

The Bulletin



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The Bulletin

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RAYMOND R. BERGER, 1941-2016 by Eric R. Oszustowicz

On March 1, 2016, Raymond R. Berger passed away at age 74. He was an ERA member since 1958. Ray will be missed by us all. Ray was on the ERA's Board of Directors for many years and also served for a time as the Chairman of its New York Division when it was still operationally independent.

To state that Ray performed work for the ERA is quite an understatement. All who perform work for the ERA do so on a strictly volunteer basis. Ray was an extremely busy individual with many interests, but he was always available to do work for the organization. Much of his work was in a leadership role, but Ray never had an issue with rolling up his sleeves in order to stuff envelopes, lug boxes, or perform any other required tedious task. In an era when time is a precious commodity, he was always selfless and ready to sacrifice his time for the betterment of the ERA, a sacrifice for which he never sought adulation. The greatest legacy that he leaves for all of us is the part he played in maintaining the ERA as a strong and purposeful organization.

Ray was a busy man indeed. He travelled the world. Ray photographed almost every transit system in the western world (and beyond) which included every system in Germany. In these travels, he met other transit professionals and enthusiasts with whom he

corresponded regularly. In addition, the photographic results of his travels were shared through countless presentations at which he would educate attendees through meticulous narration regarding the transit systems displayed.

Ray was a retired transit professional and was a respected member of NYCT's Division of Car Equipment. Think of Ray the next time you ride an R-142 or R-142A since he contributed to their basic design.

Ray was a religious man. He attained secular membership in the Third Order of St. Francis and regularly volunteered his services at the St. Francis of Assisi Church in midtown Manhattan.

When it came to any sort of work, Ray Berger was the consummate perfectionist, and he expected the same from others. Although he understood that perfection was impossible, he also believed that one should make every effort to attain it. His tenacity is legendary. Even after a debilitating accident left him barely able to walk, he still travelled widely. In fact, he passed away

while doing what he loved, travelling to photograph transit systems on a cross country journey. To the very end, he never gave in and never gave up. Let Ray be an inspiration to us all.

To have known Ray Berger and been his friend was a grand and cherished privilege.



During the 1980s Ray and Eric would often embark on photographic expeditions. On January 9, 1988, they convinced a property owner along the Brighton Line to allow access to his roof to obtain a bird's eye view of the then-new R68s. Here we see Ray proudly posing with his camera.

Eric R. Oszustowicz photograph

NEXT TRIP: SEPTA SHOPS TOUR — SATURDAY, APRIL 16 (CHANGED FROM APRIL 30)

FROM RECOGNITION TO DOMINANCE: THE NEW YORK CONNECTING RAILROAD (BRIDGING THE BAY AND CONNECTING THE PIECES)

by George Chiasson
(Continued from March, 2016 issue)

As alluded to previously, the Suburban Rapid Transit Company greatly improved downtown connections for the Harlem River Branch after its opening of an initial operating segment on May 17, 1886, from the existing 129th Street station of the Third Avenue “L” to 133rd Street. To accomplish this it used a steel swing bridge across the Harlem River that was appended beyond the end of structure of the Second Avenue Elevated (which itself had opened in August of 1880), and carried only elevated trains across the river at a height sufficient to meet navigational needs. The elevated line’s interim terminus was just a short block-and-a-half walk from the Harlem River Terminal and changed the entire dynamic (though still did not completely solve the dilemma) for New Haven passengers navigating between the northerly and southerly reaches of Manhattan in a timely fashion. With cooperation from the New Haven, Suburban Rapid Transit instituted a direct shuttle train from 129th Street to the Harlem River Terminal itself (known by the “L” operator as “Willis Avenue”) on November 25, 1886 that was coordinated with the railroad’s local schedules. To enable the Suburban’s diminutive “L” trains to access the existing railway terminal, a high-level platform was laid over the middle of three existing low-level installations (whereas New Haven locals continued to use the outer two) and a ramp constructed from the Third Avenue “L” off the end of the new Harlem River Bridge that curved eastward as it descended to ground level. Consisting of a Forney and perhaps two or three standard coaches, these steam-powered shuttle trains would be discharged on the northerly track, relayed in a turn-back east of the platform through a see-saw power swapping procedure, and then re-load at the southerly track before returning to 129th Street. In reality, most New Haven patrons continued to walk the short distance between the Harlem River Terminal and the 133rd Street station, as this was oftentimes quicker than waiting for the languid shuttle to come and go. As a result the little train proved to be short-lived in that initial form, with service suspended just a year later on December 18, 1887.

This might have been the end of that particular story were it not for a degree of persistence on the part of the New Haven, which took delivery of its own miniature “rapid transit” fleet in 1890-1. This consisted of Forney-type locomotives and a series of 9-foot-wide open-vestibule coaches, built to the same basic dimensions as the Suburban’s equipment and outfitted with Eams vacuum brakes. Collectively they were capable of running both on the New Haven’s lines and the Manhattan “L” system, the latter being in the hands of the Manhat-

tan Railway Company since June 4, 1891, as successor to the original Suburban Rapid Transit concern. While the new equipment was being “broken in” and operating personnel were trained, the Manhattan Railway temporarily restored service on the “Willis Avenue Shuttle,” as it had previously run in 1886-7, starting on July 19. Two weeks later (beginning on August 1) the New Haven used its new rapid transit rolling stock to provide all service on the Harlem River Branch, with schedules running through from New Rochelle to the Manhattan Railway’s 129th Street terminal, where immediate cross-transfer was available to both the Second and Third Avenue elevated lines. At New Rochelle, a storage yard was built for the trains and a turntable for the Forneys, with Harlem River trains starting trips from a siding (referred to as Track 6 or the “Gauntlet Track”). The New Haven’s “L” cars were evidently equipped with steps and folding traps, as such trains served the existing low-level stations along the Harlem River Branch, then the two side platforms in the terminal as they moved to and from the ramp connection to the “L,” where they terminated at a high platform at 129th Street. The high middle platform and turn-back also remained in place at the Harlem River Terminal after this service expansion, and may have been used from time to time by connecting shuttles. At any rate, this long-ago New Haven foray into steam-powered rapid transit lasted a decade and a half until the Willis Avenue Branch was electrified under the auspices of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company in 1905. In addition, for as long as the Belmont Stakes were staged at Morris Park Racecourse each June between 1892 and 1904, the New Haven was permitted to run its own rapid transit trains all the way between City Hall in Manhattan and the track’s siding in the Bronx, operating express on the Second Avenue Elevated and presumably in the charge of Manhattan Railway and later IRT personnel along the way.

PIECES TO CONNECT, PART 2—THE NEW YORK, BAY RIDGE & JAMAICA

Prior to being terminally victimized by the financial panic of September, 1873, the New York & Hempstead, while a subsidiary of Long Island’s South Side Rail Road, was gaining momentum as a going concern, though in reality it consisted of two disconnected segments, only one of which had thus far been transformed into operational reality. As might be recalled, the company’s original mission, as of 1869, had been the construction of a continuous railroad as far east as Oyster Bay and as far west as Kings County’s harbor frontage,

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MUNICIPAL OPERATION OF WILLIAMSBURG BRIDGE TROLLEY CARS

by Bernard Linder

We have been publishing excerpts from BMT Chairman Gerhard Dahl's book, *Transit Truths*, in which he complains about the city's failure to complete subway construction.

In this issue, we will explain how the city interfered with BMT trolley operation on the Williamsburg Bridge. The following brief history appears in Mr. Dahl's book:

"When municipal operation of the Williamsburg Bridge trolleys was urged in 1920, a report to the Aldermen predicted that the experiment would prepare those in charge the better to grapple with the problem of municipal operation which confronts the city in its larger aspects.

"For ten years prior to December 1, 1923, the BMT and the Brooklyn City Railroad Company operated local trolley service and through service over Williamsburg Bridge. The City of New York, however, desiring to further its program of municipal operation interfered with this regular service by inaugurating its own local service across the bridge, thus forcing the companies to discontinue their service."

A November, 1923 newspaper article revealed that he company had financial problems nearly four years before the article was written. Brooklyn Rapid Transit notified the Department of Plant and Structures that it would stop running trolley cars across the Williamsburg Bridge if it had to pay tolls, about \$60,000 per annum. When the city obtained a judgment of \$127,661, it could not find any assets to levy upon. BRT carried 90,000 passengers a day on tracks it did not own and occupied a subway terminal that was city property, and paid nothing for the privilege. By not paying tolls since 1920, the company diverted \$231,317 in tolls.

Brooklyn Rapid Transit was in receivership from December 31, 1918 until it became solvent as the reorganized Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit on June 15, 1923. A few months later, the city competed by operating its trolley cars across the Williamsburg Bridge. The news-

papers provided the following detailed account of the transition.

On November 27 1923, posters titled, "Interference with Public Service," appeared in Brooklyn trolley cars. On November 25, Grover Whalen, Commissioner of the Department of Plant and Structures, stated that the Transit Commission should force BMT to run trolley cars on the bridge. The Commission replied that it had no power because BMT cars did not operate on a franchise on the bridge. They operated under permits from the Department of Bridges and its successor, the Department of Plant and Structures. Under the charter, only Whalen could intervene. BMT discontinued bridge trolley service because it was not safe or practicable for both to operate on the bridge. BMT also refused to operate on the bridge because through service was operated at a loss and it was deprived of the profitable local service.

Before starting revenue operation, the city tried to run test cars at night, but BMT shut off the power. The city bought power from Edison at Delancey Street and at a substation under the bridge in Brooklyn, which was equipped with two 1,000-kilowatt rotary converters valued at \$150,000.

The following BMT cars, which operated across the bridge, were turned near Bridge Plaza: Franklin Avenue cars terminated at S. 8th and Roebling Streets, Grand Street and Bushwick Avenue cars were routed via S. 4th and Roebling Streets, and Tompkins Avenue and Nosstrand Avenue cars switched back under the bridge at S. 5th and Roebling Streets. Broadway, Reid Avenue, Ralph Avenue, and Sumner Avenue cars were still turned at the Bridge Plaza loops in accordance with an arrangement between BMT and Commissioner Whalen. BMT bridge operation ceased at 2 AM December 1, 1923 and power was shut off promptly.

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From Recognition to Dominance

(Continued from page 2)

using available lines in part (specifically Oyster Bay to Mineola) and providing new segments where they did not as yet exist. Within the next year, one intermediate portion (the predecessor to the present-day West Hempstead Branch) was indeed laid across the wilderness of eastern Queens County from Hempstead to Valley Stream, while another from the shores of Bay Ridge to the Kings County municipality of New Lots had succeeded in reaching the construction stage, but was beset by a variety of difficulties that were delaying its progress. The line's third portion was by then in the process of design and property negotiation, though as yet it

was only in approximate form. As conceived, NY&H's final link was to follow the northerly outline of Jamaica Bay to reach Sunrise Highway near what would become Rosedale by 1899 (when the Queens-Nassau boundary was set), and thus bore some resemblance to the present-day Belt Parkway. Ultimately, widespread expectations regarding completion of the railroad were dashed when it was caught short and starved for capital in the aftermath of the 1873 Panic, which had an unsettling effect on railroad financing across the country (including the parent South Side concern), and the New York & Hempstead effectively ceased to exist. By the middle of 1874 all but one stakeholder had been driven away from the seemingly stillborn enterprise, that being reso-

(Continued on page 6)

Municipal Operation of Williamsburg Bridge Trolley Cars

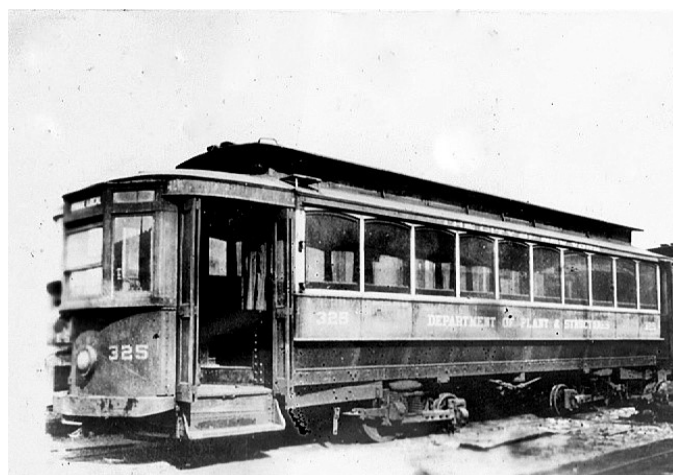
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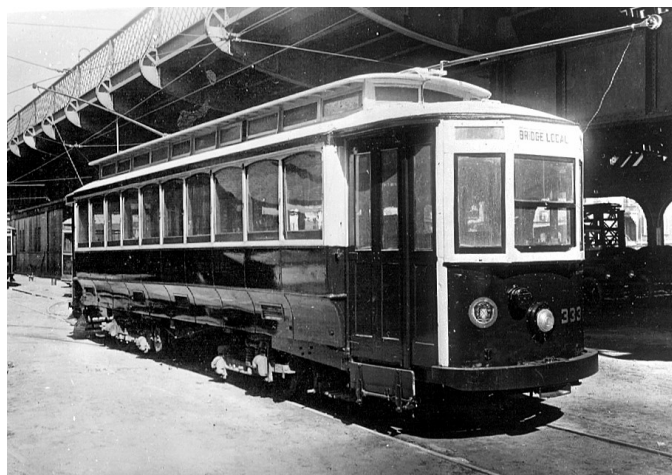
City-owned Birney car on Williamsburg Bridge Shuttle.
Bernard Linder collection



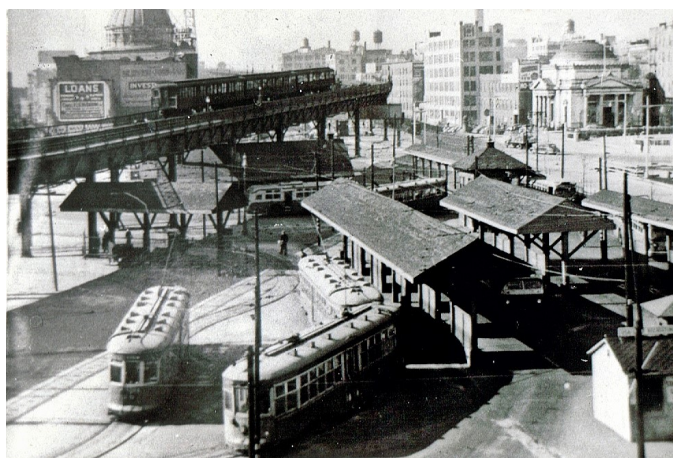
Car 8033 on Williamsburg Bridge, July 3, 1946.
Bernard Linder collection



Department of Plant & Structures, Williamsburg Bridge and Staten Island cars.
Bernard Linder collection



Box car rebuilt by Second Avenue Railroad for municipal operation on Williamsburg Bridge.
Bernard Linder collection



Washington Plaza.
Bernard Linder collection



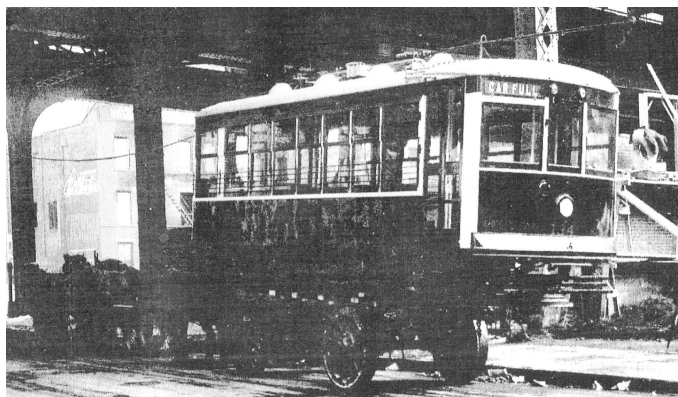
Third Avenue Railway 787 and NYRWS 1358 and 431 at Washington Plaza, February 21, 1917.
Bernard Linder collection

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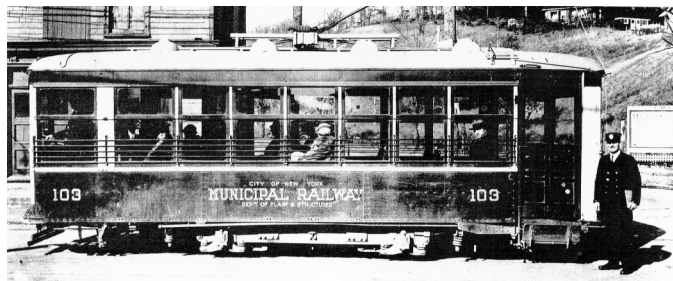
Municipal Operation of Williamsburg Bridge Trolley Cars

(Continued from page 4)

All photos below are from the Stephen Meyers collection. City owned cars were operated on Staten Island or on the Williamsburg Bridge. Cars were repaired in a shop in Brooklyn and were transferred on the ferry.



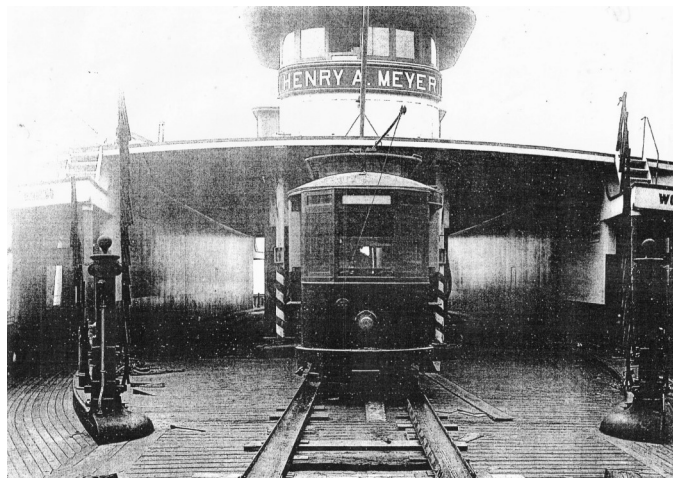
Birney loaded on wagon.



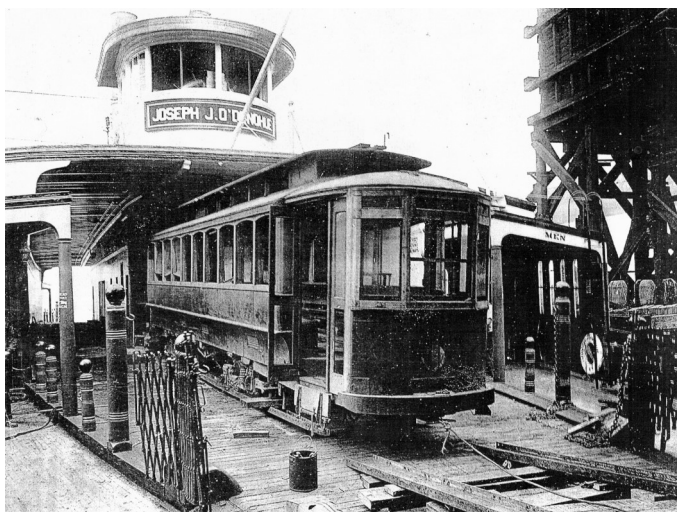
Birney 103 on Staten Island.



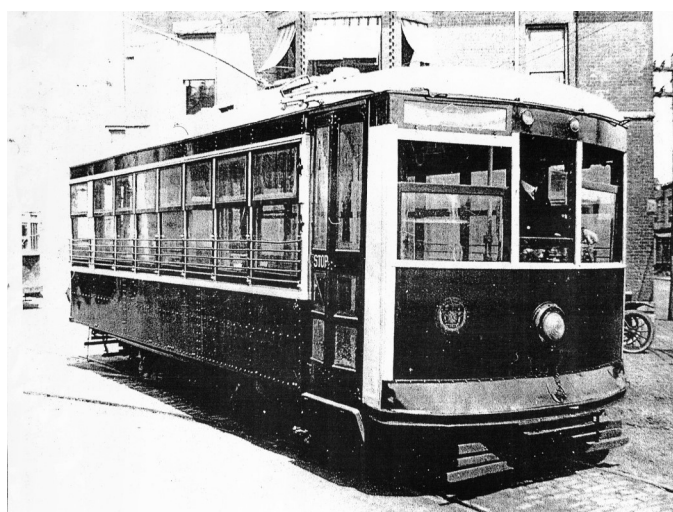
Car in service on Staten Island. Car was built in 1898 and rebuilt in 1920 by Second Avenue Railway for Department of Plant & Structures.



Car unloading at Staten Island. Note channels instead of rail.



Car unloading at Staten Island. Note inclined channels to guide car onto tracks.




Department of Plant & Structures. Birney operated on Williamsburg Bridge or Staten Island.
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From Recognition to Dominance

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lute Brooklynite Abram Wakeman, who re-shaped, renegotiated, and resurrected the project, lobbying intensely on the line's behalf among the merchants and local citizenry of Kings and Queens Counties to overcome its economic and political issues for the benefit of all, if only as an opportunity to salvage previous investment.

As finally incorporated on November 20, 1875, the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica Railroad Company served as a direct successor to the moribund New York & Hempstead, but only at the Brooklyn end of its projected span. Whereas construction of some type had already been started at numerous locations between Bay Ridge and New Lots but was far from complete, the newer entity sought to truncate its right-of-way at the meeting point with the existing Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach (Canarsie) excursion railroad, share that alignment to East New York, and then somehow gain a continued foothold (presumably on the LIRR Atlantic Division) from there to a revised terminal in the Queens County community of Jamaica. If nothing else, this organizational re-emergence assured a sufficient flow of capital and associated relevance to complete the daunting task of establishing the railway's new seaport facility at Bay Ridge, an aptly-named waterfront locale which was naturally separated from the plains of New Utrecht by a series of stiffly-built low hills (the actual "ridge") that had to be overcome through a deep and very costly excavation effort. This big job was indeed the focus of its modest resources through the ensuing winter and spring, with grading and track-laying on the segment toward New Lots to be completed in time for the following year. An agreement was executed with the Brooklyn, Bath & West End Railroad that allowed the ambitious new line to enjoy a short first season (rather than none) by renting the former's equipment and connecting its trackage where the two companies intersected at Bath Junction (about 14th Avenue). A thrice-daily schedule of trains commenced between Bay Ridge (where they connected with ferries from New York and Staten Island) and Tivoli's Hotel (Coney Island) on September 1, 1876, after an inaugural "media" run was made over the mostly-complete line on August 19. For its part the West End Line (now the province of MTA New York City Transit's  train) was then also in its infant state, located at surface level along the current-day arteries of New Utrecht and Cropsey Avenues with a short trestle across Coney Island Creek to access its resort terminal. Indeed, during those plain-spoken times the first-generation West End Line we recognize in 2016 was better known locally as "Gunther's Road" after its owner.

PIECES TO CONNECT, PART 3-AUSTIN CORBIN AND THE NARROW-GAUGE NEW YORK & MANHATTAN BEACH

Even as that first inspection trip was being made across Brooklyn, the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica had drawn the attention of one Austin Corbin (1827-96),

a redoubtable, New England-reared, western-acclimated financial wizard who was then one of Wall Street's "wonders." Corbin had *not* been personally involved in the original establishment of the summertime playground generally known as "Coney Island" (which burst into the public consciousness thanks to the completion of Andrew Culver's railway line in 1875), but was a first-hand participant in the

(Continued next issue)

interwoven financial schemes that brought both the leisure-time market for and the provision of such transportation services. It was Corbin who took the shattered remains of the New York & Hempstead, and through foresight transformed it into a cohesive railway system serving an exclusive resort of his own making. It all began with an anonymous wander that the barefoot Corbin undertook while on a Coney Island vacation in the summer of 1873, when he roamed not west toward the embryonic distractions and Tivoli's Hotel but rather east, into the wild marshes of the "Sedge Bank" that dated back to the land's discovery and origins as Dutch colonial farming country. Enthralled at the possibilities of harnessing this seemingly worthless, yet strategically located plot and combining it with the economic practicalities of an outwardly tentative, awkward railway-company-in-waiting, Corbin and his numerous associates began assembling the pieces of a seminal enterprise that would carry the somewhat pretentious name of "Manhattan Beach." As conceived, this magnificent complex was to be a bastion of *haute couture* that possessed the air of exclusivity, elegance, and sophistication appreciated by society's privileged class; a haven intended to balance what even then were perceived as Coney Island's aimless attractions and inane amusements that were attracting hordes of commoners, along with their simple tastes and meager pocketbooks. First to materialize for this mighty undertaking in 1875 was the land, almost two miles of beach front toward the east end of Coney Island that Corbin acquired for his opulent, centerpiece hotel-and-resort-to-be, some of it from descendants of the original settlers. In 1876, a right-of-way was surveyed to bring the railroad part of Corbin's venture into union with its sources of patronage. A straightforward artery of steel was incorporated under the name New York & Manhattan Beach on August 23, laying claim to a franchise that crossed the flat and still largely vacant plains of Gravesend. Corbin and company next moved to acquire the novitiate New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica Railroad after its inaugural season concluded, a transaction that was officially accomplished without much opposition on November 15 (likely owing to the Bay Ridge Line's already shaky financial condition given the high cost of construction). It was at this stage that Corbin actually became a railroad "baron," though purely in a localized sense, as his team re-oriented the one-time New York & Hempstead, which had so long been in conception and construction, as a "captive" narrow-gauge system that was almost whimsical in nature. Originating at both ends from steamboat piers along the East River and in

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From Recognition to Dominance

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Bay Ridge, the newly revamped line was to describe a long arc through East New York and converge with the branch coming up from Manhattan Beach in the northerly reaches of Gravesend, from which patrons of the Manhattan Beach resort property could be whisked across the flat, beachy plains to its exotic luxuries.

As a result of this radical change of focus, the New York & Manhattan Beach unilaterally assumed all construction that had to date been completed on behalf of the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica. This included its extension eastward from Bath Junction through Gravesend, and the ongoing effort to bring its alignment to a union with the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach (Canarsie) road in New Lots, beyond which the developing narrow-gauge railway was granted an easement along the westerly edge of the other company's grade-level right-of-way, as laid in 1865. Through early 1877, all trackage from Bay Ridge to Bath Junction was summarily converted from standard to narrow gauge to conform with the rest of the new system (an action that also eliminated its link with the West End road), while the former locomotives and "carriages" used on the intramural railway at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia were imported from their resting place of the previous summer, inspected, prepared, and reactivated for use. Their easy, low-cost availability had evidently been one of the underlying motives behind the overall decision to employ three-foot gauge, along with a desire to exclude the interchange of traffic from the new company's rails. After months of steady progress (aside from a minor skirmish when crossing the Culver Road at Parkville (Gravesend Avenue)), the New York & Manhattan Beach was finally ready to begin its endeavors by the middle of July, with a dedication run made for invited guests and members of the press. The festivities began at Bay Ridge, where boats from New York dropped those first riders, then continued across Brooklyn to East New York. There, a companion ceremony was held to dedicate the line's temporary terminal at the Metropolitan Hotel (corner of Van Sinderen Ave. and Fulton Street) and then the combined crowds of both rode back to Manhattan Beach Junction and finally south to the grand venue itself. The huge Manhattan Beach Hotel was plainly visible from a mile or so away, with its colossal 700-foot length and 475-foot breadth faced to the shoreline, and rather pronounced towers pointing skyward above its four-story height. In fact the complex consisted of two large "public" houses, the Manhattan Beach itself and the adjacent Oriental Hotel, each of which had its own ground-level train station and was surrounded by small emplacements serving various purposes (some of which had also been reassembled from original use at the Centennial Exposition), plazas,

manicured lawns, and garden settings with the (generally) calm beach in constant view. Regular schedules consisting of 13 trips from both Bay Ridge and East New York to the Oriental Hotel terminus were begun the following day, with other stations initially established on the Bay Ridge portion at Third Avenue and Parkville, and on the East New York segment at New Lots Road (Avenue), Kouwenhoven (Kings Highway), Flatlands (Flatbush Avenue), and Manhattan Beach Junction. The branch to Manhattan Beach diverged southward at that exact location (Ocean Avenue) and generally meandered in a narrow alignment between the present E. 16th and E. 18th Streets (two blocks west of Ocean Avenue), with additional stations at South Greenfield (Elm Avenue) and Sheepshead Bay (Voorhies Avenue).

As originally opened, the entire New York & Manhattan Beach system was single-track in nature, but for one long segment of double iron through Manhattan Beach Junction, between New Lots Road and Bath Junction, that was interrupted by a single-track tunnel beneath Ocean Parkway. Concurrent with its opening on July 18, 1877, the New York & Sea Beach Railroad established a partial standard-gauge replacement presence between the Bay Ridge harbor frontage and Coney Island, commencing independent excursion operations with steam-powered trains on its own alignment from Bath Junction to the Sea Beach Hoel. Though there had been an initial, preliminary agreement between it and the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica to share the excavated right-of-way through the perimeter hills en route to their ports, the latter's change in ownership and track gauge forced the Sea Beach line to construct its own alignment, immediately adjacent and also at great expense, which opened as an extension from Bath Junction on July 17, 1879. Given the topography and land availabilities approaching Bay Ridge from the plains of New Utrecht, the junior company was forced to construct a trestle to cross over the narrow gauge line between Seventh and Eighth Avenues before both continued straight into their respective dock termini at the "foot" of 65th Street, a relative point at the time in raw, mainly un-surveyed oceanfront landscape. For its part the Sea Beach operation, though modest in scope, served as a lifelong competitive foil to Corbin's interests across his years of stewardship of the Manhattan Beach and Long Island Railroads. In fact the Sea Beach entity eventually lasted long enough to be taken in by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company in the latter part of 1897, and later gave rise to BRT's very first subway line in 1915. Across time, both seaport facilities at Bay Ridge would go on to experience long, fairly prosperous, and somewhat complicated histories (and expansions), serving as key linchpins between the nation's railways and Brooklyn's huge, world-renowned waterfront.

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Commuter and Transit Notes

No. 329

by Ronald Yee and Alexander Ivanoff

MTA LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD

United States Representative Grace Meng (D-Flushing) and LIRR officials commemorated the completion of Phase One of the renovation of the Flushing-Main Street LIRR station. It provided new signage and station platform railings that will prevent small children from falling through gaps and getting injured as had occurred in the past with the older-style railings. Eminent domain authority was exercised by MTA to acquire a parcel of land occupied by a business at the base of the east end of the westbound platform to permit the construction of a new access point to the platform from Main Street. Phase Two, due to commence later this year, will provide both platforms with new elevators to bring the station into full compliance with accessibility for the physically challenged (ADA) requirements as well as new covered stairways linking the platforms directly with Main Street. The station will have new platform shelters and lighting, and the rebuilt station plaza on Main Street will have a new ticket office and window. While the cost of the project was originally estimated in 2012 to cost \$8.5 million and has ballooned to \$24.6 million, MTA is maintaining that the initial estimated completion date of the end of 2017 will still be met. The station, long considered an eyesore and a poor gateway to an important residential and business district, will finally receive a station befitting of the thriving and vibrant neighborhood. (qns.com, March 12)

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

A Pelham-based developer, Macquesten Companies, has entered into a contract to redevelop an area that would involve the demolition of the Mount Vernon West station building to make way for a new 20-story residential building to be built adjacent to the station site and would include retail and additional residential space on the site of the old station building. While no specifics have been identified, the station site could receive a state-of-the-art building that would offer a modern facility with small retail establishments serving the needs of the riders and the community. The area is already host to "The Modern," an 11-story housing development for which ground was broken last year. (lohud.com, March 11)

Beginning with the April 3 schedule change, Waterbury Branch passengers once again have to change trains at "Devon Transfer," a temporary station located at the railroad junction once known as Devon linking the New Haven main line trains with the branch line. As was done in 2015 to accommodate structural work on Devon Drawbridge and its catenary systems, main line trains in both directions scheduled to stop at this station will operate on what is normally the westbound express track and passengers will utilize a wooden platform that is built over the normal local track (that was rendered out of service by the construction work) to connect with the

Waterbury shuttle train waiting on the east leg of the wye. To avoid stranding passengers on a station platform not equipped with any facilities except for lighting and a public address system, passengers headed to New Haven will board a westbound main line train to Bridgeport, where they must transfer for a New Haven bound train. Because of the nature of the timetables, eastbound trains stop at Devon Transfer only prior to the departure of a shuttle train to Waterbury. An arriving shuttle from Waterbury is met soon after its arrival only by a westbound mainline train. *(Editor's Note by Ron Yee: Any railfans who may think of going to this station to stand around and photograph the trains will get marooned there for several hours once the shuttle train leaves for Waterbury. There is no pedestrian or street access to and from the platform. Train crews may cite security and safety concerns about members of the riding public remaining on the unattended platform for hours without shelter or facilities.)* (Metro-North Railroad website, March 14)

The April 3 schedule change will also adjust the timetables for select trains to reflect operating conditions that are causing delays in service from trains operating just a few minutes late, missing their assigned time slots as they near and eventually enter the Park Avenue Tunnel leading to Grand Central Terminal. On the Hudson Line, Train #814 will depart Poughkeepsie two minutes earlier at 5:33 AM and train #753, an all-stops local to Croton-Harmon, will have intermediate station timings adjusted 1-2 minutes to reflect actual operating conditions. On weekends, just in time for the spring and summer hiking season, three additional round trips will be offered to and from the Manitou and Breakneck Ridge stations to alleviate the delays to the two existing round trips, which have been experiencing station dwell times of up to 10 minutes due to heavy ridership alighting or boarding the trains. On the Harlem line, eight AM peak trains will be adjusted by 2-4 minutes and the four PM peak thru trains to Wassaic will be adjusted by 1-2 minutes to improve timekeeping at intermediate stations. Wassaic arrival times will remain the same. On the New Haven Line, 12 weekday AM peak and five PM peak trains will have 1-3 minute adjustments to their schedules to improve schedule adherence, especially at Stamford around 7 PM.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has taken delivery of four former Amtrak P-40-DC locomotives for use on the Shoreline East commuter rail services, increasing the P-40-DC fleet to 12 units. These four locomotives most recently served with NJ Transit on the brief but unsuccessful Atlantic City ACES service between 2009-11, then as part of the Atlantic City locomotive engine pool as units 4800-3. With Amtrak, they were formerly locomotives 812, 808, 810, and 820 respectively. A special equipment move was made with an

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Commuter and Transit Notes

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ACS-64 locomotive hauling all four units to the CDOT shops at New Haven during the week of March 6. These units, as well as the single level Mafersa-built cars built in the early 1990s, are expected to be refurbished and reassigned to a new commuter service linking New Haven with Hartford, Connecticut and Springfield, Massachusetts in 2018 with up to 24 Metro-North M-8s being re-assigned to cover the Shoreline East service to Old Saybrook. (Al Holtz, March 17)

Connecticut lawmakers hailed Metro-North's significant turnaround under the leadership of railroad president Joseph Giulietti since he took the helm of the troubled carrier in February, 2014. This is a total turnaround from the depths of the dark days of frequent safety-related failings resulting in derailments, collisions, employee fatalities, and a fatal wreck killing four passengers that prompted some Connecticut leaders to call for hiring a new operator for its New Haven Line and firing Metro-North. Under Giulietti's presidency, the railroad has made tremendous strides in restoring public confidence, improving its on-time performance once again to over 95%. Major strides in service reliability were made possible by improved maintenance practices that raised the average Mean Distance Between Failure (MDBF) to almost 300,000 miles for the entire fleet of electric multiple unit cars and diesel-propelled push-pull coaches. Giulietti was credited with quickly implementing a 100-day emergency plan to address track maintenance, infrastructure, and signaling deficiencies, poor employee morale, and work culture, all of which had fallen precipitously under the lack of effective leadership by the prior president, Howard Permut. Giulietti advised the lawmakers that the railroad still had two to three more years of heavy work before the track and infrastructure could be considered to be in a state of good repair and be able to implement a program where maintenance is performed on a planned, cyclical basis. He vowed to keep up the pressure to keep the railroad on a continual path of continued improvement, implementing a second "quiet car" at the north or east end many trains starting with the April 3 schedule change, adding bicycle racks on select railcars, and working to eliminate the many "dead zones" that result in countless "dropped calls" for customers. Additional projects the railroad will be working on is the expansion of the car fleet, from additional M-8s to possible double-deck coaches to address ridership growth (Metro-North broke its ridership record by providing 40 million passenger trips in 2015) and service expansion (Hell Gate Line serving Co-Op City and the eastern portions of the Bronx and eventually onward to Penn Station in Manhattan and to support improved Danbury Branch and Shoreline East CDOT services). (Hartford Courant, March 14)

NJ TRANSIT

The threatened strike against NJ Transit commuter rail operations slated for March 13 was averted at the last minute in a flurry of 11th hour negotiating sessions be-

tween the carrier and the labor organizations representing the rank and file employees. The tentative agreement, which still must be ratified by the 4,200 employees represented by a coalition of 11 unions, was reached late Friday afternoon, March 11, with just over 24 hours to go before the rail carrier could have been shut down. In fact, NJ Transit was just a few hours from initiating the first steps toward securing its trains and other equipment in preparation for what could have been a protracted strike. On an average weekday, NJ Transit carries over 300,000 riders across its commuter rail system, but only 40% of the roughly 105,000 Manhattan-bound commuters would have been accommodated by the contingency alternate bus service plan. Had there been a strike, the remaining 60% of rail commuters stranded would have either telecommuted, contributed to traffic jams as long as 23 miles on roads leading to New York City, or simply be unable to travel to work, school, and other activities. While no details of the agreement were released, New Jersey state officials stated that the agreement was a reasonable one that would meet the needs of its employees who had been working without a contract or pay increase for over five years while not triggering a fare increase through at least August, 2017. This new contract will run to 2019, a year longer than previously expected. (Star-Ledger, March 13)

AMTRAK

Just after midnight on Monday, March 14, Amtrak Train #4, the *Southwest Chief*, derailed in Cimmaron, Kansas (around 20 miles west of Dodge City) at 60 mph, the speed limit for that section of track, which had jointed rail. The train was carrying 128 passengers and 14 crew. 20 people were taken to hospitals with significant injuries, but there were no fatalities. The rest of the passengers were assembled at a local 4H recreation center and eventually bused onward to their destinations. Reports are that the train's Engineer saw a significant displacement of the track ahead in his headlight beams and placed his brakes in emergency, reducing the train's speed somewhat but unable to stop it in time before reaching the bent track and derailing. Subsequent investigation revealed that a large and heavy two-axle agricultural feed truck had crossed the track at that location and may have damaged the rails, possibly shifting the rails as much as 12-14 inches, based upon downloaded video recordings from the forward-facing camera in the P-42-DC locomotive cab. The truck had crossed the track at a location not graded as a grade crossing and the derailment occurred within 25 feet of that location. A follow-up report on the wreck shows the two P-42-DC locomotives and the Viewliner II baggage car and Superliner transition sleeper immediately behind them did not derail. The two Superliner sleeping cars and dining car derailed but remained upright, the Superliner lounge car derailed and came to rest at a 30 degree angle, and three Superliner coaches derailed and rolled onto their sides as the train slid to a stop. The tracks were repaired and train service restored by Tues-

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day afternoon, March 15. Trains #3 and #4 originating on March 13 and 14 were rerouted onto another BNSF line between Newton, Kansas and Albuquerque, New Mexico. (Editor's Note by Ron Yee: The reroute was likely over the BNSF freight mainline the **Southwest Chief** was going to be rerouted over had funding not been provided by New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas to maintain the original route of the Santa Fe **Super Chief**.) (Al Holtz, Associated Press, March 14; **The Wichita Eagle**, March 15)

OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire's 10-year, \$3.8 billion highway improvement plan was approved by the House on March 10, but without \$4 million earmarked to further develop the commuter rail project for the Merrimack Valley.

Governor Maggie Hassan included \$4 million in House Bill 2016 to continue preliminary work to bring commuter rail to the Granite State when she presented the plan to the House. She added the money after the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation refused to include the money in its recommendations.

The only debate on the highway improvement plan was over the money for the rail project.

Those wanting to remove the money said the work would not provide any information that has not already been developed by past studies.

The sponsor of the amendment to remove the money, Representative Neal Kurk (R-Weare), said the project would cost about \$300 million to construct with the state having to bond about \$60 million and then provide \$7-10 million annually in general funds to subsidize operations, and he said the rail service would be managed by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which is notorious for fiscal mismanagement.

But supporters of retaining the money said it would help determine how best to construct the project and pay for it. The House approved the amendment on a 174-162 vote and then the bill on a voice vote.

The most expensive new projects in the 10-year plan are the widening of Route 101 in Bedford for \$6 million and reconstructing Route 12 in Charlestown for \$5.8 million.

Under the plan, several large but to date unfunded turnpike projects will begin at the end of the 10 years, including redoing the Amoskeag Circle or Exit 6 and Exit 7 off Interstate 293. Also, several red-listed bridges on Interstate 93 in Bow will be reconstructed beginning at the end of the plan.

The plan also advances work on the new I-93 exit 4A project so that construction could begin by 2019, aligning it more with other work on the I-93 expansion project between Salem and Manchester.

Turnpike projects include expanding the Spaulding Turnpike from Newington to Dover, including rehabilitation of the General Sullivan Bridges, widening the FE Everett Turnpike from Merrimack to Bedford, the Exits 6

and 7 projects in Manchester, and widening I-93 from Bow through Concord.

The Public Works and Highways Committee increased funding for red-listed bridges and bridge preservation and paving projects.

Despite the loss of rail development money, Hassan said she is pleased with the plan. The bill now goes to the Senate, which will make its own changes to the bill and then send it to the governor for a final review. (Editor's Note by Sasha Ivanoff: During a recent weekend trip to scout out apartments in New Hampshire, I saw many of the projects currently under construction. Some of these projects are way overdue. As for the commuter service, there is VERY frequent bus service between Boston and Manchester, but not to the extent that a commuter rail service would have, including a stop at Manchester-Boston Regional Airport.) (**Mass Transit Magazine** via **The New Hampshire Union Leader**, March 11)

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Boston's fleet of ten iconic PCCs on the Mattapan-Ashmont Branch of the Red Line are potentially on the endangered list due to a MBTA management study of alternatives to maintaining or upgrading the existing fleet. The PCCs currently make the trip between Mattapan and Ashmont in just 10 minutes. Replacing the streetcars with buses would result in increased travel times for the line's 2,000 daily riders, with replacement buses mired in traffic. Local elected officials are seeking a \$3 million appropriation to make repairs to the nearly 80-year-old PCCs, for which MBTA occasionally must contact railroad museums for replacement parts. MBTA General Manager Frank Depaola stated that the MBTA Board is awaiting an engineering report that is expected to be released by this summer before making any final decisions on the fate of the trolleys. The public would also get a chance to provide some input at that point in time. (WXFT FOX25 News, March 16)

The extended late-night services on select MBTA transit lines implemented on a trial basis two years ago and scaled back due to funding issues officially ended on Friday, March 18. The traditional 12:30 AM end of service time on MBTA resumed on Saturday, March 19. MBTA Board members cited high costs and lower than expected revenue from private sector funding as well as the interference of late-night services on the ability to perform necessary maintenance on the track and infrastructure. 13,000 riders will now have to revert to previous transport options. (**Boston Globe**, March 18)

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Amtrak is proposing to build a 250-foot-long underground concourse with a glass skylight linking its 30th Street Station in Philadelphia serving Amtrak and SEPTA Regional Rail services with SEPTA's 30th Street subway station. The 30th Street Station District Plan, led by Amtrak, SEPTA, Drexel University, Brandywine Realty Trust, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, is a \$5.25 million, two-year study now nearing completion viewed as a first step toward a 35-year-long project to revitalize the area. It was formed to comple-

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ment the building plans of the adjacent University City district, which will develop the area over the Schuylkill Yards. The concourse is envisioned to be part of Phase One of this project and construction could stretch into the year 2030. The SEPTA trolley and subway station was once linked to 30th Street Station by an underground concourse, but it was shuttered in the 1980s due to safety concerns mostly stemming from a high crime rate. (philly.com, March 16)

SEPTA will issue new schedules, which will take effect on Sunday, April 10. Additional Airport Line changes will take effect, with trains now through-routed to Warminster or Chestnut Hill. Train times at Center City stations and airport terminals will remain the same. Chestnut Hill West Line trains will operate 1-2 minutes earlier; Chestnut Hill East weekend trains will generally operate 10 minutes earlier than in the previous schedule; inbound trains on the Lansdale/Doylestown Line will generally run 13 minutes earlier, with outbounds remaining unchanged but arriving at Doylestown four minutes later; Media/Elwyn Line train times will undergo significant changes (passengers should check their new schedules for updated times). Three new late-night departures from Suburban Station will be added (at 9:33 PM, 10:33 PM, and 12:33 AM) while weekend trains designated Saturday or Sunday-only will operate on both days. Paoli/Thorndale weekend trains will depart earlier than in previous schedules and all trains will stop at the Malverne station; weekend Trenton Line Owl Service Train #9744 will depart Trenton 10 minutes later toward Center City; West Trenton Line inbound weekend trains will operate 10 minutes later and be through-routed to the Paoli/Thorndale Line; and weekend Train #468 on the Warminster Line will operate 30 minutes later. Two new express trains will be added to the schedule, #2760 departing Newark, Delaware at 4:46 PM to Chestnut Hill East via Center City and #9294 departing Newark, Delaware at 5:46 PM to Center City. Passengers on the Glenside combined should consult their new timetables as some weekday service will be through-routed to other lines than they are presently going to. No schedule changes are slated for the Manayunk/Norristown, Fox Chase, and Cynwyd lines. Member Bob Wright reports that changes to the Airport schedules with the previous schedule change appear to be working as intended with two-car trains now making the Airport-Jenkintown runs and eliminating the prior practice of operating more cars than needed for the ridership levels and ending up with a lot of deadhead car-miles with associated needless propulsion costs and wear and tear on the equipment. (SEPTA website, March 20)

WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

In an unprecedented move, the entire, Washington Metro system was shut down for 29 hours as an emergency measure to enable all third rail power feeder cables to be thoroughly inspected and tested. WMATA had been experiencing sporadic feeder cable fires over the

past several years, culminating in a smoky fire that resulted in the death of one passenger aboard a train trapped between stations in a tunnel near the L'Enfant Plaza station on January 12, 2015. Following that incident, there was an intense effort to perform extensive inspections and replacement of power cables found to be in need of repair or replacement. Despite these efforts, WMATA suffered yet another power cable fire on Monday, March 14, 2016 just outside of the MacPherson Square station, circumstances eerily similar to last year's fatal fire. Post-incident investigation showed that the cable that had ignited recently passed this more vigorous level of inspection. As a result of the uncertainty surrounding the integrity of the approximately 600 jumper cables in the system and the inability to insure that another incident could be prevented, WMATA General Manager/CEO Paul Wiedefeld made the decision to shutter the entire six-line, 91-station system for 29 hours to perform the necessary inspections to insure public safety. The subway was closed from midnight Tuesday, March 15 until 5 AM Thursday, March 17. The inspections found (and repairs were made to) 26 feeder cables and connector boots that were frayed and or damaged to a degree that the tunnels they were located in would not be allowed to carry trains at all. Four other locations had damaged cables that were identified for repair at a later time but were deemed not immediately hazardous. The cables were all repaired or replaced, and WMATA service resumed on all lines as scheduled. (*Metro, Railway Track & Structures*, March 16-17)

Metro customers at four busy stations may notice something new when they look down. Metro installed floor decals on rail platforms at Metro Center, Gallery Place, L'Enfant Plaza, and Union Station that show riders where a six-car train will stop on the platform.

The bright yellow 19-inch by 48-inch decals read "6 CAR TRAIN ENDS HERE" with an arrow directing customers to the boarding area. Metro's "Amplify" customer community provided feedback on the design.

"This is a simple, low-cost, common sense step that helps Metro customers and visitors know where they should stand on the platform," said Metro General Manager and CEO Paul J. Wiedefeld. "We also hope the decals will enhance platform safety by having customers better spread out on the platform and reduce — or eliminate — running for the last door of a six-car train."

Metro operates a combination of 6- and 8-car trains, all of which stop at the far end of the platform for safety and consistency. When a six-car train arrives, customers positioned at the seventh or eighth car locations on the platform have to walk forward to board the train which, in turn, causes congestion at the last door and increases boarding times.

Customers can determine whether an arriving train is six or eight cars in length by checking the LED displays, known as PIDS, on the platform.

Metro will evaluate the decals at the four stations before deciding whether to install them at additional stations later this year. (*Mass Transit Magazine* via

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Commuter and Transit Notes*(Continued from page 11)***WMATA, March 11)****MIAMI, FLORIDA**

Hitachi Rail USA officially opened its railcar assembly plant in Medley, Florida (near Hialeah) on Thursday, March 17, paving the way for the assembly of 136 new rapid transit cars for Miami Metrorail, replacing the same number of Budd-built railcars in use since the line first opened in 1984. The original contract had been awarded to AnsaldoBreda but was mired in contractual controversy when CAF filed a lawsuit over improprieties in the bidding and award process. When the bidding process was repeated, AnsaldoBreda landed the contract and the company was subsequently acquired by Hitachi Limited. Because of the two-year delay stemming from the forced re-bidding, the first cars are expected by December, 2017 with the \$313 million order completed by mid-2019. A full scale mock-up of the new car reveals that from the side, the exterior will be relatively unchanged from the current fleet but the cab end of the car body will feature a more rounded and sculpted capping colored mostly black with some silver borders and striping with the headlamp and marker light arranged in a stylized configuration. (*Railway Age*, March 17)

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

An empty eight-car Chicago South Shore Line single-level electric multiple unit (EMU) train derailed three of its easternmost cars in Michigan City, Indiana as it was being moved from the Carroll Avenue shops in Michigan City to be placed into passenger service as train #600 around 5 AM Saturday morning, March 12. With damage to track and catenary systems at that critical location blocking all trains in the yard from reaching the main line, service on the entire line was disrupted until almost 6 PM that day when Train #508 departed the South Bend Airport station at 5:45 PM headed west to Chicago making all stops to turn around as train #511 departing Chicago's Millennium Station at 9:15 PM, the first eastbound train out of Chicago that day. Press reports from nwi.com show images of Nippon Sharyo-built single-level EMU car 40 derailed on one of the cross-over tracks outside of the Michigan City shops. Later reports attributed the cause of the derailment to be the picking of a switch by the train, derailing cars 40 and 16. NICTD offered its apologies to the South Shore Line's customers, many of whom had been relying on the Indiana commuter rail line to travel to Chicago for the annual tradition of green-dyeing the Chicago River for Saint Patrick's Day celebrations. Coincidentally, this accident and service disruption occurred the day before a special fare promotion was scheduled to begin, offering free westbound rides all day Sunday, March 13 and after 9:30 AM on weekdays through March 18. (*Chicago Tribune*, nwi.com, ABC7 news, March 12)

The Chicago Transit Board awarded lowest bidder CSR Sifang America JV a contract on March 9 to supply its next generation of railcars. The base order is for 400

of the 7000-series cars, with options which could take the total build to 846 vehicles worth \$1.309 billion.

The Chicago Transit Authority said the cars would resemble the 5000-series vehicles, with stainless steel bodies, LED lighting and information displays, and a.c. traction equipment. Following passenger feedback, they will have a mix of forward-facing and aisle-facing seats, "designed to ensure customer comfort while maximizing passenger flow and capacity."

Prototype cars are expected to be completed for testing in 2019, ahead of entry into service in 2020. The 7000-series will replace the oldest cars in the CTA fleet, some of which are more than 30 years old; this is expected to reduce maintenance costs and energy costs by \$7 million a year. CTA has been in a drive to remove the oldest of its railcars, including the last two families of the High Performance fleet, the 2600 and 3200-series.

Bidders had been asked to outline their recruitment and training plans and detail the number and type of jobs they would create. CSR Sifang America has committed to assemble the cars at a new plant in Chicago, which represents an investment of \$40 million and is expected to generate 170 jobs. Chicago was previously home to Pullman-Standard's famed passenger railcar plant, which built numerous PCCs, the Amtrak Superliner Is, and New York City's R-46 fleet. (*Railway Gazette*, March 10)

The second phase of a major rehabilitation project at the Wilson station was to begin on March 21. The station will remain open during this phase, and trains on the Red and Purple Lines will continue to stop there. Trains on the two lines will share one southbound track, as they have since July, 2015. Southbound Purple Line trains will stop at the station and at Sheridan only during the AM rush, and they will no longer stop at Addison during the AM rush. The number of station entrances available to customers at Wilson will double during this phase, and southbound Red and Purple trains will stop at a new, modern, larger platform. Northbound trains will continue to use the existing platform. This is a \$203 million project and is expected to be completed in late 2017. (CTA website via Bob Hansen, March 14)

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) Train #10, the last train of the evening from San Jose to Stockton, struck a tree dislodged by a landslide and derailed around 7:29 PM on Monday, March 7, sending the leading cab control coach careening off the tracks, down an embankment, and into the adjacent Alameda Creek. It occurred near 5500 Niles Canyon Road, between the towns of Fremont and Sunol, on a stretch of track known to be prone to earth movement but not equipped with way-side slide detection equipment commonly used on rail lines passing through mountainous or steep, hilly territory. 14 people were reportedly injured in the wreck; five suffered minor injuries and four suffered serious but not life-threatening injuries. The lead coach had 12 passengers aboard. All 14 reported injured people were taken

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to local hospitals. ACE service was suspended all day Tuesday, March 8 as crews cleared the wreck and repaired the tracks. The torrential rains from a storm system affecting central California that day likely contributed to the landslide. (SFGate.com, March 8)

The first of 775 new cars for Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) departed the Bombardier manufacturing plant at Plattsburgh, New York during the week of March 7, beginning a cross-country trip via flatbed truck to BART's maintenance facility at Hayward Shops, where it and eventually nine other pilot test cars will be delivered for testing. Upon completion of that process, the Plattsburgh plant will ramp up to full scale production rates to replace the entire car fleet, many of which date back to 1972. BART anticipates the initial order of 775 cars to be delivered from 2016-21, starting with 10 test cars in 2016 and 54 cars in 2017. BART is trying to secure the funding to acquire a total of 1,081 cars to support a fleet that will permit service increases and system expansions. (*Editor's Note by Ron Yee: Coincidentally, the exterior color scheme of the new BART cars, with a blue end bonnet, resembles that used in the PATH system's PA-5 cars serving the New York City region.*) (**Progressive Railroading**, March 15)

A number of BART cars have become victims of power surges or spikes and have sustained damage to their electrical systems. The damage to around 80 of the cars began in late February and initially was attributed to the cut-in of a new power substation near the Oakland end of the Transbay Tube. To rectify the problem, that substation was taken offline. However, the problem has resurfaced on a portion of the system far from that Oakland substation, a section of line between the North Concord and Bay Point stations. Around 50 cars sustained propulsion systems damage on Wednesday, March 16, causing a temporary shortage of cars and shortened consists system-wide, exacerbating the crowding conditions already plaguing the system. Rail service between North Concord and Bay Point was replaced by a "bus bridge" linking the two sections of the line that still had rail service while engineering staff review the power systems to determine and correct the cause of the power spikes. (AP, **SF Gate**, March 17)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

After five years in the making, the 11.5-mile extension of the Gold Line to Azusa serving the Foothills finally opened on March 5, at a cost of about \$1 billion to construct. From Union Station it takes about 50 minutes to ride to the APU/Citrus College station.

There are many firsts associated with this project: First train project built totally with taxpayers dollars from Measure R, a half-cent transportation tax passed by voters in November, 2008. It is also the longest train in Metro's arsenal. It now runs 31 miles. While rail service is nothing new to the foothills, it will be a resumption of service that ran until the early 1960s. Like other passenger trains, it will bring newcomers and recognition.

In a world in which the automobile, driven on millions of miles of roads and concrete freeways, dominates, a passenger train is both a throwback to the past and a nod to the future, offering an alternative to driving in what has become increasingly thick traffic on the 210 and 10 freeways.

Here is how, when, and perhaps why things progressed:

- July 26, 2003: Gold Line Phase 1 (Los Angeles to Pasadena) begins passenger service. This line runs from Union Station to the Sierra Madre Villa station in east Pasadena. Passengers fill up a parking structure at SMV often by 7:30 AM and walk across the westbound 210 Freeway and down the stairs to the train platform. Starting off slowly, passenger ridership grew to 46,000 a day. It is the only line in the Metro (Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority) system that has increased every year it has been in operation
- June 26, 2010: Gold Line Phase 2A (Pasadena to Azusa) groundbreaking. In more than five years, workers laid 28 miles of track, relocated 4 miles of freight track (mostly near MillerCoors in Irwindale), and built 24 bridge structures and 14 at-grade crossings
- December, 2012: Gold Line Bridge completed. This has been called the largest piece of working art in the world. The \$18.6 million dual-track bridge was designed by Andrew Leicester. The motif of two, 25-foot tall, 17-foot diameter sculptural baskets made of concrete are references to the indigenous peoples who lived in the San Gabriel Valley before the first white or Hispanic settlers. The bridge provides a connection between the existing Sierra Madre Villa station and the Arcadia station
- October, 2014: Track completed. Some of the most difficult aspects were making sure the bridge fit right and relocating freight lines
- June, 2015: Maintenance Yard/Operations Campus in Monrovia completed at a cost of \$265-million. Located just south of the 210 Freeway in Monrovia, the 132,000-square-foot Main Shop Building was designed and built to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Standard. The facility will use 35 percent less water and 32.5% less electricity than a typical building of its kind. The yard has multiple tracks and can hold 84 light rail vehicles and 200 operations and maintenance staff
- September 23, 2015: Substantial completion of Phase 2A; turned over to Metro Sept. 24. Because the project was completed on time and on budget, it was rapidly turned over to Metro for train testing
- 2017(?) Breaking ground on next phase, Azusa-to-Montclair segment. The Gold Line Authority is working with \$69 million in residual funds on final designs. Most of the \$1.2 billion project is unfunded.

(**Pasadena Star-News** via San **Gabriel Valley Trib-**

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MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

Discussions on whether to construct light rail lines on the new Champlain Bridge connecting Downtown Montreal to Trudeau Airport and the West Island are about to start between the city of Montreal and the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, but in secret.

Montreal's city executive committee passed a resolution on March 16 approving a confidentiality agreement with the province's public pension fund manager, which the Quebec government authorized last year to take over the planning for the two light-rail lines from the Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT).

The Caisse has created a subsidiary, CDPQ Infra, to manage the two projects. The projects were the subject of studies carried out by AMT and the city, and the information in them is confidential, an executive summary accompanying the resolution says. The city had a non-disclosure agreement with AMT as well, it adds.

The first step in the discussions between the city and CDPQ Infra is a mutual confidentiality agreement before they discuss the results of the studies, the summary says. Signing such an agreement, it says, is normal practice on major projects.

The province has estimated the two transit lines would cost \$5 billion. (*Montreal Gazette*, March 16)

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

To alleviate chronic overcrowding on the Route 504 streetcar operating along King Street that has been causing service delays, a new route, which would be called Route 514/Cherry, is being proposed to supplement Route 504 starting June 19 if the Toronto Transit Commission's Board approved the plan during the week of March 21 (it was not known at press time whether the plan had been approved). In essence, the route would be, in old streetcar operation vernacular, a "short-turn" operation that would provide added service to the most heavily utilized portion of Route 504 between Dufferin Street to the west and Cherry Street to the east. Route 504 would continue to operate on a 10-minute headway at all periods of the day, every day, with 4-5 minute headways during the peak hours. The new Route 514 would operate on a 8-9 minute headway during peak periods and every 15 minutes during the off-peaks. An added bonus to increasing capacity is the intent to operate Route 514 with the new Bombardier Flexity LRVs, replacing Route 511/Bathurst as the third route to receive the new cars following Route 510/Spadina and Route 509/Harbourfront. Route 511 would be the fourth line to receive the new LRVs. (CBC News, March 16)

Speaking of the new Flexity LRVs, Bombardier has committed to an accelerated production schedule that will permit the delivery of four LRVs per month beginning in April and achieve a total of 54 new cars delivered by the end of 2016. The 16th car was placed in service on February 19 and deliveries had stopped due to production issues at the plant in Mexico that assembles

and welds the pieces of the carbody. The 17th car was expected on March 29. TTC still expects all 204 cars on order to be delivered by 2019. (*The Star*, March 14)

In response to initially low and then continually declining ridership numbers, Union-Pearson Express reduced its fares from \$27.50 to \$12 without a Presto fare card and from \$19 to \$9 with the card. In addition, in an effort to fill empty seats, people wishing to ride the train to two intermediate stations the trains stop at on the Kitchener Line, Dundas West at Bloor and Weston, would pay the regular GO Transit fare, \$4.71 to and from Bloor and \$5.02 to and from Weston. Ridership had fallen off to barely 2,200 passengers per day for the 25-minute ride with trains operating on a 15-minute headway, attracting much consternation from the public for a service that cost C\$456 million to build. Impediments to the line reaching even its modest initial ridership goals of 7,000 daily customers include a longer-than-expected walking distance from the downtown hotel and business districts centered on Yonge Street, and ongoing construction at Union Station as it undergoes a rebirth and expansion, creating a less than ideal environment for pedestrians. Daily ridership has spiked from 2,200 up to 5,300 boardings as a result of the fare cut. 83% of the riders were airport travelers and 17% were local GO Transit riders. Surveys of the ridership on Wednesday, March 16 showed that 40% were new riders. UPX officials are working on improved signage directing customers to the UPX station platform near Union Station to further increase ridership. (*Toronto Star*, February 23 and March 17)

ENGLAND

A new Railway Group Standard in the United Kingdom covering audibility and visibility came into force on March 5, removing the requirement for trains on the national network to have yellow front ends.

Industry safety body RSSB said headlamp technology had improved since the requirement for a yellow panel was introduced the 1950s, when it had been found that diesel and electric trains were quieter than steam locomotives.

Vehicle owners and operators must ensure sufficiently visibility, which for new and modified vehicles includes fitting headlamps complying with the Technical Specification for Interoperability for Locomotives & Passenger Rolling Stock. A yellow front end is still required for trains without the new arrangement of headlamps, and the specification for the yellow panel is still provided in the new standard GM/RT2131 where this is found to be good practice.

RSSB said the change means owners and operators are now able to "make their own informed choice" about front end color, subject to a risk assessment and consultation with all affected parties. Colors associated with signal aspects or with high-visibility clothing should be avoided.

However, little is likely to change in the short term, as the majority of existing vehicles with yellow front ends are likely to keep them as they do not comply with the

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TSI headlamp requirements.

On-track plant still has to be yellow, and forward-facing surfaces on shunting locomotives and snowplows must still be painted yellow with black diagonal stripes where it is reasonable to do so. (*Railway Gazette*, March 12)

GERMANY

Transdev has placed a €115 million order for 28 Alstom Coradia Lint diesel multiple-units, which its Bayerische Regiobahn subsidiary is to use starting in December, 2018 on Dieselnetz Augsburg I services from Augsburg to Landsberg and Füssen and from München to Füssen.

The order announced by Alstom on March 11 covers four Coradia Lint 54, five Coradia Lint 81, and 19 Coradia Lint 41 DMUs which are to be built at Salzgitter. These 140 kilometer-per-hour units will have capacities of between 225 and 485 passengers, a first class area, a multi-purpose area for wheelchairs, bicycles, and prams, an accessible toilet, a “large number” of luggage racks, a real-time passenger information system, and CCTV.

Transdev GmbH Management Board Chairman Chris-

tian Schreyer said Coradia Lint DMUs had “proven themselves with different Transdev businesses in the past,” and the operator “wanted to stick to the modern, passenger-friendly, and reliable trains from Alstom.” (*Railway Gazette*, March 11)

ISRAEL

Israel Railways has exercised an option for an additional 60 Bombardier Transportation Twindexx Vario push-pull coaches, and called tenders for the supply and maintenance of 60 double-deck electric multiple-units.

The €106 million firm order announced on March 21 has been placed within an October, 2010 framework contract with Bombardier. Deliveries are scheduled to run from March, 2017 to July, 2018. The push-pull coaches will operate with Traxx a.c. electric locomotives that ISR ordered in 2015 as part of its 25,000-volt, 50 Hz electrification program.

The order will take ISR’s total fleet of Bombardier double-deck coaches to 425 vehicles.

The separate call for tenders covers 60 four-car and six-car EMUs. A proven design is required, which should be suitable for 160 kilometer-per-hour operation on regional and “inter-city comparable” routes of up to 300 kilometers. (*Railway Gazette*, March 21)

WORLD TRADE CENTER PATH STATION OPENS

by Andrew Grahl
(Photographs by the author)

Designed by architect Santiago Calatrava, the new \$4.4 billion PATH World Trade Center station opened shortly after 3 PM Thursday, March 3, 2016. This monumental station, which is ten years late and \$2 billion over budget, improves access today to lower Manhattan for 100,000 daily PATH riders. Calatrava envisioned a

bird being released from a child’s hands when creating the design. The station features a cavernous hall called an Oculus complete with a 350-foot long skylight and future retail space. Later in 2016, access to NYCT’s Fulton Street Transit Center will also be possible.



Around New York's Transit System

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comply with all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. New York City plans to spend \$55 million for 10 new ferry landings and rehabilitating 6 existing landings, and has budgeted \$30 million in subsidies to bring the fare down to \$2.75 from the current \$4 charged by East River Ferry. However, there will be no free *MetroCard* transfers to MTA buses and subways. The city expects the per-ride subsidy of a ferry passenger will be \$6.60, compared with an almost \$8 subsidy for a LIRR rider and \$15 for express buses. The Rockaways (Queens), Astoria (Queens), and South Brooklyn routes are scheduled to begin around Summer, 2017. The Rockaways route will connect to the Brooklyn Army Terminal and Wall Street; the Astoria route will connect to Astoria, Roosevelt Island (Cornell Tech), Long Island City, E. 34th Street, and Wall Street, and the South Brooklyn route will connect Bay Ridge, Brooklyn Army Terminal, Red Hook, Brooklyn Bridge Park's Pier 1 and Pier 6, and Wall Street, with an optional link to Governors Island. The Soundview (Bronx) and Lower East Side route will begin in 2018 with routes connecting Coney Island and Stapleton (Staten Island) still in the planning stages. Travel times from the Wall Street ferry landing are expected to be an hour to the Rockaways with one intermediate stop, 38 minutes to Astoria with 3 stops, 48 minutes to Bay Ridge with 4 stops, and Soundview in 43 minutes with 2 stops. The only downside to this plan is that New York Water Taxi, with its iconic yellow ferryboats, will likely cease operations as it will be unable to lower its \$4 fare to compete with a city-subsidized ferry service, resulting in the loss of 200 jobs. *(Editor's Note by Ron Yee: The ferries should be a major hit with commuters, and at 149 passengers per boat, they will probably have to turn away passengers seeking shorter travel times to many destinations that the current combination of subways and buses cannot match, for the same fare.)*

New Senior Vice President for Subways

MTA New York City Transit announced Wynton Hershman as Senior Vice President for Subways on March 17. He had been serving as acting SVP for Subways since the December, 2015 retirement of Joe Leader. A 33-year veteran employee at NYC Transit and son of a subway Conductor, he began his career in the signals division and worked his way up to Vice President of Maintenance of Way, which, during his tenure, saw a significant decrease in fires and employee accidents. He was the Vice President and Chief Officer for Service Delivery prior to his current position. Challenges awaiting him include the successful and on-time opening of Phase One of the Second Avenue Subway scheduled for December, on-going Hurricane Sandy-related Fix & Fortify work to protect the system from future superstorms, implementation and expansion of Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC), replacing antiquated signal and power equipment, integrating new subway

cars into the fleet, and expanding underground cell phone and Wi-Fi service to meet the needs of today's customers.

New Senior Vice President for Capital Program Management

John F. O'Grady has been named Senior Vice President for Capital Program Management by NYC Transit after acting in the position over the past several months. O'Grady, who succeeds the retired Fred Smith, has 27 years of experience at NYC Transit. Most recently, since 2013 he was Vice President and Program Executive of Infrastructure and Facilities/Recovery and Resiliency, in charge of NYC Transit's Fix & Fortify program to repair the subway system after Hurricane Sandy and prevent future flood damage.

M Rehabilitation to Start in 2017

NYC Transit announced two major projects that will have significant impacts on **M** in 2017. Two sections of **M** over the old Myrtle Avenue "L" have deteriorated to the point that they are becoming structurally unsafe. There is a badly deteriorated steel bridge between Fresh Pond Road and the Metropolitan Avenue terminus of the line that needs to be replaced. Phase One, which will see the replacement of that bridge, will take two months during the Summer of 2017 when Christ the King High School, adjacent to the Metropolitan Avenue station, is in summer recess to minimize disruption to its students who rely on the line to reach the school. **M** will be replaced by buses between Myrtle Avenue and Metropolitan Avenue. The buses will operate over two routes serving the stations that are closed while a third bus route will connect the Flushing Avenue **J/M** station with Metropolitan Avenue with one intermediate stop at the Jefferson Street **L** station. Phase Two will occupy the next eight months until the Spring of 2018 and enable repairs to be made to the deteriorated Bushwick viaduct linking the line with the Jamaica "L." During that time, **M** will operate as a shuttle train service between Metropolitan Avenue and Wyckoff Avenue to offer connections to **L**, and a shuttle bus route will operate between the Wyckoff Avenue and Myrtle Avenue stations, offering connections with **J/Z** and **L**. During this entire project, **M** trains will be rerouted east of Myrtle Avenue and terminate at Broadway Junction with peak hour frequencies reduced by 25%. All of this repair work will insure that the infrastructure of **M** between Myrtle and Metropolitan Avenues will enable the line to continue to offer reliable service for its 60,000 weekday riders. *(Editor's Note by Ron Yee: These repairs will also insure that this line will be able to serve as one of the alternative rapid transit routes for **L** customers when the repairs to the Canarsie Tubes commence sometime around 2019; they may take nearly four years to complete.)*

The project also includes construction of a two-car inspection and repair shop in Fresh Pond Yard, since the car fleet assigned to the shuttle train service will not be able to access **M**'s regular inspection/repair facility, East New York Shop.

TOUR OF TURKEY

by Jack May

(Continued from March, 2016 issue)
(Photographs by the author)

Saturday dawned with blue sky and sun, and so after consuming our breakfast, served in the lounge next to our room, we were off and running. Konya is a historic city, the seat of an important Islamic sect, the Mevlevi, whose adherents ceremoniously worship Allah by spreading their arms and spinning, hence the well-known whirling dervishes. Konya is a center for pilgrimage, and as such has a large number of worthwhile attractions. Clare had worked up a nice schedule of museum visits, while I would ride the streetcars. We decided to meet back at the hotel at 13:00, to get an early start on the next part of our motor journey.

We had visited Konya in 2001, so I was already familiar with streetcar operations in this city of 1 million, and it was just a short walk to the layover station of this one-line system, adjacent to the loop around Aladdin Hill. I am quite fond of traditional tramways, and this one certainly fits the bill. The 13.1-mile-long suburban line operates mainly in center reservation, and uses traditional single-ended Duewag articulated cars. These are the types of streetcars that were just being introduced in Germany and Austria on my first European trip in 1960, and then became ubiquitous for the next 3 decades. While they are mostly gone from the properties that originally purchased them, it is good to see them live on to provide excellent service in less advanced countries. These particular 8-axle single-end cars were built for Koln, probably in the early 1960s, and sold to Konya for the inauguration of its express tramway in 1991. And express tramway it is, with 36 stops and a fast, snappy operating culture.

This was the "Children's Day" holiday weekend and service on this Saturday morning was being operated at a 3½-minute headway. Almost all the cars had Turkish flags attached to their front dashes, which blended in nicely with the company's "traction" white with red striping color scheme. There are plenty of good photo locations along the line, with the long loop at the outer end itself having a couple of stations and several layover tracks. One station is named MTA, which does not stand for Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The in-

ner portion of the route is surrounded by stately apartment buildings, while much of the outer section consists of fields, dotted with clusters of high-rise commercial and residential buildings. Portions are adjacent to a major arterial highway, and there are overpasses crossing both the streetcar tracks and the busy road. At one point the line crosses over TCDD's brand new high-speed rail line, on which service did not begin until a few months after our visit.

The tramway is always busy, as it serves the city's bus terminal and university. In fact there is a cutback loop at the Otogar (bus station) about halfway along the line. Fare collection is interesting. Smart cards are used, which are sold at kiosks adjacent to most car stops. The busiest platforms are enclosed, with entrance turnstiles supporting station fare collection. They have automatic elevator-type doors that open only when cars are at the stop with their entrances lined up. This allows all doors to be used, enabling the crowds on the platform to be swallowed up easily into the large articulated cars. Platforms at most stations, however, are open, and boarding passengers use the front doors, tapping their fare cards under the watchful eye of the tramcar's operator.

We duly met back at the hotel at 12:30, and moved our bags outside while I went for the car. Unfortunately, I could not leave the garage on the same side I entered, and after paying the charges I found myself on streets I had never seen before. It took me about a half hour to return to the hotel, as I lost my way several times in the maze of one-way local alleyways. Clare, of course, was quite frantic when I finally pulled up to the door. But we did finally get onto the road.

Editor's Note: Since Jack wrote this trip report, Konya has added a new line and replaced its rolling stock with 60 new Skoda model 28T 100 percent low-floor LRVs from the Czech Republic. Many of the Duewags, built 1963-5, have since been sold to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where they started a third career replacing equally ancient Tatra PCCs (which in turn had replaced ancient Washington, D.C. PCC cars).

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Tour of Turkey

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An inbound car has just discharged its passengers at the Kültür Parkı terminal in the center of Konya. The operator changes the rollsign at this station to designate the outer terminal of the line, but the car will first circle Aladdin Hill and stop here again before heading out to Selçuk University.



An inbound car photographed from a pedestrian overpass that crosses over Nalcaci Cd.



An inbound car near the outer end of the line, where much room for development still exists.



As the tramway approaches the center of Konya, it runs along Ahmet Hilmi Nalcaci Cd., an attractive thoroughfare lined by modern apartment houses. Note the Turkish flags on the dashes, signifying a holiday. The tramcars' color scheme blends well with the national flag.



Much of Konya's tramway is at the side of Yeni Istanbul Cd, an arterial road that eventually becomes highway D330.



A pair of cars pause at one of the busier stations on the line. The platform on the outbound side is open, but passengers must usually pay their fares before entering the enclosed inbound platform. The sliding doors that allow access to the cars when they are lined up properly with the vehicles' entrances close when the tram moves on. But if there is no agent present, which occurs during quiet periods, the doors remain open.

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NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR UPDATE

Subdivision “A” News

By the end of February, just two trains of existing R-142As (7571-90) remained on ⑥ that were destined to be shipped to Kawasaki Rail Car in Yonkers for “conversion” to CBTC-capable R-188(C)s, with 7571-5 observed in revenue service there as late as February 26. At the end of the month, cars 7566-70 were awaiting shipment at the 239th Street facility (where cars are taken in and out by flatbed truck), while others below that number were already in process, or back in service on ⑦. Moving to KRC since the end of September, 2015 were the following: 7501-15 in October, 2015; 7516-30 in November; 7531-40 in December; 7541-55 in January, 2016; and 7556-65 in February. Since the autumn of 2015, one ④-assigned train of (Bombardier) R-142 or (Kawasaki) R-142A/R-142S equipment has usually been found making a morning rush hour run on ⑥. Reportedly this equipment is most often put in from either Mosholu or Concourse Yards, enters service as a Lexington Avenue Local at 149th Street-Grand Concourse, and makes at least one round trip back to Parkchester or Pelham Bay Park before returning to its home route. On December 23, 2015, one 5-car R-142S link (7746-50) was formally relocated to the Westchester facility and outfitted with ⑥ strip maps inside, but the balance of the Pelham-based R-142A fleet has otherwise been unchanged since the last Update in 2015, with 7571-7655 remaining as of February 29 to yield an overall fleet of 90 cars, or a maximum of nine New Technology trains.

Deliveries of R-188(C) and R-188(C1) cars since last Fall included 7466-80 plus 7924 and 7925 during October, 2015; 7481-90 plus 7926 in November; 7491-7510 plus 7927 and 7928 in December; 7511-20 plus 7929 in January, 2016; and 7521-35 plus 7930 in February. (Re)-starting their service careers on ⑦ in this period were 7441-50 plus 7922 on October 5, 2015; 7451-60 plus 7923 on October 26; 7461-70 plus 7924 on November 2; 7471-80 plus 7925 on November 28; 7481-90 plus 7926 on December 28; 7491-7500 plus 7927 on January 18, 2016; and 7501-10 plus 7928 on January 29. Cars 7516-20 plus 7929 were accepted in the company of 7521-5 on February 29, but not placed in service immediately. They were awaiting completion of the “burn-in” (500-mile pre-service simulation) phase of cars 7511-5 and 7526-30 plus 7930, which would enable all four sets to be numerically matched in consecutive order when they do begin carrying passengers in March. On or about February 6, the first “mixed” train composed of veteran R-188(C) and (C1)s 7486-90 plus 7926 and R-188(N)s 7881-77 entered revenue service on ⑦. This tendency should continue through 2016 as the new equipment gains in experience and the confidence of NYCT.

The transfer of R-62As from ⑦ to ⑥ has abounded correspondent to the (re-) entry of R-188s during the

past five months. The first linked set to be relocated was 2096-2100 on October 6, 2015, followed by 2051-55 with 2136-40 on October 13; 2031-40 as a complete train on November 1; 2111-15 on November 20; 2086-90 on December 3; 2056-60 and 2146-50 on December 13; 2121-5 on December 19; and 2046-50 on December 28. On New Year’s Eve (December 31), single-unit R-62As 1921-5 were dispatched from Corona (⑦) to Westchester (⑥) as a matched set, that is coupled and *not* linked. They were followed by singles 1916-20 in similar fashion on January 30, with link 2026-30 finally thrown in as well. The latter had been bypassed in the numerical grouping since its use as half of an “ad-themed” ⑦ consist last summer. Cars 1961-5 returned to ⑥ from a spell at 207th Street Shop by November still coupled together and not linked as had been anticipated, a form that is expected to be assumed in time by Corona-based singles 1901-5 and 1911-5 as they are readied for transfer to Westchester. Beyond those, it would not be possible to marshal the cars in five-car numerical sets without moving them between ⑦ and ⑤/Grand Central Shuttle. In any case, at the end of February there remained 40 unitized R-62As on ⑦ (8 five-car links) along with 29 single units, though of the latter cars 1911-5 had not appeared in passenger service since January. On any given weekday there were about five trains of R-62As remaining on ⑦, with perhaps one or two on weekends. Separately, R-62 train 1371-5 and 1556-60 was briefly spied on ① in late December, 2015, but proved elusive and was back on ③ by mid-January, 2016. Cars 1406-10 arrived on ① in mid-February to be mated with the “spare” set of 1431-4 and 1438, being followed by 1541-5 at the end of the month. It appears that 1456-60, which had been stationed at 240th Street (①) since May of 2014, may have finally gone back to its “home” at Livonia (③).

Subdivision “B” News

As of December 7, 2015 R-160Bs 9183-92 had again returned from Coney Island (N/Q) to Jamaica (E/F, sometimes R), a transfer compensated by the movement of R-68s 2776-83 from Concourse (D) to Coney Island (B/G, sometimes N). These consistent variations to regular equipment assignments have been unchanged since our last look at the end of September, 2015: R-46s on F, R-68As on G, R-68s and/or R-68As on N, and Jamaica R-160s on R. All occur just about every weekday in limited quantity, fluctuating between one and four trainsets on each line. J/Z have been dominated by Phase I R-32s throughout the Fall and Winter, supplemented by the six remaining trains of Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s and a handful of R-143s borrowed from L. What has grown to be surprisingly rare are sightings of R-160A-1s on J/Z,

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Around New York's Transit System

34th Street-Hudson Yards Station Has Leaks

The new 34th Street-Hudson Yards station of 7's \$2.4 billion extension has been experiencing constant leaks since it opened, mostly stemming from waterproofing issues within the complex, causing ceiling leaks that have forced the closure of the station's toilets until further notice and sometimes over half of the escalators to be shut down on a rotating basis for maintenance. The constant seepage is also causing the white ceiling panels in these sections to become moldy and discolored. This past winter, the seepage frequently froze, causing even more issues for the escalators as well as slip-and-fall hazards for the station's users. Despite the fact that the entire neighborhood being developed over and around the new station has yet to open for occupancy, the resulting shortages of escalators have actually resulted in passenger queues for the ones that are still functioning, an absolute necessity since the station's fare control mezzanine is over 90 feet above the level of the station's lower mezzanine located directly above the platform. The primary contractor, Yonkers Contracting, has hired a waterproofing specialist for \$3 million to remediate the issues that have cropped up in the six months since the station opened on September 13, 2015. As part of the station warranty, MTA is expected to hold Yonkers Contracting responsible for the costs associated with fixing the leaks. *(Editor's Note by Ron*

Yee: I have always suspected that this station would have issues with the street level escalators leading down to the upper mezzanine having to deal with blowing snow and tracked-in, salt-laden snow from the boots and shoes of passengers walking in from the streets that end up on the escalator treadles, despite the covered headhouse. Unless the steps or escalator apparatus was equipped with a heating system, I foresaw those escalators having problems just from snow, never mind poor construction.)

Citywide Ferry Service Announced

New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio announced the formation of citywide ferry service, which is slated to begin operations in the summer of 2017 and expand to the full expected scope of its service region serving 21 ferry landings around the city serving an estimated 4.6 million trips per year with six specific routes covering 60 miles of waterways for the price of a subway or bus ride, currently \$2.75. San Francisco-based Hornblower, Incorporated was selected as the operator of this new service, which is expected to create 155 jobs. It will also absorb the operations of a current ferry operator, East River Ferry. The new fleet will be composed of at least 18 high-speed, environmentally friendly, fuel-efficient boats featuring a hull design that will generate a minimal wake. Each boat will have a minimum capacity of 149 passengers, be equipped with on-board Wi-Fi, and

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New York City Subway Car Update

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though they do continue to be used in small numbers on weekdays, and have a much greater presence off-peak. Speaking of the Morrison-Knudsen-overhauled R-42s, it is somewhat telling, relative to the status of the nascent R-179 acquisition, that the surviving 50-car mini-fleet began cycling through Coney Island Overhaul Shop for yet another round of SMS work in November. A number of components are being renewed (but not necessarily completely rebuilt) as a result, while a coat of fresh silver paint is being applied to the fiberglass end bonnets and along their trademark, rusting gutter lines above the windows. Also continuing to pass through CIOH for "strong, ongoing maintenance" are select examples of MTA Staten Island Railway's R-44(SI) series, with 399, 404, and 414 having crossed over the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge (on a flatbed trailer, of course) as of January, 2016. One other news note tells us that beginning in January, rolling stock with operational, "upgraded" (digital) CBTC equipment is denoted by orange strips beneath the number boards on the "A" (cab) cars at the ends of each unit. These can be witnessed on select R-143s and members of the 8317-76 R-160A-

1 group at East New York (JZ, L, M) as well as one train of R-188s (lead cars 7371 and 7380) on 7.

By February 29, the restoration of R-46s 5742-5, late of the May, 2014 Queens Boulevard Line derailment, was about complete and it was awaiting its first operational testing. A similar state was also enjoyed by Sandy-victimized R-160B set 8738-42, which was finally ready for its pre-service testing after an extensive (and largely unanticipated) electrical reconstruction at Coney Island Shops. Both should be ready to resume work in the second or third quarter of 2016. R-143s 8277-8280, which have been sidelined since a 2006 derailment at Rockaway Parkway, have physically been put back together as a 4-car unit (still located at 207th Street) but are in need of some component replacement to become operational. East New York-assigned R-160A-1 sets 8313-6 and 8377-80, which have been set up as a test train, continue to be employed by the Engineering Department as specifications are developed for the future installation of CBTC on the Queens Boulevard Line by early in the next decade. It is still often found roaming the unused express tracks between Bergen Street and Church Avenue in Brooklyn, or resting between runs at Coney Island or Jamaica Yards.