The Bulletin

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The Bulletin

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SHORT PLATFORMS EXTENDED FOR LONG TRAINS
by Bernard Linder

At the turn of the 20th century, New York's elevated trains were so overcrowded that it was obvious the city desperately needed more rapid transit. While designing the new subway, the planners were not sure that people would like to ride underground.

The original plans specified 200-foot platforms for 5-car 51-foot locals and expresses south of 96th Street, but the 1902 plans showed 350-foot platforms for 8-car expresses on stations south of 96th Street. Because the cars had no middle doors and the end doors were closed, the front and rear cars extended beyond the platform.

Meanwhile, riding increased rapidly because the subway was popular and New York's population was also increasing rapidly. Rush hour service, which was operating closer than a 2-minute headway, could not be increased. Therefore the IRT Company decided to order additional cars and lengthen platforms. In 1910, platforms at and south of 96th Street were lengthened to 480-500 feet for 10-car expresses and 210-220 feet for 6-car locals. We do not know when most of the platforms north of 96th Street were extended. The first 10-car train was in service on January 23, 1911, and there were all 10-car rush hour trains on May 24, 1911. Contract 3 platforms were probably built to accommodate ten-car trains.

In the Spring of 1934, your Editor-in-Chief made his own survey of platform lengths, which revealed that southbound expresses opened their doors on only the six north cars at stations from 238th Street-Broadway to 103rd Street (except the 191st Street full-length platforms) and from 177th Street to Jackson Avenue. At 174th Street and probably other busy stations, a Conductor stood on the southbound platform in the morning rush and opened the center door of the fourth car. The platforms south of 177th Street were extended in September, 1934, but the Broadway platforms were not lengthened.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Lexington Avenue Locals were composed of 6-car trains on weekdays and Saturday (except midnights) and 5-car trains on Sunday. Broadway Locals and Lenox Avenue Locals were 6-car trains in the rush hour and 5 cars at other times. At 210-foot platforms, five 51-foot cars with their ends extending beyond the platform could open all the doors. Six-car trains, which extended beyond the platform, were operated with end cars equipped with hand-operated doors. At the short Contract 1 stations, both Conductors kept the center doors closed and opened only the end doors. When the local platforms were lengthened in 1910, the company used narrow spaces at the ends of the platforms formerly reserved for manholes.

Signal plans, which were revised in the 1940s, showed short Contract 1 local platforms and upper Broadway southbound express platforms. Nearly all other platforms could accommodate old 10-car trains.

End doors on cars built after 1938 were located behind the Motorman's cab. When all doors were open on 10-car trains, they may have extended beyond the 480-foot platforms. In 1938, the World's Fair cars were placed in service, train lengths were shortened from 10 to 8 cars, platforms were not extended, and more frequent service was operated.

We do not know when the platforms were

(Continued on page 20)

FROM RECOGNITION TO DOMINANCE: THE NEW YORK CONNECTING RAILROAD (BRIDGING THE BAY AND CONNECTING THE PIECES)
by George Chiasson
(Continued from January, 2017 issue)

Over on the Manhattan Beach Division, the year 1908 saw the completion of six new street bridges on Section 1 (16th Avenue and 59th Street, 17th Avenue, E. 14th Street, Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn Avenue, and Avenue H and Albany Avenue) and four railway overpasses on Section 2 (Avenue G (Glenwood Road), Utica Avenue, Remsen Avenue, and E. 94th Street). By late in the summer, after the final tasks associated with completion of the Brighton Line's elevation had been completed, work to expand it in support of partial relocation of the LIRR Manhattan Beach Branch was begun. This part of the job was undertaken on behalf of the railroad company and the Brooklyn Grade Crossing Commission, which were acting as co-sponsors in a similar manner to their joint administration of the Bay Ridge Improvements. By June of 1909 the result was near full completion of a two-track embankment appended to the easterly side of the new Brighton Line elevation that included 18 steel bridges on concrete abutments largely shared with BRT, some for streets that were still being originated as the new street grid emerged:

Avenue J	Avenue N	Avenue R	Avenue V
Avenue K	Avenue O	Avenue S	Neck Road
Avenue L	Avenue P	Avenue T	Avenue Y
Chestnut Avenue	Kings Highway	Avenue U	Avenue Z
Avenue M			Sheepshead Bay Road

Four new low-platform stations were also included on the new embankment, at locations that matched those of the original New York & Manhattan Beach (grade-level) alignment that lay one to three blocks eastward:

Greenfield (Avenue M)
Kings Highway
Neck Road
Sheepshead Bay

Once again by the time Manhattan Beach Branch operations had been "swung over" to their new alignment during that summer season, the Long Island Rail Road had been obliged to cut its seasonal passenger service even more than the previous year as traffic continued to decline, so in an effort to expedite the completion of this now-drastically-overbuilt improvement only a single track was laid for its entire distance (with no passing sidings), which proved to be highly adequate for the eight daily trains to and from Long Island City that were scheduled (compared to the 24 of times past for which the new embankment was designed). Nevertheless, LIRR was also forced to retain its original right-of-way in an operational state for Sheepshead Bay Racetrack Specials through that September and for the next year. The new embankment ramped back to ground level in time for the line to cross Voorhies Avenue at grade, and then resumed its former course to the line's beachfront terminus. Redevelopment was beginning to effect large-scale change at that end of the line, too, with the original LIRR terminal at the Oriental Hotel being forsaken after the 1908 season, giving way to an off-season electric trolley shuttle for the last increment. This abbreviation of service was soon formalized by the establishment of concrete platforms, bumping blocks, and a new Manhattan Beach terminal building at West End & Oriental Avenues (opened on June 19, 1909), but even so it was clear that Austin Corbin's former showcase resort was gradually slipping toward extinction. The same number of daily trains (eight) were offered for the 1910 summer season on the Manhattan Beach Branch, with the second track being completed and operational over the length of the route, as per contract, by early June. Sheepshead Bay Race Track would run no more after the summer racing season concluded that September, and soon thereafter BRT's side terminal, along with the original New York & Manhattan Beach alignment, were abandoned outright. As late as the mid-1990s some concrete abutments associated with the Brighton Line's 1908 elevation to the sporting venue could be found along the wayside on E. 16th Street between Avenues X and Y. In June, 2011 the Metropolitan Transportation Authority found itself entangled in a public relations brouhaha when it was discovered that someone had sued the agency for governance rights over a curious, "forgotten" plot of land between E. 17th and E. 18th Streets, from Avenue U to Avenue V. This parcel was apparently overlooked when Corbin's original survey had been sold off in 1924, and then, lo and behold, the agency was caught short after some intrepid local research exposed the very existence of the New York & Manhattan Beach Railroad! The issue was finally resolved through a court ruling in favor of some longtime residents, who had by then been "squatting" on an otherwise unknown, dormant railroad right-of-way for 52 years.

As the Bay Ridge Improvements reached their boiling point, major work proceeded on three sections of the venture at once and the majority of its associated projects reached a beneficial state of completion. Eight new street bridges were opened along Section 1 during 1909 (Fort Hamilton Avenue, 11th Avenue, 13th Avenue,

(Continued on page 3)

From Recognition to Dominance

(Continued from page 2)

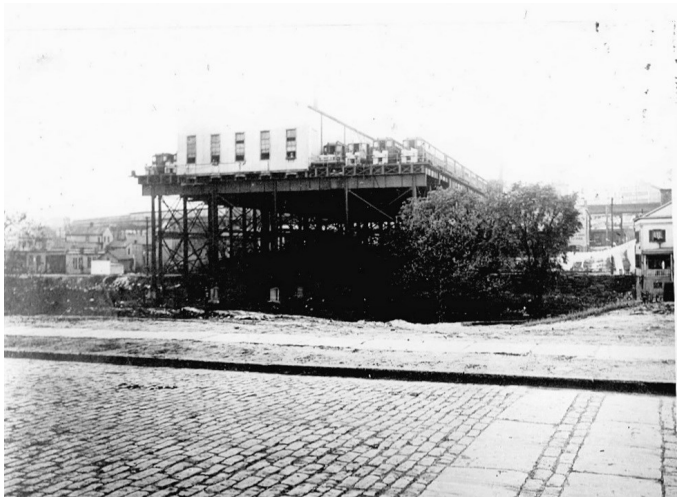
14th Avenue, 15th Avenue and 61st Street, 60th Street, Coney Island Avenue, and Ocean Avenue, the last including a newly-depressed, replacement station at Manhattan Beach Junction), along with two more in 1910 at 7th Avenue and at E. 18th Street. On the elevation in Section 2, the year 1909 saw the completion of a new railway overpass at E. 92nd Street as a replacement for the latter-day Canarsie Road crossing, with a new platform appropriately situated to serve as the (third) Rugby station. Another pair of substantial overpasses were opened as part of ongoing street reconfiguration at Ralph Avenue-Avenue D and Kings Highway in 1910, with the latter also marking the advent of the new station at Kouwenhoven, which was desperately hanging on to its original, non-descript (Dutch) name in a time steeped in modernism and change. Finally, the construction contract for "Section 3" of the Bay Ridge Improvements, which consisted of widening and depressing approximately one mile of existing grade level right-of-way from New Lots Road to East New York Avenue, was awarded in May of 1909 and work begun immediately. Per description, this encompassed portions of the latter-day East Flatbush, Flatlands, Canarsie, Remsen Village, Brownsville, and East New York neighborhoods of Brooklyn (including the former town of New Lots), while the project scope in this section included the addition of five new street bridges (railway underpasses) and two pedestrian bridges.

It is of interest to note that an extensive amount of regrading and some elevation work of another sort had already taken place in much of this section long before the Bay Ridge Improvements were started. In March of 1906, four months after the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company assumed control of the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach (Canarsie) Railroad, a pact was reached between it and the Long Island Rail Road (with the Brooklyn Grade Crossing Commission as partner) to divide the responsibilities of expediting the upgrading and creation of streets through what would become Section 3, as well as grade-separating them from all intersecting railway traffic. The immediate upshot was replacement of the Canarsie Line's ground-level single track (as had existed since 1867) with a two-track fill and steel elevated from New Lots Road to Eastern Parkway (Pitkin Avenue). This structure would ascribe to the minimum standard of vertical clearance of 12 feet required to meet municipal thoroughfare guidelines across an uncertain landscape (and thereby avoid the later cost of individual bridges—it was actually lifted to a median height of 14 feet), and also enable an easy tie-in with the existing Fulton Street elevated east of that point to ensure the extension of rapid transit service from Canarsie straight onto BRT's extensive system of public conveyance. Thanks to its relatively simple engineering and a ready supply of steel (legend has it that the Canarsie Line's steel structure, which still survives in 2017 as part of MTA New York City Transit's L train, was salvaged from the "Old Main Line" that BRT had removed in 1904), the entire raising was accomplished in just four months, including third rail to supply power all the way to the Rockaway Parkway station and the framing for side station platforms with modest canopies at New Lots Road and Sutter Avenue along with their attendant means of access. When Canarsie rapid transit service was initiated using the new structure on July 30, 1906 neither of the two stations were opened right away as they awaited approvals from the Public Service Commission, which meant that trains ran non-stop between the Eastern Parkway and E. 105th Street stations for several months. Another set of side platforms was also built as provision for an additional stop at Livonia Avenue, but unlike the other two its related street had yet to materialize in any meaningful form and completion of the station house and connecting stairways were deferred to a later date. At that time all three grade crossings of the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach (Canarsie) Railroad were eliminated (New Lots Road, Sutter Avenue, and Eastern Parkway), but each one's adjacent grade-level encounter with the double-track LIRR Manhattan Beach Division remained as they had been since 1877. As their issues were ultimately resolved, construction work on the first two BRT elevated stations, at Sutter Avenue and New Lots Road (now New Lots Avenue), was gradually completed. After an initial mention in the ***Brooklyn Daily Eagle*** on August 19, 1906, their opening was ultimately delayed until January 14, 1907, almost six months after the new service had commenced. The third BRT stop at Livonia Avenue almost became part of the LIRR project in its own right as its fate was tied to the progress of Section 3 and the related establishment of Brooklyn's street grid. That eventuality also required Public Service Commission approval when "grade" issues in the area were addressed.

Construction along the length of Section 3 commenced almost immediately by June of 1909 with another raw excavation, as had earlier been performed next to the existing Brighton Line trackage, undertaken along the westerly flank of the Manhattan Beach alignment from Liberty Avenue to a point south of Sutter Avenue (at the intersecting survey of incomplete Dumont Avenue). When this task was completed, Manhattan Beach Division tracks were relocated into the partial cut, excavation of the easterly half undertaken and bridge work proceeded. In 1910 the four-track cut and associated street bridges replaced existing grade crossings at Sutter Avenue, Eastern Parkway (later re-designated Pitkin Avenue), and Liberty Avenue. Blake Avenue was also placed upon a bridge across the cut as part of a completely new through street, while a 300-foot, pedestrian-only overpass was installed across the cut to connect either side of Belmont Avenue. A street overpass was completed at Glenmore Avenue as part of new construction there by September, while the rest of Section 3 followed suit by the next year when another pedestrian bridge, with an attached stairway into the unopened BRT station, was built overhead of the existing grade to

(Continued on page 6)

CONTRACT 1 SCENES



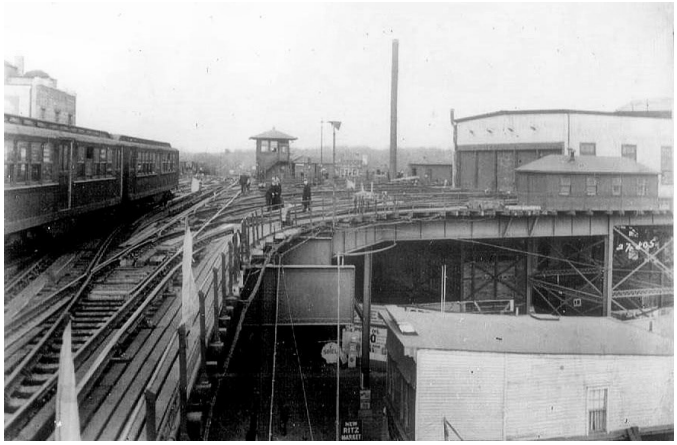
E. 177th Street and Devoe Avenue, May 21, 1914, original inspection shop at 177th Street station.
Bernard Linder collection

Original escalator, 177th Street station, December 2, 1956.
Bernard Linder photograph

Abandoned inspection shed and yards at 177th Street station, December 20, 1924.
Bernard Linder collection

Original inspection shop at 177th Street station, March 8, 1942.
Bernard Linder photograph

177th Street station, White Plains Road Line, looking north,November 6, 1916. The original tower is in the foreground. The new tower is under construction in the background.
Bernard Linder collection



Looking north from 177th Street station, White Plains Road Line.
Bernard Linder collection

(Continued on page 5)

Contract 1 Scenes

(Continued from page 4)

Looking south from 180th Street, Bronx Park station, July 20, 1951.
Bernard Linder photograph

E. 180th Street and Boston Road, July 30, 1952.
Bernard Linder photograph

177th Street station, White Plains Road Line, looking north, July 20, 1951.
Bernard Linder photograph

180th Street, Bronx Park station, east pocket, looking north, July 30, 1952.
Bernard Linder photograph

180th Street, Bronx Park station, west pocket, looking north, July 30, 1952.
Bernard Linder photograph

E. 181st Street and Boston Road, July 30, 1952.
Bernard Linder photograph

From Recognition to Dominance

(Continued from page 3)

join separate portions of Livonia Avenue. This unusual conglomeration was constructed per an agreement between BRT and the Long Island Rail Road dated January 27, 1911 that made way (at last) for the station to open after five years in abeyance, it being placed in service on May 15. The baseline cut from East New York to Dumont Avenues was depressed below the former Manhattan Beach grade by some 21 feet while the overpass at Livonia Avenue was set at a similar height above. This had (and still maintains) the interesting effect of NYC Transit's elevated line slightly overlapping (and thereby noticeably overhanging) the easterly edge of the LIRR line along the length of the open cut.

As the overall Manhattan Beach Division crossing elimination project entered its latter stages, emphasis again returned to the Bay Ridge end of the line on Section 1, with several factors requiring an even greater enlargement of the original 1876 cut (as revised in 1895) that originated at 65th Street Ferry. One was the long-delayed city approval of the New York Connecting Railroad's final routing in 1909, in response to which the Pennsylvania Railroad (through its LIRR affiliate) assumed the laborious undertaking of greatly expanding Bay Ridge Yard and its nearby rights-of-way to accommodate the voluminous traffic levels that were anticipated. This expectation manifested itself during 1911 with replacement of the original (wooden) New York & Sea Beach trestle over the Bay Ridge Branch, located between 7th and 8th Avenues, with a concrete overpass as part of an overall widening that stretched as far as 7th Avenue. The same impetus also produced a three-block-long concrete and steel street viaduct at 1st Avenue, along with enlargement of the 17-year-old 2nd Avenue bridge in 1912.Other pre-existing overpasses along the Bay Ridge cut that dated from the 1895-era improvements which also had to be expanded were located at 4th Avenue in 1914; 5th Avenue in (March) 1915; and finally at 3rd Avenue in 1917, which drew all work on Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the Bay Ridge Improvements to a close. Another factor was occurrence of BRT's "Dual Contracts" rapid transit expansion, with the Sea Beach Line first to be upgraded for through service to Manhattan using modern equipment, as agreed in March of 1913. To expedite the entire rapid transit line's depression into an open cut, trolleys from 63rd Street Ferry began providing all service on the Sea Beach Line in place of "motor" (rapid transit) trains out of both 63rd Street Ferry and as connected off the West End Line at Bath Junction on October 28 of the same year. This mode was proven to be more easily adaptable to a quickly-changing operational environment and its reconstruction was thus easily able to be coordinated with the ongoing Bay Ridge Improvements between 4th Avenue, where it would emerge from its new subway connection, and the BRT station at 8th Avenue. As things turned out the two slightly revised railway alignments crossed directly under the four new subway tracks near 7th Avenue and superseded the two-year old replacement overpass as a result. On December 1, 1913 excavation in the vicinity reached such a crescendo that for the first known instance in the U.S., early motor buses were substituted for all trolleys as far as 14th Avenue (Bath Junction), where patrons could either connect with West End rapid transit trains or return to the newly-truncated Sea Beach trolleys. This remained the situation until that first BRT subway line was complete enough to commence revenue service on June 22, 1915.

For the balance of the Bay Ridge Improvements, Section 4 was designed as an underground tunnel beneath the maze of tightly-woven streets through East New York and initially deferred, while Section 5 consisted of widening and elevating just a ½-mile of right-of-way through Bushwick to the Queens boundary, containing but one railway overpass at Central Avenue. This was a 10½-foot-high steel girder span that was completed during 1912 and turned out to be the last grade crossing replacement implemented under the original undertaking that had begun in 1905. From that point forward most of the remaining construction included bridges for several new streets being added to the grid: an overpass at 50th Street in Mapleton and pedestrian bridge at E. 15th Street in Flatbush that were added in 1913; street bridges in Bay Ridge at 8th Avenue in 1914 (which included BRT trolley tracks) and at 6th Avenue in 1915; and the last a span at Bedford Avenue, Flatbush, in 1916 where that broad thoroughfare was being overlaid on what had been E. 25th Street. An original, contentious underpass that was situated beneath tony Ocean Parkway in 1877 (and was the site of the famous LIRR "Parkville" wreck of June, 1893 that led to the prohibition of gauntlet track) also had to be widened substantially to provide for a full double-track right-of-way and was not completed until 1913.

A POST-PENN STATION PUSH:THE NEW HAVEN'S ELECTRIFICATION AND THE ENIGMATIC NEW YORK, WESTCHESTER & BOSTON

With all construction and franchise aspects of the New York Connecting Railroad sanctioned at last by 1909, the Pennsylvania, Long Island, and New Haven Railroads set to work creating the cohesive, semi-standardized railroading environment that would be necessary to make the undertaking an operational success, much as the Pennsy and LIRR had coalesced on behalf of Pennsylvania Station. As such there emerged a conglomeration of facilities and methods that represented certain components of each but created an entirely new whole, all to be set to its own timetable of implementation. Whereas there was already corporate control of the Long Island Rail Road by the Pennsylvania, this captivity had long since been evident in their uniformity of operational practices, which in turn facilitated an efficient collaboration of resources. For its part the Pennsylvania conceded early on that the New Haven would have to be the standard-bearer for long-range railroad operations on the eastern side of New

(Continued on page 7)

From Recognition to Dominance

(Continued from page 6)

York Bay, given that most of the traffic so routed (freight and passenger) would be distributed through its extensive system, which dominated southern New England and made the best connections with roads venturing even farther north. At that time, the Pennsylvania was in the latter stages of applying its first attempt at urban railroad electrification in the New York Terminal zone using d.c. third rail technology, a manner that was economical for the company and proven to the time for that particular purpose. In addition, however, the Pennsy was also still in an uncertain state from a corporate standpoint as to how the electrification concept could be expanded to encompass its larger main line operations, so was truly in no position to impose a technological alternative in its own right. So it was that the New Haven was left to make independent judgment on how best to flesh out the easternmost end of this shared, jointly-controlled venture given its long body of practical experience, a direction which made the entire enterprise captive to that company's operational philosophy, whatever form it might take. While a prolonged period of preparation would surely have given both railroads additional opportunity to take advantage of the continuous developments emerging in the science of railway electrification, time was of the essence with regard to the New York Connecting Railroad, with Pennsylvania Station almost ready to commence operations and as such a definitive course of action needed to be taken and soon to expedite associated construction of the venture. This left the New Haven little choice but to update and stand fast with the a.c. system of electrification it was already using, extend its reach onto the new railroad, and, for commercial and standardization purposes, begin the overall process of implementing it.

There was also impetus for the New Haven to establish a greater standard of operations from another, rather obscure quarter. For many years prior to this time, prospective railroad and transit "paper" interests abounded in the territories between New York City and southern New England, though few were actually brought to reality. One such scheme (among many) was a company called the New York, Westchester & Boston Railroad, which secured a New York State charter in 1872 to build a system of lines around Westchester County, centered on a mainline from the Harlem River to Port Chester that in part greatly resembled that of the New Haven's Harlem River Branch. It was soon buffeted about by the power plays of wealthy financiers and economic tides, then finally disappeared from the collective business consciousness. In 1906 it was revived from triviality at the hand of J.P. Morgan, who evidently saw its initial charter as a springboard to further enhance the New Haven's pre-eminent position in the regional transportation scheme of southern New England and Greater New York, though it had long since achieved such dominance, if not a downright monopoly in some cases. Morgan's wishes were prosecuted through his associate Charles S. Mellen (1852-1927), a highly-touted railroader and man of great business acumen originally from Concord, New Hampshire, whose job after 1903 was to manage, maintain and expand the New Haven's "brand recognition" in a market that was markedly devoid of competition. With all of their political and economic might primed for construction by late 1909, Mellen formed yet another management team to specifically concentrate on materialization of NYW&B, which in turn heavily relied upon the knowledge and resources in addition to the largesse of Morgan and the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad. At that point it was obvious what course of design, formation and operation the new suburban railroad would follow.

The New Haven had long since grown into one of the stalwart operations serving Manhattan's Grand Central Terminal by the 1890s as well as one of the seminal railways in the entire country; a monster of a presence whose mainstay route was the 228 hyperactive railroad miles between New York and Boston, along with numerous metropolitan areas throughout much of New England. Nevertheless, there remained a lingering cloud of municipal dissatisfaction if not disdain over the situation at Grand Central in the decades after it was established, a sentiment that was moved into the political arena as the city grew past the railroad's neo-primal state and was exaggerated through several corporate missteps and calamities. Following a serious collision in the steam-enshrouded Park Avenue Tunnel that resulted in several passenger fatalities on January 8, 1902, all railroad lines using the terminal were forced by a 1903 edict of the New York State Legislature to electrify their operations, a collective action to be effective on July 1, 1908. Though the railroad companies were for some time uncertain how best to proceed in terms of technology and financing, the New York Central ultimately chose to implement a d.c. system similar in function to that of the city's subway and the Long Island Rail Road (chiefly thanks to limited overhead clearances in the Park Avenue Tunnel), but employed an unusual "Wilgus-Sprague" type of under-running third rail for enhanced wayside safety. *(Continued next issue)*

NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR UPDATE

Subdivision "A" News

A single "assigned" train of R-62s continued to be seen on 1 through early 2017 (cars 1406-10 and 1431-4, plus 1438), being joined by unit 1456-60 as of September 23, 2016. It was complemented by one or two other, random consists on loan from 3 during rush hours through at least mid-December, 2016. The group of fifteen (15) R-62s then continued to be seen in several variations on an almost daily basis into the middle of January, 2017. While in short-term, "captive" supplementary service on 1, certain Livonia-assigned R-62 consists wound up being exported to the Westchester facility of 6 for ongoing inspections, with 1581-5 and 1596-1600 being observed there over the October 8-9 weekend. In at least one known instance, one of these "visitors" was actually appropriated for revenue service, as exemplified by 1326-30 and 1466-70 spending their entire day on Friday, November 4 roaming around on 6. This was the first known instance of a Kawasaki-built R-62 consist operating in regular (non-diversionary) service on 6 since their 1984 introduction.

In another first, the entire 7 was operated with 37 "R-188" trains on Friday, September 30, 2016 and *no* R-62As at all.

Subdivision "B" News

No sooner had our previous Update been released than word arrived that "open-end" R-46s 6206/7 were on the road to reactivation. Sure enough they turned up in A service on September 22, 2016, which fully restored the active R-46 fleet to its current maximum of 752 cars, or the equivalent of 940 60-footers (thus forming the planned basis for NYCT's future R-211 order).

An October 7, 2016 electric power problem brought L service to its knees, a situation counteracted that afternoon by the supplementary assignment of 4 "full-length" (8- or 10-car) trains on G, employing four different kinds of equipment: R-46s 5664-5-3-2/5486-5-7-8; R-160s 9117-6-5-4-3/9107-6-5-4-3; R-68As 5088-7-5-6/5024-5-3-2; and R-68s 2826-7-5-4/2840-1-3-2. There were also three "extra" trains deployed on M at that time, utilizing R-143 equipment and their attendant "PM" crews as diverted from the errant L.

As partially revealed in previous issues, to provide the ten additional trains necessary for the restoration of W on November 7, 2016, a variety of separate car transfers occurred over the preceding November 5-6 weekend: R-68s 2768-75 were moved from Concourse (D) to Coney Island (BG, sometimes N and W); R-46s 5822-45 went from Pitkin (A) to Jamaica (FR); and R-160s 9183-9222 were sent from Jamaica (EF, sometimes R) to Coney Island (NQW). Finally, to provide for the introduction of an R-32 consist on A in the morning rush and the addition of a second such train in the PM (this on top of the existing R-32 train taken from C that has been serving Lefferts Boulevard and the R-68/68A consist borrowed off B), Phase I R-32s 3414-5, 3436-7, 3660-1, 3726-7 and 3864-5 were permanently shifted from East New York to 207th Street, which commensurately changed their official allocation to 102 on J/Z and 120 on C, with a couple of trains used on A weekdays. Further complicating things to a slight degree is the temporary removal of R-32s 3872-3 and 3878-9 from C for some time (going back to 2014-5). Both have issues serious enough to require long-term repair (though by all indication they *will be* repaired). This detail reduces the overall fleet of active Phase I R-32s to 218, with 102 at East New York and 116 at 207th Street.

Virtually all car assignment exceptions have continued unabated from mid-August, 2016 into mid-January, 2017, most notably including the use of R-46s on F, R-68As on G, R-143s on J, R-160s on R, and R-68/68A's on N, each of which varies in quantity and regularity from day to day. Following the restoration of W, and the temporary truncation of Q to 57th Street on November 7, 2016, one or two daily trains of R-68s and/or R-68As began to regularly appear on both, harking back to equipment usage patterns that were so common prior to the service cuts of June, 2010. Since the initiation of Q to 96th Street/2nd Avenue on January 1, R-160s have been carrying all known service for its first two-plus weeks of existence. There remains one technical glitch, however, as software problems prevent the Automated Announcement Systems from being employed on the R-160s, so Conductors must provide old-fashioned, manual narration on all trips north of 57th Street. Another side effect of the fleet swaps that occurred on November 5-6 was the near-daily use of one Coney Island-based consist on F in the morning rush hours, nominally as an AM put-in that enters service at Kings Highway. Most times this has been a standard Coney Island-assigned R-160 train, which readily blends in with the legions used otherwise out of Jamaica, but on the morning of December 8 it turned out to be R-68As 5110-9-11-12/5094-3-5-6. This was the first confirmed instance of an R-68A being used on F since their arrival in 1988-9, and the first observation of this car type on F overall since early February of 1988. On New Year's Day, 2017, a completely different train of R-68As (5146-5-7-8/5180-79-7-8) was spied as it wandered in D service by old friend Bill Zucker. Another was also in use that day, composed of 5054-3-5-6/5044-3-1-2.

Starting on or about September 19, 2016, Coney Island R-160s 9057-6-5-4-3/8938-9-40-1-2 were directed to be kept together as a dedicated set on N and Q, as all 10 cars were equipped with a pilot USB charging installation for the convenience of customer electronic devices. The unsuccessful test lasted approximately two months, being succeeded in late November by the

(Continued on page 17)

Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 339

by Ronald Yee, James Giovan, and Alexander Ivanoff

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

The day after the successful opening of the Second Avenue Subway to the public, MTA Chairman Thomas Prendergast announced his retirement effective sometime this coming spring, capping off a successful 25-year career that started at New York City Transit (NYCT), included the presidency of the Long Island Rail Road, and ended as Chairman of MTA (since June, 2013). In addition to getting the Second Avenue Subway opened within the schedule laid down by Governor Cuomo, one of his other more notable accomplishments was at NYCT, where he was hailed as the key person responsible for the amazingly quick recovery of the subway system from Hurricane Sandy in 2012. He had planned to retire after three years as Chairman but stayed on a few more months to oversee the completion of phase one of the Second Avenue Subway. Potential successors include NYCT President Veronique Hakim, New York State Commissioner of Transportation Matt Driscoll, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, and former U.S. Transportation Secretary John Porcari. (***New York Daly News***, January 2, 2017)

MTA Long Island Rail Road

LIRR Train #2817, the 7:18 AM out of Far Rockaway with a consist of six M-7s, crashed into the bumping block at the end of Track 6 at Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn at around 8:15 AM on Wednesday, January 4, 2017, injuring 103 of its approximately 430 passengers and crew. Subsequent examination of the data on the train's "Black Box" event recorder revealed that the train entered the terminal track at over 10 mph, twice the speed limit, and that the throttle settings were erratic, causing the train's speed to vary but remain over the limit until impact with the bumping block at over 10 mph. The train's Engineer, a 15-year veteran, is being investigated for sleep apnea as a contributory factor as he stated that he did not remember anything after entering the terminal track. He was on the next-to-last trip of his overnight shift and had just returned from being off for 3 days due to the New Year's holiday weekend. NY1 TV news video showed the lead car with its first three car number digits visible; the number was 7558 or 7553. (NBC, NY1, ***Newsday***, January 4, 2017)

LIRR officials confirmed that federally recommended steps to improve safety as trains enter stub-end track terminals were in the process of being implemented on that same morning but were not yet in place to prevent this wreck. Like MTA Metro-North Railroad and New Jersey Transit, LIRR now requires the Conductor to be in the operating cab with the Engineer as the train approaches stub-ended tracks. *(Editor's Note by Ron Yee: at Metro-North, a member of the train crew who is certified as being qualified on the book of rules and physical characteristics of that section of the railroad must be in the operating cab with the Engineer between the south end of the Park Avenue Tunnel and Grand Central Terminal, in both directions, calling out the signal aspects and monitoring the train's movement as the cab signaling and automatic speed control systems are not capable to affecting a train's movement below 15 mph. It is uncertain if PTC will insure that an equipped train will stop short of the bumping block.)* (WABC-TV News, January 19, 2017)

Miscellaneous

Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus announced that it would cease operations nationwide. Dwindling attendance numbers, exacerbated by the retirement of all elephant acts last year, forced the 146-year-old circus to bring down the curtain for the final time this year. Its famed circus trains will make their last runs across the nation this winter and spring. The Blue trainset will be in the New York City area for circus performances at Brooklyn's Barclays Center February 23 to March 3 (train lays over in New Jersey) and Long Island's Nassau Coliseum from May 12-21 (train lays over in two sections, one at Mitchell Field Secondary and the other at Long Island City) where the circus will have its last-ever performance. The train is scheduled to leave New York afterward for its final return to its Florida base of operations. (Fox News, Al Holtz, January 15, 2017)

Amtrak

After four years of working with the Northeast states, federal and state partner agencies and dozens and dozens of public meetings, the Federal Railroad Administration on December 16, 2016 recommended a vision to build a better and stronger Northeast Corridor over the next 30 years. In 2012, at the urging of Congress, all Northeast states and the Federal Railroad Administration began working together to develop a vision for the corridor to deal with capacity constraints and slow speed zones and bring the corridor up to a state of good repair.

The recommendation announced by FRA would increase reliability and provide more options by:

- Increasing the Northeast Corridor to four tracks in most locations, which would allow for more frequent and faster service. Additional tracks would be added to areas with greater demand
- Providing intercity access to Philadelphia Airport so that passengers do not have to change trains at 30th Street
- Adding direct and frequent service to Hartford, Connecticut and Springfield, Massachusetts
- Increasing, and in some cases doubling, the number of regional trains and providing up to five times more intercity trains

The recommendation would improve travel times:

- Travel from Boston to New York City would be 45 minutes faster (total time of 2 hours 45 minutes)
- Travel from New York City to Washington, D.C.

(Continued on page 10)

Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 9)

would be 35 minutes faster (total time of 2 hours 10 minutes)

While the recommendation made on December 16 would grow the role of rail along the Northeast Corridor, it prioritizes bringing the current corridor back to good condition, or a state of good repair, first.

With the corridor returned to good condition, the recommendation includes projects that will allow for even faster and more reliable service, along with more options for customers. The recommendation is also projected to create 47,000 jobs each year for 30 years.

It will now be up to states, cities, and railroads to take next steps and decide whether to move forward with any of FRA's recommendations. (Federal Railway Administration press release, December 16, 2016)

Amtrak recently opened a new, modern passenger station in Niagara Falls, New York. It occupies portions of a former customs house and now shares space with a U.S. Customs and Immigration Inspection Office and an Underground Railroad Historical Interpretive Museum.

The station serves passengers on the east- and westbound Toronto to New York City *Maple Leaf* and the Niagara Falls to New York City *Empire Service*. *Maple Leaf* Train #64 was the first to call at the new station on December 6, 2016.

Meanwhile, plans for a new Schenectady Amtrak station are poised to move forward after Governor Andrew Cuomo proposed infusing the project with additional state funding during his State of the State address on January 11, 2017 in Albany, investing a total of $15 million in capital funds to replace the existing Erie Boulevard station. The exact amount in new funding was not immediately clear, but the announcement places a renewed focus on the long-stagnant project, and officials said it will help get the rebuild back on track.

The Schenectady station is expected to see an increase in traffic with the Rivers Casino and Resort opening in February. Previously, the state Department of Transportation budgeted roughly $15 million for the overhaul, though some of that came from federal funds.

Last March, officials with the state Department of Transportation put the project out for bid, but only received one response. That number came in about $10 million over budget. The project has been stalled since. The existing depot, which was built in the late 1970s to replace the old Union Station, handled about 61,000 passengers in 2013, according to Amtrak.

In addition to the complete station overhaul, a second rail line is being installed between Schenectady and the Albany-Rensselaer stop. Work on the second track is ongoing, and is expected to be finished this spring. (***Schenectady Daily Gazette***, January 11, 2017; (***Trains*** Magazine via Al Holtz, December 12, 2016)

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Despite the program having come under criticism in the past, Governor Cuomo unveiled on January 9 a $500 million next phase of his Buffalo Billion economic development program, promising hundreds of millions of dollars for projects intended to spur development in downtown Buffalo, on the East Side, in Lackawanna and Niagara Falls.

Cuomo's most far-reaching proposal may be the state's embrace — for the first time — of extending the Metro Rail north to the University at Buffalo campus in Amherst and south to the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad Terminal near the KeyBank Center in downtown Buffalo. As the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) looks to recommend a specific plan to federal authorities early in the new year, Cuomo's advocacy for the project could eventually provide crucial local financing to a project requiring Washington's approval. Cuomo outlined the proposals in Amherst during his annual State of the State address, presented this year in six locations around New York rather than the traditional address from Albany. Cuomo's transportation initiatives were warmly received by the crowd, especially with expanding Uber and Lyft to upstate — where they have never been approved by the Legislature — would end Buffalo's distinction as the nation's largest city without ride-sharing services, almost suggesting that the Legislature should not adjourn without approving ride-sharing upstate.

But Cuomo's most far-reaching proposal may be extending NFTA's Metro Rail system beyond the current 6.4-mile line completed in 1985. One piece would be to extend Metro Rail into the former DL&W terminal that serves as home base for the system's light rail vehicles. NFTA's proposal would redevelop the trainshed for mixed use.

No specific plan or route has yet been recommended by NFTA planners, though specifics are expected soon. But the Governor's reference to a system serving Amherst commuters appears to center on a rail alternative (as opposed to enhanced bus service), with additional studies to determine environmental ramifications and costs.

Metro Rail, long criticized as a "train to nowhere" was profiled by the website Buffalo Rising in 2009, noting that this train to nowhere is far from that, carrying 26,000 riders a day and only being held back due to its un-expanded line, the only light rail line in the United States that has the distinction of never having had an extension to its network. With the Governor on board, that expansion is looking more likely.

How all those projects would be funded with $500 million is uncertain. The Governor said he will also propose a $2 billion fund for clean drinking water infrastructure improvements. How the program will be funded, such as perhaps through a voter-approved statewide referendum, remains uncertain.

Meanwhile, in what might fuel further transit usage in Buffalo, the city has, for the first time since 1953, overhauled its zoning codes and has become the first major city in the country to completely remove outdated mini-

(Continued on page 11)

Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 10)

mum parking requirements, according to an article from CityLab. *(Editor's note from Sasha Ivanoff: ERA First Vice-President John Pappas and I have had conversations on numerous occasions about the poor state of planning in the Buffalo metropolitan area. It seems that a combination of local and state factors might change the city's way of doing business with developers and make for a much more sustainable city. With climate change becoming a significant factor, Buffalo, with an elevation of 600 feet above sea level, is fairly well protected. Furthermore, I can see further downtown development coming at the cost of convenient downtown parking, as those lots could be torn up for development.)* (***Buffalo News***, January 9, 2017; Buffalo Rising website**,** June 9, 2009; CityLab**,** January 9)

Washington, D.C. area

Two cars of an eight-car Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority train separated while in rush-hour service on December 12, 2016, local media reported. No one was injured. The separation happened at the Twinbrook station as the train was headed outbound to Shady Grove, Maryland. There were fewer than 40 passengers on the train. These passengers were able to get off at Twinbrook. Metro said the train stopped automatically after the break-apart. Both sections were moved under their own power to a rail yard for inspection.

The train was made up of 7000-series cars, the newest in Metro's fleet. Cause of the separation is under investigation. A train of 3000-series cars separated on the Green Line in January. (***Trains*** Magazine via Al Holtz, December 12, 2016)

Charlotte, North Carolina

The Charlotte Area Transit System is planning on spending $1.5 million to study how it should expand its network to serve the west side of the city and its airport, the ***Charlotte Observer*** reports.

A decade ago, the transit agency proposed building a streetcar line along Wilkinson Boulevard, one of the city's main roads. However, that plan never went beyond being a proposal.

The study will determine where exactly the route should go, how it should access the airport, and how could it best serve the new River District development west of Interstate 485. (***Trains*** Magazine via Al Holtz, December 13, 2016)

Chicago, Illinois

The Chicago Transit Authority has received a $1.07 billion grant to provide major modernizations for its Red and Purple Lines. The large sum awarded by the Federal Transit Administration will help to reconstruct a section of transit lines on Chicago's north side. The funds will also improve infrastructure and increase capacity on the agency's oldest sections. A large portion of the work will involve track improvements north of the Belmont station to relieve a bottleneck at a junction between the Red, Purple, and Brown Lines. The funds will also help to renovate some CTA train stations. It is expected that design and engineering work will begin later in 2017 while construction for improvements will begin in 2018. (***Trains*** Magazine, January 11, 2017)

Long-stalled efforts to clean up Metra's fleet of dirty locomotives could get a big boost next year, as Illinois is slated to collect nearly $98 million for anti-pollution efforts from a federal legal settlement from Volkswagen, reported the ***Chicago Tribune***. The agreement stipulates the money from the German automaker — which installed secret software in nearly a half-million diesel vehicles to make them appear cleaner than they actually were — must be used to reduce lung- and heart-damaging nitrogen oxides emitted by diesel trains, buses, ferries, and equipment, the report said.

So far there has been no public discussion of how Governor Bruce Rauner's administration should spend the VW windfall, though a top aide said Metra, which relies on locomotives built in the 1970s, and other potential recipients already are clamoring behind the scenes to secure a share, according to the Chicago Tribune. (***Metro*** Magazine, December 27, 2016)

Fort Worth, Texas

The TEX Rail commuter line that will link downtown Fort Worth with the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport will receive $499 million in federal funding, officials announced on December 15, 2016. The Federal Transit Administration announced the grant agreement with the Fort Worth Transportation Authority. The grant will cover roughly half the cost of the $1.03 billion project, which is scheduled for completion by the end of 2018. The 26.8-mile commuter rail line will serve downtown Fort Worth, the City of Grapevine, and the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. The project also will provide connections to other transportation services in the area, including the Dallas Area Rapid Transit light rail system, Amtrak, Trinity Railway Express, and a local bus system. The service will use diesel multiple units built by Swiss company Stadler at a new plant in Salt Lake City, Utah. Officials estimate that 44 daily trains will carry about 9,000 people when the line opens, growing to 13,700 by 2035. (***Trains*** Magazine via Al Holtz, December 16, 2016)

Houston, Texas

Houston has completed a rail line extension. On January 11, 2017, Houston Metro celebrated the completion and opening of the Metro Green Line light rail project to its originally planned destination, Magnolia Park Transit Center. The Green Line now has nine stations, an addition of two. The length has increased from 2.0 miles to 3.3 miles. The line opened on May 23, 2015 from downtown to the Altic/Howard Hughes station, just short of a crossing of the BNSF Railroad. Most of the extension beyond that point was built, but couldn't be opened until a controversial bridge over the tracks could be completed. (John Pappas)

California

Caltrain riders can soon expect a new way to pay for their rail tickets. The agency is beginning to develop a new mobile ticketing app for use throughout its commut-

(Continued on page 12)

Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 11)

er rail system. A contract worth more than $600,000 has been awarded by Board members to provide funds to a mobile tech company to design and implement the new fare technology. The app is expected to be ready by summer 2017 and will be compatible with both iOS and Android devices. (Caltrain press release, January 10, 2017)

San Francisco, California

On January 13, 2017, Muni's first train from its fleet of the future was to arrive. It is the first of 24 light rail vehicles to arrive through the end of 2018. The next 40 vehicles will arrive on a rolling basis through 2020. The ultimate purchase of 260 light rail vehicles may be one of the largest purchases of light rail vehicles in North America in modern history, and will increase Muni's light rail vehicle fleet by 50 percent.

But once they are put in service, the San Francisco riding public will get a glimpse at Muni's future. The trains, built by Siemens, will come equipped with bells and whistles that today's N/Judah, L/Taraval, J/Church, K/Ingleside, M/Oceanview, and T/Third do not enjoy.

In August, 2016, the ***San Francisco Examiner*** took a tour of one of the new train cars on the factory floor in Sacramento. As the ***Examiner*** reported, the seats are still fiberglass, but the individual seats, lined in a row, have been replaced by benches. Bright red, the surface has a slight texture, which was added for "grip," according to Siemens' designers.

The box of sand has moved, too. Well-known to riders of the N/Judah train, the sand is dropped to create friction while the train brakes. Now, instead of sitting underneath the seats, the sand box is hidden beneath a panel containing buttons to release seats for wheelchair access.

And perhaps the brightest new feature is LED signage within the streetcar, so riders always know what train they are on.

All told, said John Haley, SFMTA's Director of Transit, there are more than 50 discrete design improvements throughout the trains, the result of months of public surveys. (***San Francisco Examiner***, January 3, 2017)

Los Angeles, California

A federal grant and loan totaling nearly $1.5 billion to help build the second phase of the Metro Purple Line Extension to downtown Beverly Hills and Century City was announced by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro).

Metro received a construction grant agreement for $1.187 billion through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grant program and a $307 million loan through the U.S. Department of Transportation's TIFIA program to total $1.494 billion. The project will also receive $169 million in federal funding through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program.

Coupled with Metro's $747 million local match made possible by 2008's Measure R sales tax, $2.4 billion is now secured to continue construction of one of Los Angeles County's most critically needed public transit projects — a subway primarily under Wilshire Boulevard that will finally connect downtown Los Angeles and Westwood with service en route to the Miracle Mile, Beverly Hills, and Century City.

Metro is now in the process of selecting a contractor to build the subway extension's second section. The agency planned to recommend a contractor to the Metro Board in January.

Metro is already building the first section of subway between the current subway terminus at Wilshire/Western and Wilshire/La Cienega with three new stations. The second section will add another 2.6 miles to the project and build two new stations at Wilshire/Rodeo in downtown Beverly Hills and Century City.

Pre-construction activities for the second section are already underway. Major construction is planned to begin in 2018. Completion of the second subway section is anticipated no later than 2026 per the FTA Full Funding Grant Agreement and Metro is aiming to possibly finish the project at an earlier date. A third and final section will extend the subway to the Westwood/VA Hospital. Construction on this last section is planned to begin as early as 2019.

Construction of the Purple Line Extension Section 2 will support over 20,500 jobs in Southern California during its construction, according to the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation.

The Purple Line Extension to the Westwood/VA Hospital station will garner about 49,300 daily weekday boardings at the seven new stations. There will be about 78,000 new daily trips on the full Metro Rail System as a result of opening this line.

A total of $3.1 billion in federal New Starts funding has now been secured for recent high priority Metro transportation projects. (***Metro*** Magazine, January 5, 2017) >

Montreal, Quebec and Toronto, Ontario, Canada

New equipment for Canada's two largest transit systems are continuing to be problematic. As Toronto continues to wait for Bombardier to deliver the remainder of the very delayed new streetcars, a staff report says the few already on the road are having problems much sooner than they should.

The report found that the streetcars are failing six times quicker than anticipated. The target distance between failures was set at 35,000 kilometers. The report shows the cars are failing after only 5,696 kilometers.

A TTC spokesperson quoted by ***CityNews*** downplayed the report, saying it was the normal part of a new fleet of vehicles.

According to TTC, all 30 cars have had at least one minor issue. Some of the streetcar failures include issues with the doors, seating issues, and electrical problems. The issues are tracked to determine if it is just one car or a consistent flaw that needs to be brought up to Bombardier.

According to TTC, the door issues are the most com-

(Continued on page 13)

Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 12)

mon found on the new streetcars. The matter has been forwarded to Bombardier.

And in Montreal, Societe de Transport de Montreal (STM) officials are trying to find out why their new cars are taking damage in normal service. One week after announcing more frequent Metro service, STM held a news conference on January 16 to announce that all 12 of the new Alstom/Bombardier-built Azur Metro trains acquired to date have been removed from service as well as another, older trainset. At the news conference, STM General Manager Luc Tremblay said that at a subsequent inspection of the entire line and the rolling stock used on it, all 12 Azur cars, and at least one 1970s-era Bombardier-built MR-73 trainset have sustained running gear damage.

An investigation into the cause is under way. In the interim, all Azur sets are out of service pending repairs, as is the damaged MR-73.

The withdrawal has placed a crimp in the previously announced train frequency increase, as a like number of cars in the system's oldest fleet, the MR-63 series, which date from the system's 1966 start-up, have been retired and or scrapped.

An Alstom representative told a writer for ***Trains*** Magazine that its focus is on a vehicle-track interaction problems and that any parts damaged on the Azur trains will be replaced and upgraded, if necessary, on trains yet to be delivered. (***CityNews***, January 13, 2017; ***Trains*** Magazine via Al Holtz, January 16, 2017)

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

VIA Rail Canada recently prepared for aurora borealis, or northern lights, season aboard its Winnipeg to Churchill, Manitoba, train starting on Jan. 24. Every year, thousands of people take the train to the edge of the Hudson Bay to see the stunning northern lights display, which is at its best between January and March — a dark, clear, and cold time of year. VIA Rail markets the Winnipeg-to-Churchill train as the best way to see this remote community. October and November, 2016 saw record-breaking ridership aboard the train as people traveled north to see the polar bears that frequent the area, according to the Canadian passenger railroad. (***Trains*** Magazine via Al Holtz, December 14, 2016)

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Local elected officials have asked Canadian Pacific to give priority to West Coast Express commuter trains after a spate of delays this fall, the ***Vancouver Sun*** reports.

Slower-moving CP freight trains have caused more than 80 hours of delays to commuters since October 1, 2016, according to the newspaper. The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation wrote to CP Chief Executive Officer E. Hunter Harrison and Canadian Transportation Minister Marc Garneau to negotiate a solution. CP says it is working on solutions to the delays. "We do our best to avoid delays, but the possibility exists that they will happen," Mark Redd, a CP operations Vice President, wrote to transit officials. Copies of the mayors' group letter were available to commuters on board trains. The West Coast Express carries 11,000 riders each weekday. (***Trains*** Magazine via Al Holtz, December 15, 2016)

London, England

The first demonstration rail freight service carrying textiles and other consumer goods from China to England arrived at the London Eurohub terminal in Barking just after 1 PM on January 18, 2017, having left the Yiwu Xi station in eastern China's Zhejiang province on January 1. The inaugural train is expected to be followed by weekly trips for three or four months to assess customer demand.

The 12,000-kilometer route ran via Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, Belgium, and France. The two breaks of gauge between China and Europe's 1,435-millimeter standard gauge and the 1,520-millimeter broad gauge used in the former Soviet Union required transhipment at Dostyk on the China-Kazakhstan border and at Brest on the Belarus-Poland border.

A total of 44 40-foot intermodal containers left Yiwu, of which 10 were destined for Duisburg in Germany. The other 34 were transferred in Duisburg to special DB Cargo container wagons that are approved for use in the Channel Tunnel.

The 18-day journey time was around half the time required for sea transport, and significantly cheaper than air freight. The service would also offer a more cost-effective alternative to air freight for consignments that miss a ship's departure date owing to manufacturing delays but cannot be held back for another vessel.

The service was organized by Yiwu Timex Industrial Investment Company as an extension of the route from China to Duisburg in Germany and Madrid in Spain, which it has offered since 2015. England is the eighth country and London the 15th city to be added to its European network. Yiwu Timex's England agent is One Two Three Logistics, which was supported by Brunel Project Cargo.

Train operations were managed by Switzerland-based InterRail Group on behalf of China Railway Corporation subsidiary China Railway International Multimodal Transport. InterRail subcontracted Kazakh Railways subsidiary KTZ Express to manage the 1,520-millimeter gauge section of the route, DB Cargo hauled the service from Duisburg to Aachen and DB Cargo UK was responsible for the English leg.

The project supports the Chinese government's One Belt, One Road trade connectivity initiative to create a modern-day Silk Road. According to DB around 40,000 containers were transported by rail along the routes between China and Europe in 2016, with journey times of between 12 and 16 days. Annual traffic is expected to increase to 100,000 containers by 2020. (***Railway Gazette***, January 18, 2017)

Edinburgh, Scotland

A ScotRail electric train was left temporarily stranded

(Continued on page 14)

Around New York's Transit System

(Continued from page 18)

Second Avenue Subway Inaugural Ceremony

On December 31, the day before revenue service began, a ceremony was held at the 72nd Street station. Governor Cuomo and MTA Chairman Prendergast presided. Member Randy Glucksman and his wife, who were also invited, were able to meet the dignitaries.

To keep the 72nd Street mezzanine warm, temporary doors and electric heaters were installed. Randy also recalled that he rode the first train on Archer Avenue and on 63rd Street. Doors were opened at 9:30 PM; guests passed through security and rode the long escalator to the mezzanine level, where food and drinks were served buffet-style.

The opening act was a brief performance by actors from the subway-named Broadway musical "In Transit," which was followed by almost continuous music performed by the Sunnyside Social Club, a jazz band that is part of MTA's Music Under New York program. At 10:15 PM, the guests were invited to descend to the track level and board the train on the northbound track. The train on the southbound track was wrong-railed alongside Randy's train. At 86th Street and 96th Street, the guests were given brochures describing the artwork and allowed 15 minutes to inspect the stations, after which the train proceeded non-stop to 72nd Street, where Chairman Prendergast and Governor Cuomo made brief speeches. Drinks were served and the guests rang in the New Year and departed.

WiFi and Cell Service Project (Almost) Completed

On January 9, 2017, Transit Wireless, the contractor hired by NYCT for $300 million to equip all underground stations with WiFi and cellular telephone service, completed its work a year ahead of schedule, except for the Bay Ridge Avenue, 53rd Street, and Prospect Avenue stations on the Fourth Avenue Line, which are undergoing reconstruction. 4,000 antennas and 120 miles of fiber optic cables were installed underground to finally enable subway customers to maintain their electronic communication connectivity at all stations. The WiFi and cellular signal is only provided at stations. Security concerns dictated that cellular phone service should not be provided in the tunnels between stations, especially in the under-river tubes.

MTA and TWU Reach Contract Agreement

Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 and MTA reached an agreement on January 16, 2017, averting the possibility of a labor action. The 26-month contract will provide two 2.5% wage increases and a $500 bonus for the last 2 months of the contract, which will end in May, 2019. While this contract demanded no "give-backs," TWU was able to further increase the pay for some of its workers. Drivers of articulated buses will be paid $1 per hour more as opposed to the current 25-cent premium over standard buses and MTA will hire an extra 100 employees to renovate employee break and locker rooms around the system. The contract now goes out for ratification by the rank-and-file.

Commuter and Transit Notes

(Continued from page 13)

after it was accidentally routed onto a non-electrified track in Edinburgh. The four-car train, which got stuck near Haymarket Station on December 29, 2016, had to be coupled to a diesel train and towed back onto electrified track. A small amount of damage was caused to the electric train's pantographs after it lost contact with overhead electric power lines. An investigation has been launched regarding the incident. It is believed that contributing factors to the accident were human error on behalf of the signaler in charge of setting the train's route, in addition to low visibility on the tracks that prevented the train's operator from noticing the incorrect routing in time to stop before losing all electric contact. Fortunately, the train was not in passenger service during the incident and the error did not affect regular train service. The affected class 380 model train has since been repaired and returned to passenger service. (scotsman.com, January 5, 2017)

Paris, France

New trains are coming to Paris cross-city suburban network lines through a contract worth up to $4 billion. The French Railway system has chosen an Alstom-Bombardier consortium to provide up to 255 new high-capacity commuter rail cars for the D and E train routes. The first part of the order is worth $1.2 billion and will provide 71 new trains. These and more trainsets would enable the retirement of older trains running on the D and E routes as well as offer the needed fleet boost to expand service.

Alstom and Bombardier are planning to construct the new trains in their French factories and the order will be split so that Alstom has a somewhat bigger share. The new trains will begin hitting the rails in 2021, just in time for a $4 billion extension of the E route west to Nanterre via the La Défense business district. Alstom has named the train design "Xtrapolis Cityduplex." The new train cars will feature closely connected single-level and bi-level cars with extra-spacious sliding doors, and are designed to easily accommodate many passengers. (Alstom press release, January 11, 2017)

Netherlands

In an innovative move, electric passenger trains in the Netherlands are now receiving energy generated from wind-power. Nederlandse Spoorwegen, a Dutch passenger rail company, has collaborated with electricity company Eneco to create new wind energy technology. The rail company announced that all of its electric trains are now running on energy harvested from newly constructed wind farms as of January 1, 2017. Nederlandse Spoorwegen is the major passenger rail provider in the Netherlands, operating over 4,000 trains every day across the country's 3,200-mile rail network and the innovation in wind power will provide substantial environmental efficiency benefits.

SWITZERLAND IN THE LATE SUMMER
by Jack May
(Photographs by the author)
(Continued from January, 2017 issue)

We continue our narrow gauge journey that we started in the previous issue.

The 6 minutes of tardiness at Realp were not made up and we arrived at our destination at 13:26, but we still had two minutes to cross the platform for our 13:28 connection to Goeschenen. Andermatt is 4,710 feet above sea level on the meter-gauge east-west line, while Goeschenen is down in a valley at 3,629 feet. The line connecting them is less than two and a half miles long, so the grades are steep, and because of its tunnels, snow sheds, and the tall mountains surrounding it, it seems that hardly any sunshine ever penetrates to the tracks. Goeschenen is the northern mouth of the famous Gotthard Tunnel, and so the line is a valuable connector for MGB passengers wanting to continue on trains to Luzern and Zurich to the north, and Lugano and Milan to the south. The line was the originally independent Schoellenbahn and electrified at a different voltage than the Furka Oberalp's 11,000, but was converted, and now some of the MGB regional trains from Brig run through to Goeschenen. High-frequency SBB rail service through Goeschenen is on its last legs as soon the new Gotthard Base Tunnel will open, and express trains will be diverted through the forthcoming high-speed route (I am sure connecting service will remain, as Andermatt/Goeschenen is an important transfer point).

We rode the same equipment back, which left at 13:53 and arrived Andermatt at 14:03 (04). After grabbing some snacks and beverages at the station's kiosk, by 14:27 we were aboard the MGB regional train to Disentis/Muster. But we were not going to go to that division point, the end-to-end junction with the Rhaetische Bahn, but only as far as Sedrun, in order to cover the most scenic and interesting part of the former Furka Oberalp railway (in my opinion). Upon leaving Andermatt (4,710 feet up) we twisted and turned, traversing four cutbacks (the highway has eight) and several tunnels totaling about three miles to reach the next town, Natschen, less than one air mile away (0.87), but 1,277 feet higher at 5,987.Needless to say it felt like we were on a gradual ascent in an airplane, with the relatively large town of Andermatt slowly getting smaller and smaller. It was even more spectacular on our return trip, as the town loomed larger as we steadily came down the mountain.

We detrained at Sedrun at 14:15 in order to get back to our hotel at a decent hour, and, here at the mouth of another tunnel, an old electric motor, apparently still usable for charters, was on display. We took the 14:31 back, having to change regional trains at Andermatt (15:22-37), which allowed some time for photography, including a view of a late-running *Glacier Express*). We tried to board this train, but were told we would have to pay a reservation fee of about $20 each, so we finessed that, and took the connecting regional back to Brig, arriving at our home station at 17:38 (33). We soon got to our room and sprawled out for a couple of hours before dinner. It was our second great day on the MGB and its connections.

The MGB Andermatt station is at the crossroads of the east-west meter-gauge rail line from St. Moritz and Chur to Brig and Zermatt, and the north-south standard-gauge Gotthard Pass and Tunnel line from Zurich and Luzern to Lugano and Milan, the latter being reached by the short connecting line to Goeschenen, over 1,000 feet below. The left photo shows the rear of an MGB train arriving from Zermatt, made up of modern Stadler-built (2011-3) partly low-floor EMUs. The right view shows the front of the locomotive-hauled "Glacier Express" heading for Zermatt. There are 13 of these electric engines on the MGB, built for its predecessor companies by the Swiss Locomotive and Machine Works (SLM) between 1986 and 1990. (The Winterthur-based Schweizerische Lokomotiv- und Maschinenfabrik company, which built more of these for other meter-gauge rack lines, and equipped the Manitou & Pike's Peak Railway with diesel railcars, was acquired by Stadler in 1998.) All of the equipment shown is equipped for cog-wheel operation. Also note that Swiss railways run left-handed.

(Continued on page 16)

Switzerland in the Late Summer

(Continued from page 15)

Cogwheel locomotive 36 was on display at the Sedrun station, where we reversed our direction and began our return trip to Brig. The electric locomotive still sports the "F O" markings for the MGB predecessor in this location, the Furka Oberalp Railway. It was built in 1949 by SLM with electric equipment provided by Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon, the same pair of companies that built the iconic Crocodile (Krokodil) steeplecab locomotives. The railroad interests of SLM were later acquired by Stadler, while MFO's were sold to Brown Boveri and Company. BBC eventually merged with ASEA of Sweden to form ABB, which then became a component of Adranz before finally being swallowed up by Bombardier.

We headed down the mountain in a local train pulled by a locomotive painted to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the completion of the Furka Oberalp railway between Brig and Gletsch in 1914. 104 is one of a series of electric motors built by SLM for the FO and other Swiss meter-gauge cog railways between 1985 and 1990.

The village of Rueras as seen from the windows of our train descending toward Andermatt. It is part of the Tujetsch region (population 1,359), which also includes the larger town of Sedrun.

(Continued on page 17)

Switzerland in the Late Summer

(Continued from page 16)

Two photos of Andermatt from our train as it descended from Natschen. On the left is a bird's eye view of the railway station, while the right picture shows our train taking one of the last curves approaching the town.

(Continued next issue)

CORRECTIONS

In the "Status of North American Transit Project Openings Scheduled for 2017" article in the January issue, we noted that the NYC Transit Second Avenue Subway is 6.3 miles long. The section that opened on December 31, 2016 (to the public on January 1, 2017) is 1.5 miles long.

In the same article, we listed the Staten Island Railway Arthur Kill station as opening in December, 2016. The new Arthur Kill station opened at 5 AM on Saturday, January 21, 2017, replacing the outdated and little-used Atlantic and Nassau stations just north of the line's terminus at Tottenville. The $27.4 million intermodal station is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), having ramps leading to each of the two side platforms, and features a new 150-car park-and-ride lot, bicycle racks, security cameras, and a pedestrian overpass decorated with 28 glass panels depicting images of local wildlife and landscapes. An S78 bus stop is located in front of the new station and parking lot. The two stations it replaces were simultaneously closed and will be slated for demolition. The opening of this new station had been delayed by a need to re-design key elements to make it more resilient to storm damage after Hurricane Sandy struck the city in 2012.

New York City Subway Car Update

(Continued from page 8)

"pilot" installation of electronic LCD interior signage on some Coney Island-assigned R-160s, in place of the art "posters" that the cars have sported since their arrival a decade ago. Reportedly, NYCT has received sufficient funds to apply these LCD readouts, whose main purpose appears more related to advertising as opposed to simple rider information, to 100 such cars and may equip the entire 510-car contingent if additional money is supplied to pay for the conversion during 2017.

As previously described, the first of the anticipated 300 R-179s (car 3014) was delivered to 207th Street Shops by flatbed truck on September 6, 2016, with its four mates (3010-3) following suit by the end of the week. After being marshaled at Pitkin Shop in Brooklyn, a month of static testing followed before the 5-car "pilot" unit embarked on its maiden voyage to Far Rockaway and back on October 14. Some initial software and electrical problems were experienced with the cars, which brought about another delay in early evaluation proceedings, but by Thanksgiving those first five cars had reputedly completed their initial tour of the entire Subdivision "B" (ex-BMT and IND) system. Evidently, any resultant technical concerns were sufficiently addressed to enable delivery of the *second* 5-car unit (3015-9) between November 15 and November 17. This set was also tested independently in the Rockaway "Flats" once assembled and made operational at Pitkin, with the first known complete, 10-car train of R-179s seen making its way through the Howard Beach-JFK and Aqueduct stations on December 21, 2016. That same evening, "pilot" R-179s 3053 and 3052 were also delivered to 207th Street Shops, followed by 3050 and 3051 on December 22 to form the initial 4-car unit of the R-179 order. This was as far as known progress related to the R-179 had proceeded through January 15, 2017, but the weeks and months ahead promise to yield news of their initial revenue service testing, and eventually what effect their arrival will have on Subdivision "B" equipment assignments and any potential retirements. Stay tuned to your ERA Bulletin!

Around New York's Transit System

Second Avenue Trains are Finally Running

On New Year's Day 2017, rapid transit returned to upper Second Avenue more than seven decades after Second Avenue "L" service was discontinued at Unification, June, 1940.

Before revenue service began, the 96th Street station was open for public inspection. At the December 22, 2016 open house, maps, T-shirts, and cookies were distributed. The next day the station was open again from 8-10 AM and 5-7 PM. Officials attended the inaugural ride on December 31.

At noon January 1, the first train departed from 57th Street-Seventh Avenue and provided revenue service in the new subway to 96th Street. Trains operated from 6 AM to 10 PM until 24/7 service began on January 9. The new line will serve more than 200,000 passengers per weekday and will relieve overcrowding on the 4 5 6 Lexington Avenue Line. Q trains are routed via the Brighton and Broadway Lines to the new terminal at 96th Street-Second Avenue. Running time of these trains, which stop at Lexington Avenue-63rd Street, 72nd Street, 86th Street, and 96th Street, is only nine minutes from 57th Street-Seventh Avenue to 96th Street.

ERA Tri-State and Commuter News Editor Ron Yee rode the first northbound train out of 57th Street-7th Avenue to 96th Street-2nd Avenue. The consist was: (R-160) N-9108-9-10-1-2/9113-4-5-6-7-S.

Your Editor-in-Chief always enjoyed riding on the Second Avenue "L," which was never as crowded as the other elevated lines. As far back as anyone can remember, Second Avenue trains never ran all night. In 1939, there was no service leaving 129th Street from 12:05-4:38 AM and no elevated service from Corona and Astoria at about the same time.

Trains operated from lower Manhattan to 129th Street at other times and to Freeman Street and Bronx Park Third Avenue during rush hours. Service from lower Manhattan to Corona and Astoria was discontinued in June, 1942 because of low ridership.

(Continued on page 14)

SUBDIVISION "B" CAR ASSIGNMENTS

CARS REQUIRED JANUARY 1, 2017

LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH	LINE	AM RUSH	PM RUSH
A	10 R-32, 296 R-46	20 R-32, 296 R-46, 8 R-68A	L	168 R-143, 24 R-160	152 R-143, 16 R-160
B	40 R-68, 160 R-68A	32 R-68, 152 R-68A	M	184 R-160	176 R-160
C	64 R-32, 80 R-160	56 R-32, 80 R-160	N/W	24 R-68, 300 R-160	24 R-68, 300 R-160
D	232 R-68	216 R-68	Q	210 R-160	210 R-160
E	260 R-160	260 R-160	R	240 R-46	240 R-46
F	56 R-46, 370 R-160	56 R-46, 370 R-160	S(Rockaway)	12 R-46	12 R-46
G	52 R-68	52 R-68	S (Franklin)	4 R-68	4 R-68
J/Z	80 R-32, 40 R-42, 40 R-160	80 R-32, 32 R-42, 40 R-160			

Short Platforms Extended for Long Trains

(Continued from page 1)

extended again, but we know that 10-car R-type or longer locals were not operated until the platforms were extended. Checking the schedules, we found the dates trains were lengthened.

LINE	DATE				
	7 CARS	8 CARS	9 CARS	10 CARS	11 CARS
1 Broadway Local	—	February 6, 1959	—	May 24, 1976	—
2 Seventh Avenue Express	—	(A)	February 10, 1959	May 6, 1968	—
6 Lexington Avenue Local	September 22, 1948	January 20, 1956	September 4, 1962	November 4, 1963	—
7 Flushing	—	—	July 14, 1948	November 1, 1962	April 19, 1964

(A) June 27, 1958 — 10-car Lo-Vs and 9-car R-22s
Data for 3, 4, and 5 is not available

(To be continued)