks and signals on the Northeast Corridor, Keystone Corridor, and Michigan Line between Kalamazoo and Dearborn, Michigan, as well as at Poughkeepsie and Albany, New York, New Haven, Connecticut, and Springfield, Massachusetts. (***Amtrak***)

The New York State Department of Transportation will be working with Amtrak on several projects designed to speed up train traffic by double-tracking a notorious single track section between Albany-Rensselaer and Schenectady. A fourth platform track will be added at Albany-Rensselaer and signal and grade crossing improvements to allow an increase in train speeds and service reliability. Five alternatives will be presented at public hearings to increase speeds from the current limit of 79 mph to as high as 125 mph on the Albany-Buffalo portion of the Empire Corridor. Local rail advocates favor the 110 mph alternative, which has the lowest subsidy requirement at $9 per rider. (***Al Holtz***)

Due to safety concerns from avalanche dangers in Marias Pass, Amtrak passengers were bused between Whitefish and Shelby, Montana. An avalanche did occur, requiring the track to be cleared before BNSF freight operations resumed. Amtrak operated its trains empty through the area. Snow accumulations around Marias Pass were not the only issues to plague Amtrak's trains. Amtrak *Cascades* services, the *Empire Builder*, and *Northline Sounder* commuter trains were suspended due to mudslide risks on Friday, March 7 at Mukilteo, located between Seattle and Everett, Washington. Another mudslide blocked the same BNSF Railway tracks Saturday evening, resulting in the cancellation of Amtrak and Sounder services on Monday, March 10. Amtrak and Sounder provided alternative bus services for the duration of the outage. (***Al Holtz***)

On Tuesday, March 11, Amtrak Train #173, the 11:05 AM from Boston to Washington, D.C. with 250 passengers aboard, stalled out over the Cos Cob drawbridge. Apparently, it had a "cab signal hit" approaching Cos Cob and the locomotive went into penalty brake mode, coming to a stop in the middle of the bridge, which has a designed gap in the catenary, leaving it literally "high and dry" without any source of power for lights, ventilation, or toilet functions for five hours. An electric tow locomotive was ordered, but it, too, encountered mechanical difficulties and, in the end, had to be towed back to Stamford by a Metro-North diesel-powered switcher. Passengers finally reached New York Penn Station atcancele 8:30 PM, nearly six hours late. Those destined for points south of NYC were transferred to another train to complete the journey. (***New York Daily News***, March 12)

VIA Rail Canada corridor services between Toronto

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and Montreal, as well as between Toronto and Ottawa, was suspended for a brief time, cancelling three trains and stopping four trains already enroute at Belleville or Kingston due to a blockade on the tracks by a dozen Idle No More protesters at Marysville, Ontario. The local authorities were able to resolve the issue that triggered the blockade and service was resumed the next day. Idle No More is an ongoing protest movement that began in December, 2012, originating among the aboriginal peoples in Canada comprising the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and their non-aboriginal supporters in Canada, and to a lesser extent, internationally. A reaction to alleged legislative abuses of indigenous treaty rights by the Stephen Harper Conservative federal government, the movement takes particular issue with the recent omnibus bill C-45. (***VIA Rail Canada***, ***Wikipedia***)

NORTHEAST

Buffalo, New York, facing a myriad of transit issues, has found a solution: get out of the real estate business. ***Mass Transit*** Magazine reported on February 28 that the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) approved the sale of Outer Harbor lands to two state agencies, while also unveiling a massive new project to replace Metro Rail's aging escalators. The agency had been looking for years at getting rid of the Outer Harbor properties that it owned, as expenses on those properties were holding the system back. In past years, expansion of the light rail system has come to a standstill due to the region's declining population and economic issues. Ridership on Metro Rail has dropped 25%, in part due to construction work along Main Street and general problems with the system. Before the construction on Main Street, ridership was growing, in part due to new jobs at the downtown Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The report from the ***Buffalo News*** reported that much of the ridership loss is in the free-fare zone, which is strictly in downtown Buffalo and does not extend to the University at Buffalo (SUNY) campus. Getting the network back up to snuff is of importance as 17,500 people are projected to work at Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, not to mention that the University of Buffalo Medical School is also there. Studies have been conducted to determine the feasibility of extending the line 10 miles to Amherst. (***Mass Transit***, February 28)

The New York State Department of Transportation is holding hearings on a proposed plan to bring higher speed (or high-speed) trains to upstate New York. Five plans, which range from doing nothing to a brand new electrified right-of-way between Buffalo and Albany, have been proposed and a draft environmental impact statement released to the public. The Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA) is in favor of a plan that would allow trains to run at up to 110 mph between Buffalo and Albany. Currently, trains are limited to 79 mph between those two cities. The "alternative" plans all include additional frequencies. (***Albany Times Union***, ***NYSDOT***, ***ESPA***)

SEPTA (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority) celebrated its 50th anniversary on February 18. The agency held its first organizational meeting in 1964. The agency was charged at first with the planning, development, and coordination of a regional transportation system for Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties, until it took over the Philadelphia Transit Company (PTC) in 1968. (***SEPTA***)

Vice President Joseph "Amtrak Joe" Biden unveiled the Amtrak Cities Sprinter on February 6, with the first revenue trains running the following day. The Cities Sprinter's ACS-64 locomotive is based on the Eurosprinter and Vectron locomotive platforms, and includes features such as regenerative braking and modern fault monitoring software. ***Global Railway News*** reported that the 70 locomotives on order are being assembled in a solar powered plant in Sacramento, California. (***Global Railway News***)

Some happy news for MARC (Maryland Area Rail Commuter) riders. Weekend ridership is up on MARC Train, which links northern parts of Maryland and West Virginia to Washington, so the 54 new Bombardier MultiLevels that began entering service in late February are arriving just in time. The new MultiLevels are identical to the ones used by NJ Transit (in fact, the order is a result of NJ Transit not taking up an option order) and AMT in Montreal. The new cars will have two-by-two seating and a.c. power outlets and will carry 30 more passengers than the existing cars. Train frequency is also increasing. In December, 2013, MARC began weekend service between Baltimore and Washington, with eight round trips on Saturdays and six on Sundays. MARC carried 18,000 passengers during weekends in December and had a 97% on-time performance. (***Baltimore Sun***)

SOUTHEAST

In North Carolina, FTA approved project development for the Durham-Orange Light Rail Line on February 25. Environmental impact statements are due to be completed by January, 2016. The project development phase is scheduled to take two years, followed by three years of engineering design. Construction is expected to take four to five years. (***Railway Gazette***)

Atlanta unveiled its new streetcars, which began arriving during the week of February 17. Siemens is building four cars for the Atlanta Streetcar that are based on the company's S-70 70% low-floor vehicle. The Atlanta vehicles are similar to the ones used in Salt Lake City, San Diego, and Portland. Two cars arrived in February, with the other pair coming in March. The 2.7-mile line will stretch from Centennial Olympic Park to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historical Site with 12 stops and is ex-

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pected to open later this year.

In a surprise turn, Governor Rick Scott of Florida announced that the state would contribute up to $215 million for a train station at Orlando International Airport (MCO). The station will be served initially by SunRail and, once the line is ready, Florida East Coast Railway's (FEC) All Aboard Florida. Governor Scott set aside $123 million for the project, and according to the ***Orlando Sentinel***, more money will be set aside if the Governor is reelected. Construction on All Aboard Florida should begin this year. (***International Railway Journal***)

MIDWEST

In what could be considered one of the most bizarre transportation policies ever proposed by a state legislature, the Indiana Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee voted 8-4 to advance a transit bill that would prohibit the construction of a light rail system. If passed, the transit bill would require that 25% of operating costs come from fares. Voters would have to approve the bill in a referendum. However, the light rail issue might as well be dismissed as, "bus rapid transit is the better option." Light rail was originally criticized due to the potential costs associated with construction. (***Indianapolis Business Journal***)

Another month, another environmental study: according to the Indiana High Speed Rail Association, ***The Journal Gazette*** (Fort Wayne) and the ***News-Sentinel*** reported on February 12 that the Fort Wayne City Council voted unanimously to pay $200,000 toward an environmental study for a proposed higher speed rail line between Columbus, Ohio, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Chicago. The trip between Fort Wayne and Chicago would take two hours and trains would run at speeds of up to 110 mph. The projected cost of the project would be $1.2 billion.

In Kansas City, Missouri, the Kansas City Streetcar Authority has awarded an $18,000 contract to Willoughby Design, which is based in Kansas City. Willoughby has already done work with the city, having handled the marketing for Kansas City's MAX bus system, including creating the MAX brand name. The two-mile line should be opened in mid-2015. (***Trains***)

Riders of the *Empire Builder* are not the only ones facing frustration with the North Dakota oil boom and the extreme cold of this winter. The Northstar commuter rail line in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area has been plagued with delays and, according to ***Trains*** Magazine, the situation was severe enough that Metro Transit (the operator of the region's transit) handed out apology letters on February 6 because passengers had to take a bus due to a morning train being cancelled. Part of the issue stems from the cold weather that has rocked the North Central states, with some daily temperatures not even reaching 0ºF. In complaints to the agency from riders regarding poor communication, Metro Transit is rolling out an alert system using text messages and email if the agency knows a train will be running late or is over 15 minutes late. BNSF, whose tracks the Northstar runs over, has plans to improve the line with $900 million of a $5 billion investment plan for 2014 going to the Northern Transcon alone. (***Trains***)

Private rail operations in the United States got a boost in February when Iowa Pacific Holdings President Ed Ellis asked Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin for rail service that would begin in May over a stretch of state-owned rail between Tulsa and Oklahoma City. During the month, the Iowa Pacific ran demonstration trains from Tulsa to Oklahoma City, billed as the *Eastern Flyer*. As the ***Bulletin*** went to press, the ***Tulsa World*** reported that the Tulsa City Council approved an amended resolution regarding the sale of the route the *Eastern Flyer* would be on, known as the Sooner Subdivision.

MOUNTAIN STATES

On February 28, Amtrak returned to Denver's Union Station, which has been closed since 2011 as part of a massive reconstruction project that is turning the historic station into a rail and bus hub with connection to the city's light rail system. Construction is still incomplete at the station itself, so passengers will access the waiting room, ticketing, and baggage office by following signs to the track side of the building. By 2016, Denver will also be served by about 36 miles of commuter rail. Train #6, the California Zepher, with P-42-DC 134 and 71 on the point and private car Virginia City at the rear, was the first train to call at the 1894-vintage station, which once served as many as 80 trains a day. (***Denver RTD***; ***NARP***; ***Trains***, March 3)

SOUTHWEST

On February 17, Metrolink's Positive Train Control (PTC) system went into operation along the BNSF track between Los Angeles and Riverside, as reported both by the ***Los Angeles Times*** and ***Railway Track and Structures*** Magazine. It was the Chatsworth accident on September 12, 2008, when a Metrolink train passed a red signal and collided head-on with a Union Pacific train, that led to a call for PTC. The cost of Metrolink's PTC program is $216 million, which includes the construction of a new dispatching center that will support the PTC technology and replace Metrolink's current dispatching center. PTC equipment is being installed on 52 locomotives and 57 cab cars, and lineside equipment at 476 signals.

Also in Los Angeles, ***Railway Age*** reported on February 21 that FTA is awarding LAMTA $670 million for a connector that will link its three light rail lines together. The connector line will cost approximately $1.4 billion, with construction expected to begin later this year, and if all goes well, the project would open in 2020.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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Despite the issues with "Bertha", the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) massive tunnel boring machine that is currently inoperable due to mechanical issues, Sound Transit set annual ridership records in 2013 for boardings on its light rail, commuter trains, and buses. Systemwide, the agency saw nearly 30 million boardings, an 8% increase from 2012. Sound Transit's Board of Directors has found an alignment for the planned expansion of Tacoma Link light rail service, which would continue north from the existing Theater District station to Martin Luther King Way and S. 19th Street. The new alignment still needs to go through an environmental review and the project is dependent on local and federal funding. ***Seattle Transit Blog*** reports that Sound Transit will be running Sounder train service to the Sounders' soccer season opener match on Saturday, March 8 against Sporting Kansas City and again on Saturday, March 15 against Toronto FC. Bus service will also be increased. Sound Transit does not run commuter trains during the weekend, except for during sporting events. (***Ron Yee***; ***Al Holtz***; ***Trains***, March 3)

The Anchorage Daily News reported on February 11 that the Alaska Railroad is evaluating whether to launch weekday passenger rail service between Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, the suburban region of the Anchorage metropolitan area. Two daily roundtrips would be made, with trains not running during the summer months due to the existing cars (which would be used for the service) being used for tourist and cruise ship trains, which might pose a problem. Nearly one-third of the valley's residents travel to Anchorage for work, either driving or taking buses. Discussions on commuter rail in Anchorage have existed for years. (***Anchorage Daily News***, February 11)

A replica of the cars that will be used on Honolulu's upcoming rapid transit system was unveiled on February 13. The 80 rail cars will seat 200 passengers each (most likely ***Trains*** meant seating and standing room), and feature Wi-Fi and room for luggage, wheelchairs, and — this being Hawaii — surfboards. The production cars will be manufactured by Ansaldo Honolulu JV, a joint venture between Ansaldo STS and AnsaldoBreda. The replica will be on exhibit at Kapolei Hale by appointment through the end of April, which can be arranged through an email to the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) at info@honolulutransit.org.

OVERSEAS

In the United Kingdom, Bombardier won a £1 billion contract on February 6 to provide vehicles for London's Crossrail project, which is due to open in 2018, ***BBC*** reported. The railcars will be manufactured at the company's Derby plant, and the project is expected to create up to 760 manufacturing jobs. The Crossrail project should increase London's rail capacity by 10%. Sixty percent of railcars built in the United Kingdom or on order are made by Bombardier.

Also in the United Kingdom, plans have been put on hold indefinitely on a high-speed rail project to link London to Frankfurt by Deutsche Bahn (DB). The Siemens class 407 Velaro-D trains have not received necessary international approvals, although DB itself has the approval. Modifications to the trains must be made before they will be allowed to pass through the Channel Tunnel, which requires additional safety equipment, including fire protection and under-floor fire extinguishers. In the interim, Eurostar is launching London-Amsterdam service using its new class 374 Velaro-UK trains, which will begin in December, 2016. (***International Railway Journal***)

Voters in Switzerland approved the so-called Faif project to invest $7.1 billion in maintaining and upgrading the national rail network. Around 60% of the fund will be used for infrastructure maintenance and 40% to increase capacity. Switzerland is expected to see passenger trips increase by 60% by 2030. (***International Railway Journal***)

Ukrainian Railways (Ukrzaliznytsia) suspended operations of its Hyundai-Rotem intercity high-speed rail trainsets on February 13 due to technical problems. Hyundai-Rotem has already done quite a bit of work on the trains, including the replacement of all pantographs and reinforcement of roofs. Locomotive-hauled coaches have been introduced on lines served by the HR-CS-2s, which operate at the same maximum line speed of 100 mph. Refunds are being offered to passengers if Ukrzaliznytsia cancels reservations or substitutes traditional equipment. (***International Railway Journal***)

The first higher-speed trainsets built by CSR Sifang's Qingdao plant for Iraqi Republic Railways were rolled out on February 17. The new trains will be used on the Baghdad-Basra route. They will seat 343 people and are equipped with climate control and on-board entertainment, something Amtrak's *Acela* lacks. The design also takes into consideration Iraqi desert conditions in their overall construction, and the trainsets will be equipped with data and fault diagnostic systems. (***Railway Gazette***)

New York area commuter news items may be emailed to nycommuter@erausa.org. News items about systems outside the New York area can be emailed to transit-news@erausa.org.

Around New York's Transit System

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including seven stops on G and R. Ninety kiosks will be provided by Control Group and 55 by CBS Outdoor. (***TransitWire.com***, February 14)

On the opposite end of the spectrum of customer information services, a group called Efficient Passenger Project (EPP) has been placing its own signage at specific parts of subway stations identifying the optimum locations where customers should situate themselves for the fastest transfers to other lines or exit to the street, making the trip as time-efficient as possible. However, as this effort is not sanctioned by NYCT, these signs are being removed almost as quickly as they are put up. NYCT currently maintains the position that the installation of these signs constitutes criminal vandalism, forcing the founder of EPP to remain anonymous. As these signs use the standard MTA fonts, there may be copyright issues involved as well. Hopefully, cooler minds will prevail and both parties can come to an agreement on how best to serve the riding public. As of this writing, EPP has confined its efforts to the L Canarsie Line. (***AM New York***, February 12)

Transit Wireless is currently in the beginning of phase two of its project with MTA to bring cellphone connectivity and Wi-Fi to 11 more subway stations in midtown Manhattan, including Grand Central, 34th Street-Herald Square, and 42nd Street-Bryant Park. Once this work is completed, Transit Wireless will extend coverage to every station in Queens. Phase two should be completed by June, 2014, and by 2017 all 277 subway stations will be wired. In addition to the convenience this will provide for riders, wireless capability is expected to bring a new level of security with the ability for people to call 911 in an emergency. (***BusinessWire.com***, February 21; ***TechTimes***, February 22)

Much of the subway work planned for the final weekend of February, including the scheduled weekend outage of 7 between Times Square and Queensboro Plaza, was cancelled in anticipation of a huge snowstorm. Some service changes remained in effect, including on L, which operated only between Myrtle-Wyckoff Avenues and Rockaway Parkway, as well as the scheduled weekend work on 6, F, M, N, Q, and R. NYCT made the decision on Friday afternoon to postpone an extensive schedule of weekend work on most of its subway lines to prepare for the forecasted snowstorm. As it turned out, weather forecasting still being an inexact science, the storm missed New York City. (***NY-1***, February 28)

The Montague Street Tunnel overhaul project is proceeding on schedule, and the tunnel is expected to reopen in October. (***Brooklyn Daily Eagle***, March 14)

"Building New York" Program

On February 25, member Alexander Ivanoff attended the "Building New York" program at St. Francis' College in Brooklyn hosted by the New York Transit Museum with Dr. Michael Horodniceanu. The event focused on two of the MTA's current projects: the 7 Hudson Yards extension and the Fulton Center complex.

The first project to be discussed by Dr. Horodniceanu was the 7 extension, part of the "rush for gold," as the Hudson Yards Redevelopment Project on the West Side is being called. Originally planned for a 2012 Summer Olympics in New York, which did not happen, the subway extension will provide easy access to Hudson Yards, without which the redevelopment project would not be viable. Unfortunately, there will be only one new station on the line, the terminus at 34th Street-11th Avenue across from the Javits Center. Dr. Horodniceanu mentioned how the station will be air-conditioned, nearly 100 feet underground, feature two high-rise elevators, and have an open station design (think cathedral ceilings). One of the challenges in constructing the tunnel included soft soil conditions. The extension will be a little late to open, now scheduled for sometime this fall.

Next, Dr. Horodniceanu talked about Fulton Center. The project is in part a response to the rapid population growth currently occurring in lower Manhattan, along with tourism associated with the World Trade Center Memorial. In discussing the renovations, Dr. Horodniceanu noted that some of the passageways (especially the mezzanines for the A and C trains) could be best described as an "experiment with rats." As part of the project, the historic Corbin Building received a top-to-bottom renovation. A unique aspect of the center is the Arts for Transit project, which features 900-plus reflective aluminum plates to allow natural light to reach the platforms. Interactive information kiosks will feature transit advisories (plus some ads). Another great addition, and one that I was unaware of, will be a transfer between E and R trains. At a cost of over $1 billion, the project, funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and counted as the largest stimulus project in the country, will open this summer.

Afterwards, Dr. Horodniceanu was interviewed by Michael Grynbaum, the City Hall correspondent for ***The New York Times***. The ever-rising multi-billion dollar price tag for MTA's construction projects is the main issue he has to address. Dr. Horodniceanu noted that some union work rules, and dirt and noise complaints from residents in the affected areas, have contributed to higher costs. Issues within MTA have not helped either, with some of the bids on the East Side Access project coming in much steeper than originally envisioned.

Dr. Horodniceanu recalled getting complaints from some 5- and 6-year olds over construction of the Second Avenue Subway. To quiet them (and get them interested in the SAS), he showed the kids how concrete was made and let them mix their own.

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TRACTION TOUR TO SOUTHERN EUROPE
by Jack May
(Photographs by the author)

Beginning with this issue, the **Bulletin** *will carry highlights of Jack May's spectacular and varied April, 2013 traction tour to southern Europe, including Portugal, Spain, and Italy, partly by train and partly by cruise ship* Eurodam*. Jack is a longtime ERA member and is a former Board member and Editor of* **Headlights***. This series will continue over the next few months. Kudos to Jack for his wonderful trip notes!*

Our arrival at the gate in Lisbon was almost exactly on time after an uneventful flight on TAP from Newark. Entering Portugal was perfunctory, and after using an ATM to obtain euros, I found my way to the Airport station of Lisbon's Metro, which was just a hop, skip, and a jump away from the terminal building's main entrance, and thus extremely convenient for air passengers. It took me a little while to buy a day ticket, as no agent was on duty and many of the machines were out of order. The Metro station is lovely and escalators make it very easy to get to the next subway train departure.

The Aeroporto station is the current outer terminal of the Red Line, which is presently being extended westward to meet the Yellow Line (http://bit.ly/1iQGbY2). The stations on the four-line system are well-lit and very attractive, built with aesthetics in mind. Very little of the network is above ground; on previous trips to Lisbon I took photos at the Campo Grande station, which is one of the few that is not in subway. On this trip I would use the Metro only for necessary transportation.

When I arrived at the Green Line platform I noticed that the Metro is well-equipped with countdown clocks that indicate when the next few trains are coming. The data appears to be based on real-time information rather than being programmed from schedules. All in all, I was quite impressed with the modern facilities and fast rapid transit trains.

Lisbon currently has five 900 mm-gauge streetcar routes, which is down from about 30 when I visited Portugal's capital for the first of many times in 1968 (http://bit.ly/1eGgTEE). The operator of the urban transit system, known as the Carris since its origins in the 19th Century, is now principally a bus company, and has been trying to abandon most of the city's tram network for many years. It has succeeded to a great degree, but it seems the City tries to keep as much of the system operating as it can. One line, the 24, is "temporarily" operated with buses. It is reasonable to say that the remaining routes are split into two categories: the hill lines (Lisbon is incredibly hilly in its older urban section) and the flat (or coastal) lines. The latter now consists only of Route 15, which runs parallel to the Taugus (Tejo) River and is served by modern low-floor articulated LRVs. The remaining four lines, Routes 12, 18, 25, and 28, use single-truck American-style Brill-type cars dating from the 1930s. The bodies are traditional, but the traction equipment inside is totally modern. These cars, called remodelados, climb steep grades without any effort and they are remarkably silent. In fact, I missed a number of photos on my last two trips because I did not hear cars coming! All these trams are single ended.

The four "hill" lines are further divided into the 12/28 and the 18/25. The first two serve the Alfalma district in the eastern section of the city, a major tourist draw for its narrow streets, authentically quaint buildings, historic attractions, and bar-restaurant scene. To a certain extent one can compare the ambiance of this area to the old Greenwich Village in Manhattan. All of the remodelados have both poles and pantographs, and fortunately these two lines call for operation using the historically-accurate poles. It is quite possible that the use of pantographs on the steep curving track along the narrow streets could result in the overhead being pulled down. Cars on the 18/25 operate using their pans. Further, the Carris antagonism to trams has resulted in the 18 cars no longer operating on Saturday afternoons and all day Sundays, while the 25 runs only Monday to Friday. The cars used for this service are Brill-type 4-wheelers that have been painted red and have extra-comfortable seating, and are equipped with public address systems. Quite a few of the Brill-types have been converted to that use, and according to some local railfans, there now is a shortage of "hill" cars for regular service, especially since a number of the units were sold to other properties (Sintra and Soller) during the past few years. There are 45 of these single-truck cars on the roster, numbered from 541 to 585, and all were built by Carris in its Santa Amaro shops in the 1930s.

We decided to ride the 18 first, as the museum would not open until 10:00 and the line runs near to its entrance; and further, it would not be operating in the afternoon. We left the hotel a little before 9. First order of business was to buy a day ticket for Phil, which was easily obtainable from machines at the nearby Baixa-Chiado Metro station (I had already gotten mine at the airport). These are electronic tap tickets that release turnstiles in subway stations and create a tone in the streetcars that notifies the Operators that the fare has been paid. (I should also mention that while the weather forecast was for a perfect sunny day, we experienced a San Francisco-like fog in the morning, which did not

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Around New York's Transit System

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Alexander left the event with several questions, all about how we can bring down the cost of construction projects in the New York metro area. Denver, on the other hand, has lower construction costs, probably because much of the area where it is working (for the FasTracks project) is undeveloped.

Traction Tour to Southern Europe

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clear up until we were inside the tramway museum.) All of the tram lines were a short walk from our hotel, so it was easy to get to a stop for the 18. It turned out that the Operator spoke English and was a traction fan! Thus he placed the car in a perfect position for photography while he laid over at the end of the line and then picked us up between stops for our return trip. The line has some steep grades, but the headways and weather were not encouraging for walking along the route; but then, I already had many photos from previous trips.

We ended up with an excellent day of riding and photographing, covering the 18, 15, 12, and 28, as well as the museum. We visited the museum after returning from a round trip on the 18 and then rode the 15, but I am going to leave a description of that part of our day to succeeding portions of this report, which will accompany corresponding photos of those activities (a taste of what is to come is at the bottom of this page).

Last things first, so I will start out with routes 12 and 28, two of the world's most interesting and thrilling lines for American traction enthusiasts. We spent a great deal of time on the eastern section of the 28 (after having finished with Route 15) and then completed our day covering the western end, which is not as spectacular in comparison, but would be well able to stand on its own if the eastern portion through the Alfalma did not exist. We first rode the 12 directly up the steep hill to Sao Tome in the center of the district. This was once a short single-track bi-directional line with a couple of passing sidings, but now is through-routed over the 28 creating a clockwise loop.

After cresting its incredible grade, we were able to photograph the 28 from above, despite being just a few feet from the junction of the routes! We then walked part of the 28, had a quick snack, and finally rode it in segments, getting off here and there for photos, until dusk. I should mention that on my first visit to Lisbon the eastern section of the 28 was supplemented by two circular lines, the 10 and 11, which were collectively called the Graca loop. In 1968 service through the picturesque neighborhood was extremely frequent.

We alit from our Route 18 car at the line's junction with Route 15 and walked to the museum, which is located on the property of the Santa Amaro shops and carhouse. It is operated by the Carris, with the aid of funds raised from other sources, including public contributions. The exhibits are housed in two distinct buildings, somewhat apart from each other. A single-truck red-car shuttles back and forth between the two structures, adding to the pleasure of the public's visit.

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Lightweight cars 329, 777, and 506 at the museum.

Just on the other side of the single track and around a corner, near the Rua Escolas Gerais stop.

Around New York's Transit System

Dyckman Street Station Rehabilitation Completed

The rehabilitation of the 108-year-old Dyckman Street 1 station was completed with the dedication of an energy-efficient elevator bringing the station into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The station now features new concrete platforms, platform windscreens, canopies that were rehabilitated using wooden rafters salvaged from the original, and a refurbished fare control area with ADA-compliant ramp. The entire facility has been redecorated with historic finishes such as mosaic signage and replica handrails and lampposts. With the completion of this project, 80 of NYCT's 468 stations are fully accessible to riders with disabilities. (***Progressive Railroading***, ***NY-1***, ***Metro***, ***New York Daily News***, February 7)

During the past month, NYCT installed 18 "On the Go" touchscreen travel kiosks in the Grand Central subway station. The kiosks at Grand Central feature an interactive map that shows the best route to one's chosen destination, as well a listing of real-time subway train arrival estimates or scheduled departure times of Metro-North Railroad trains from Grand Central Terminal. Two companies are contracted by NYCT to provide the informational kiosks, Control Group and CBS Outdoor. By late February, more kiosks were expected to go live at Times Square and Penn Station. By the end of May, it is expected that a total of 145 kiosks will be in service,

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PASSING THE BATON
by BOB NEWHOUSER, ERA PRESIDENT

Note: The following message originally appeared in the March, 2014 meeting notice.

Greetings, ERA members!

Due to his busy schedule, Randy Glucksman will be stepping down as our longtime ***Bulletin*** News Editor with publication of the March, 2014 issue. Randy joined the ERA in April, 1965 and has been contributing columns to ***The Bulletin*** since 1981, 33 years ago! Randy served as Commuter News Editor beginning in 1988 and as News Editor since 1996, covering both commuter and urban rail transit news. In addition to working as a transit consultant in his other life, Randy was appointed to the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council, elected chair in early 2013, and in June, 2013 became Chair of the MTA's Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee (PCAC). He will continue to contribute articles occasionally as his busy schedule permits.

Randy's shoes have been so large to fill that his role will be taken on by two dedicated and talented ERA members beginning with the April, 2014 ***Bulletin***:

Ronald Yee, Tri-State and Commuter News Editor: Ron will cover tri-state transit news and commuter rail news around North America. Ron retired from Metro-North in March, 2013, having worked there 30 years. He started as a supervisor of passenger counting, rising through the operations planning department to becoming Manager at the Crew Management Center, and then becoming the On-board Services Officer managing 800 Conductors. Ron has a Masters in transportation planning and engineering from Polytechnic University. His longtime MTA commuter rail experience and travels to traction venues around the world make him well-suited for his new ERA role. Ron can be reached at nycommuter@erausa.org.

Alexander "Sasha" Ivanoff, North American & World News Editor: Sasha will cover current traction news around North America (outside of the tri-state region) and the world. Sasha is a 2012 graduate of the State University of New York at Potsdam, with Bachelor's degree in history and communications. He is a lifelong transit enthusiast. Sasha grew up near the Harlem Line in Brewster with fond childhood memories of taking Saturday trips to the city. He maintains his own blog, The Ivanov Report. We are impressed with his knowledge of transit current events outside the tri-state region. Sasha can be reached at transitnews@erausa.org or northeastern292@gmail.com.

Randy's high-quality work was greatly assisted by many outside contributors. As we cheer on our new editors Ron and Sasha, we encourage those who have contributed to Randy's column to keep those news articles and other contributions coming in! We have provided Ron and Sasha's email addresses above.

CORRECTION

In the Subdivision "B" car assignment published in last month's issue, the assignments for the two S shuttles were reversed. The R-68s are on the Franklin Avenue Shuttle and the R-46s are on the Rockaway Shuttle.