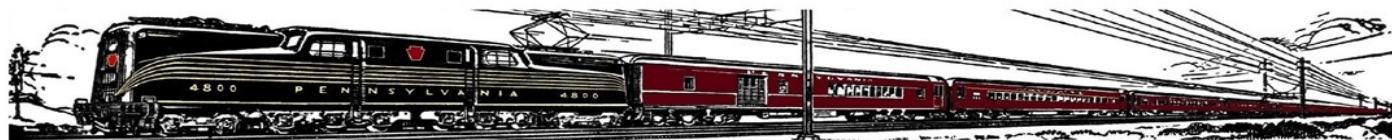


# LANCASTER DISPATCHER

1935-2024



LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 57 NUMBER 1

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JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024



GG1 hauled passenger train exiting the Hudson (North River) Tunnels in May, 1969.  
From the collection of Fred W. Schneider, III and property of the Lancaster Chapter, N.R.H.S.

### Note from the Editor

#### The Fred W. Schneider, III Photo Collection

Fred W. Schneider III

Lancaster Chapter member Fred Schneider has donated to the Chapter a huge amount of Pennsylvania Railroad photographs that he has taken over the years. They are high-quality, black-and-white, 8" x 10" glossy photos, all developed by Fred himself. In addition, Fred has photos from friends in his collection, which he also developed for them. I visited Fred in his Lancaster home and enjoyed a wonderful morning learning about his life, his varied interests and his railroad and trolley photography. Since we will be featuring Fred photographs in the *Dispatcher* throughout 2024 (see the cover) here are the interesting facts about Fred's careers and hobbies.

After high school, Fred enlisted in the army. During his enlistment, he was able to photograph trains, trolley's and architecture throughout the United States and Europe. Next, he attended Franklin and Marshall College, where he majored first in business, then in geology. Upon graduation, he taught high school math for two years. He then worked for the Commonwealth, providing labor statistics for the state. Since he had accumulated pensions from the military, the state and school system, Fred was able to retire and travel at the age of 60.

During high school and without an automobile, Fred walked the entire Enola Low Grade, up to 30 miles a day, to film the route. He also walked most major metropolitan cities in the United States and Europe as well.

Fred joined the Chapter in 1963 and originated some of the Chapter excursions, including a "mixed train" on the Reading's Lancaster Branch from Lancaster to Sinking Spring in October of 1964. It took place on a Sunday and was the first *mixed train* since Reading's 1950 service was abolished.

Fred did photo processing in his home for people such as long-time Chapter member John Bowman, William Middleton, and Donald Duke of Golden West Books, with whom he was a very close friend. Some of their photos are in his collection.

Fred co-authored the book, *PCC From Coast to Coast*, a pictorial survey of the PCC on every streetcar system in North America that ever operated the streamlined PCC car.

He had at least one article published in *Trains Magazine* on the DL&W and Erie Railroads. David P. Morgan, *Trains* editor, actually paid higher than the per word rate to Fred, because of the quality of the article. *Trains Magazine* also published a photo of Fred's – the last GG1 in Lancaster, PA.

What stands out about Fred's photography is not just the quality, but his eye for capturing the story. He has many photos of railroad workers and passengers that vividly bring out life in the 1950's, 60's and 70's. It is a pleasure to present Fred's photographs throughout future Lancaster Dispatcher issues. His photos will grace many of our covers as well as photo-stories of the areas he visited and recorded. We are all so grateful that Fred has shared his work with the Chapter that he has been such a large part.

Thank you, Fred!



**Fred and fellow Chapter member John Bowman on the Strasburg Railroad in 1983. Fred served as a conductor.**



## Railway News Flash

By Steve Ferrell

Gathered from press releases and revised for this publication

**January, 2024**

On December 14<sup>th</sup>, SEPTA transit police went on strike. SEPTA is using supervisors and local police, private security guards and university police departments to fill the security needs for now.

SEPTA launched a new user-friendly website on Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. It appears to be working quite well so far after extensive beta testing.

Infrastructure improvements to accommodate the second daily round trip of Amtrak's Pennsylvanian will receive more than \$143 million in federal funding. The funds will go toward the infrastructural work agreed to by the State and Norfolk Southern.

Amtrak, in coordination with NJ Transit, has begun the procurement phase of the Sawtooth Bridges (built in 1907) replacement project. The replacement of these bridges in Kearny, New Jersey will preserve and expand the busiest section of the Northeast Corridor. The bridges carry over 400 NJT and Amtrak trains per day over tracks used by other NJT lines, PATH and Conrail freight lines.

Amtrak is testing a long retired HHP8 electric motive (with pantographs removed) for use as a cab car on their push-pull Keystone services. These would replace the aging fleet of ex-Metroliners currently used as cab cars.

Siemens unveiled the prototype car of its Airo train sets being constructed for Amtrak. They are planned for introduction in 2026 to replace the aging Amfleet cars. Some locomotives on these will have dual-mode capabilities to eliminate the need for engine changes when leaving electrified areas.

The East Broad Top (through the EBT foundation) announced that due to scheduling and maintenance demands for its lone operating locomotive (Baldwin Locomotive Works 2-8-2 Mikado #16), it will not hold its highly popular annual Winter Spectacular Railfan event in 2024.

The Woodstown Central Railroad division of the SMS Rail Lines has had its steam locomotive (Alco 0-6-0, number 9) certified for operation on this tourist line by the FRA. It had been in restoration at the SMS shops for fourteen years.

New Jersey Transit's Morris & Essex line was disrupted by catenary damage near Mount Tabor New Jersey. Fifteen trains are being re-routed through the Montclair-Boonton Line between Denville and Newark Broad Street. Catenary support structures were knocked down by apparatus from a work train.

The Harrisburg NRHS chapter opened the former Pennsylvania Railroad Power Director's office. This center is the sole remaining preserved electrification control room. Built in 1937 this office which is located on the second floor of the Harrisburg Station is open for visits by appointment. (from Dan Cupper).

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced that the Federal Railroad Administration released \$8.1 billion in funding for 10 passenger rail projects. These programs include funding for two high-speed rail projects. At the same time, the FRA revealed the inaugural Corridor Identification Program list, selecting 69 passenger routes to receive planning and service development funding.

News of the weird: On Thursday December 10<sup>th</sup>, a bull (that's right a bull, horns and all) was observed by train passengers waiting on the Newark Penn Station platform waking down one of the tracks. This disrupted Amtrak and New Jersey transit traffic for a short while. The bull was eventually caught, tranquilized and taken to an animal rescue sanctuary after exiting the station.

**THIS MONTH ON THE PENNSY****PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN JANUARY—FEBRUARY**

Source: Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society (permission of Christopher Baer, PRRT&HS).

January 16, 1920 Prohibition begins; big impact on club car and station restaurant revenue.

January, 1925 PRR sets new Philadelphia-New York speed record of 90 minutes with a three-car special for Cantor Joseph Rosenblatt. PRR announces completion of a study for New York-Washington electrification.

January 23, 1925 Philadelphia Electric Company awards contract for Conowingo Dam to Stone & Webster, Inc., of Boston; will be third largest U.S. hydroelectric plant after Niagara Falls and Muscle Shoals; eventually provides power for PRR electrification.

February 18, 1925 PRR announces that over 1,500 handcars have been replaced by motorized track cars.

January 6, 1930 New Class K5 4-6-2 No. 5598 is placed on No. 15 between Philadelphia and Altoona

January 31, 1930 PRR and CNJ agree to joint ownership and operation of NY&LB

January, 1930 Pitcairn Car Shop turns out first of 100 70-ton hoppers equipped with Timken roller bearings; first roller-bearing freight cars; are used in service between Cresson Division and Tidewater and are to be tested soon as a single train near Trinway, Ohio.

February 1, 1935 PRR begins lowering the track in the No. 2 line of the North River and East River Tunnels at New York to permit the installation of a.c. catenary; No. 1 line is already done.

January 28, 1935 Special nine-car AC train makes first electric run from Washington to Philadelphia and back for guests, including Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes; leaves Washington at 10:00 AM and arrives at 12:08 PM; prototype GG1 No. 4800 hits maximum of 102 MPH near Seabrook, Md.; breaks record of "Lindbergh Special" of 1927; electrification has been financed in part by the sale to the federal government of \$30 million in 4% serial bonds and of equipment trust certificates for the GG1's.

February 11, 1935 Chief of Motive Power F.W. Hankins writes a memo to VP in Charge of Operations John F. Deasy putting the savings from electrification of passenger trains between New York and Paoli over steam operation from May 1, 1933 to Apr. 30, 1934 at \$1,799,630; estimates the saving from electric freight and passenger service to Washington at \$5,439,000; the net savings after fixed charges will be \$2,248,779.

January 13, 1940 PRR and Missouri Pacific Railroad establish a through sleeping car between New York and Mexico City operated weekly for the rest of the winter tourist season; runs westbound on The American and The City of Mexico and eastbound on The Sunshine Special and The American.

January 1, 1945 Borrowed Norfolk & Western Class J 4-8-4 hauls Broadway Limited from Chicago to Ft. Wayne..

February 28, 1945 Since Pearl Harbor, about 38,500,000 troop-trips have been run by U.S. railroads, including 91,000 special trains, 246,194 coach trips, 430,685 sleeping car trips, and 120,046 baggage car and kitchen car trips.

January 6, 1950 LIRR drops keystone herald and replaces with a new herald with "LI" in futura lettering in a circle; also drops tuscan red in favor of new grey and green paint scheme, both devised by Lester C. Tichy.

February 1955 PRR announces it will remove Track No. 3 between Parkesburg and Lancaster; not much used since World War II.

**THIS MONTH ON THE PENNSY****PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN JANUARY—FEBRUARY**

Source: Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society (permission of Christopher Baer, PRR&HS).

January 12, 1955 PRR announces it will remove Princeton yards, previously used for football specials and single-track the Princeton Branch, as they now only run three or four trains from New York to football games; in 1920s, ran up to 44 trains.

February 1955 PRR announces it will remove Track No. 3 between Parkesburg and Lancaster; not much used since World War II.

January 11, 1960 PRR files with the ICC to abandon its Jersey City Terminal at Exchange Place, now served by only a small number of commuter trains, and its elevated passenger line on Railroad Avenue.

February, 1960 Last Class H9s (No. 5216), H10s and M1 (No. 6940) sold for scrap.

February 14, 1960 PRR places single MU car on former schedule of No. 601 between Lancaster and Harrisburg.

February 19, 1960 LIRR introduces bar service as an experiment on 5:03 from Hunters Point Ave. to Port Jefferson using a portable bar set up between seats.

January 30, 1965 Post Office Dept. discontinues all local rail mail service between New York and Philadelphia except one RPO round trip on No. 3815-505 and No. 522-3858; solid New York-Philadelphia head-end train No. 251-260 discontinued.

February 15, 1965 Railroads sign contracts with telegraphers, signalmen, clerks, maintenance of way workers and hotel workers calling for eliminating jobs only through attrition; no employee with more than two years seniority on Oct. 1, 1964 will lose job; completes settlement with all rail unions.

February 18, 1965 Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission votes to locate the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania at Strasburg to take advantage of the established Lancaster County Dutch Country tourist base and the operating Strasburg Railroad; votes are Strasburg - 4, Mt. Union - 3, Altoona - 1.

January 18, 1970 US DOT announces plan for "Railpax" (National Railroad Passenger Corporation), a quasi-public corporation to operate intercity passenger trains with an initial grant of \$40 million and a \$60 million loan.

February 1, 1970 Black River & Western tourist railroad buys Lambertville-Flemington Branch from Penn Central.

January 16, 1975 Penn Central Company reports total losses of over \$1 billion since 1970.

January 31, 1975 Penn Central loss for the month is \$47.97 million, or \$64,500 per hour.

February 1, 1975 SEPTA opens its own ticket office on the mezzanine level of 30th Street Station and separates its operation from the main ticket office on the concourse operated by Amtrak.

February 24, 1975 Prototype E60CP No. 950 derails at 102 MPH at Elkton during final southbound acceptance run; caused by excessive yawing; Amtrak refuses to accept delivery; delivery of P30CH diesels, which use same truck, is also delayed pending further tests.

January 19, 1980 No. 900, first of 47 Amtrak AEM7 electric locomotive, arrives at Wilmington Shops from La Grange.

The Fred W. Schneider, III Photo Collection



GG1 entering Hudson River Tunnel with the PRR Senator on May 22, 1969



PRR New York bound MU's crossing Passaic River Bridge in Newark NJ 1960. Photo credit: George White, collection of Donald Duke



Left: PRR Silver Meteor exiting Sunnyside Yards with Flushing Subway above. June 17, 1970



Right: PRR B-1 at Sunnyside engine terminal June 15, 1970



Left: PRR E2C at Thorndale, May 11, 1952 John Pickett photo



Right: PRR Ore-extra Sept. 8, 1956

The Fred W. Schneider, III Photo Collection

Note that while all of these photos are in Fred Schneider's collection, and most of them are his, photos credited to others were developed by Fred in his home darkroom on behalf of the original photographer.

Winter in Lancaster



Left, Top: PRR Lancaster; 18" snowfall, drifts to 5". GG1 motors burnt out due to fine show. February 15, 1958

Left, Center: PC WB Leaman Place 1969 Strasburg RR Meet

Left, Bottom: Lancaster Station Snow Removal. March 20, 1958

Right, Top: PRR # 50 Lancaster in 1958. March 20, 1958

Right, Bottom: PRR FF2 Lancaster PA 1958

### Riding behind the Queen of Steam!

*Our Excursion in Shenandoah Valley behind the legendary Norfolk and Western 611 steam locomotive*

By John V. Smith III

Pictures by the author except where noted...

My wife Michelle and I recently wanted to meet our son (John V. Smith IV) in the western part of Virginia to see him run in a 50-mile race on Saturday, November 4, 2023. Perfect timing as the next day, the Norfolk and Western 611 steam locomotive was operating its last excursion this fall, and within an hour drive. Though we jumped right on purchasing the tickets when they were first available, we felt lucky to get two tickets (albeit not together) on this trip.

Built in 1950, this is the last remaining “J” class locomotive and one of the very last steam locomotives built for use in the United States. Nicknamed the “Queen of Steam” or “Spirit of Roanoke” 611 was built at the Norfolk and Western’s Roanoke Shops. It operated passenger service from 1950-1959. From 1982 to 1994, this locomotive operated excursion services and later placed on display at the Virginia Museum of Transportation (VMT). In 2015, it went under an extensive restoration and the VMT has continued to operate the 611 as a traveling exhibit, with lengthy time running on the Strasburg Railroad. Of note, Lancaster NRHS chapter member, Steve Himpsl volunteered on the locomotives recent shop service this past winter and spring. After which, it was stored (and tours were given by myself and others) at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. This fall’s excursions are operated by the VMT 611 staff with the cooperation of and over the route of the Virginia Scenic Railway. As of this writing, there are no firm plans for next year’s excursions.

Today’s excursion would operate from Victoria Station in Goshen, Virginia, to Staunton, Virginia, then reverse back to Goshen (no getting off the train at Goshen was permitted). Goshen is a small town (population 339 in 2021) snuggled in the beautiful mountains of the Shenandoah Valley. The total mileage was 30 miles each way on the famous and scenic Buckingham Branch. We noticed that the fall foliage was about two weeks past its prime but was nevertheless remarkable.

Victoria Station is actually just a large field with two rail lines going through it, one of the locals told me they put the second line in to accommodate the 611 excursions. The rails were in very good shape. There were plenty of tents set up by the vendors providing the regions fantastic barbeque and souvenirs. The parking was very well managed and orderly. Southern hospitality at its best!

Michelle dropped me off at the main entrance so I did not miss seeing the 611 coming in from the morning run. I got to the tracks and heard her in the distance, that distinctive whistle. Then “Here comes the Queen of Steam!”, (the regulatory two longs, one short, then one long whistle at grade crossings is also morse code for “Q”). Very appropriate. She was looking good, really good, and proudly approached the growing crowd. She was steaming and smoking and sounded like the perfectly tuned locomotive she is, akin to a giant sewing machine that is alive and breathing!

I did not count the consist but it was about her normal length of 15 large heavy passenger cars. The passengers from the previous trip detrained, then the passengers for the 2:30 run were able to board. The crowd was very nice, all enthusiastic railroad fans from young to elderly riders. Everyone seemed happy and excited like we were all one with the 611. Again, southern hospitality my wife kept reminding me, who I met and married in Virginia. It was my privilege to have met Scott (the chief locomotive engineer) and talk for a couple of minutes before I boarded the train. I had previously met Scott when I was giving 611 tours in the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania’s yard.



611 Pulling into the Boarding Track



### Riding behind the Queen of Steam!

Thanks to a very nice young family who were also not seated together, we quickly accommodated each other and Michelle and I and the family were able to each sit together. (Not to be redundant, but southern hospitality was everywhere)! Everyone was charged up about being part of the 611's fall tours. We sat near another couple who were avid enthusiasts, and it made for a very pleasant experience, he pointed out some notable sights and I provided some technical information to enhance their trip.

We had the magnificent 611 at her proper place in the front of the train and we were in the first passenger car. At the rear of the consist were two GP-40 diesel electric locomotives numbers 13 and 7 sporting their "Buckingham Branch" (a short line) livery. Like the 611, the diesels (used for dynamic breaking and for leading the train on backup or reversal moves) were shiny and proud. Just a couple minutes late, the train started effortlessly backing up at about 15 miles per hour. She had to back up for a few miles to switch onto the line for Staunton. We were at this point riding backwards and that added to the feeling of going back in time to the glory days of steam locomotive travel. We then stopped for a few minutes then effortlessly accelerated forward to about 40 miles an hour. This Queen of Steam was operating impressively!

The scenery was magnificent, with forests, mountains, farmland that had a similar look as Lancaster and of course, many of the Queen of Steam's loyal fans lining the tracks taking pictures. The 611 blew her whistle; two longs, one short and one long at each of the many grade crossings as the ones with gates lowering, as if respectfully bowing to this "Queen of Steam"! Also fascinating was the railroad's infrastructure, particularly at Staunton. Enroute, in addition to the fabulous scenery and camaraderie, we had a truly splendid conductor who enjoyed posing for pictures with the riders. A talented crew member walked thru the train playing the harmonica to entertain the riders.

We only stopped in Staunton for a few minutes, then we backed up for the return trip, with the diesels in the lead. More of the same magnificent experience on the way back. It started getting dark prior to our arrival back in Goshen. At Goshen it was totally dark. We departed the train and just about everyone took up the crew's invitation to walk up to the locomotive. The locomotive then proudly blasted her distinctive horn as if saying "All Right, All Right, All right"! A magnificent and impressive encore to a great performance.

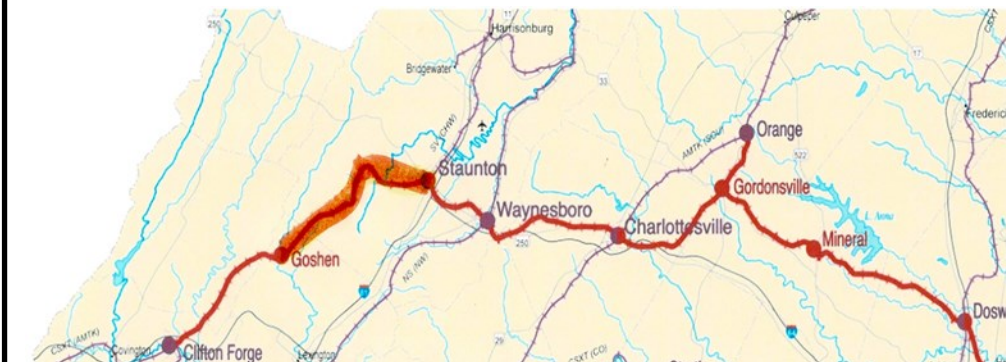
I took this opportunity to take some night pictures of the 611 which I will call my "O Winston Smith" collection (in tribute to the famous railroad photographer, O. Winston Link). I only had an iPhone, but with some editing, captured the mood for my memory. By the way, my son, John Smith IV did finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 50-mile race, a fabulous weekend to be remembered for a long time!



Crew member oiling the locomotive and running gear while the cab crew looks on...



Route map of our trip from Goshen to Staunton



**Riding behind the Queen of Steam!**



**Our photogenic conductor**



**Scenery aboard the trip, eastbound to Staunton**

**Some of the 611's Specifications:**

- Build Date: May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1950**
- Drivers: 70 inches**
- Length: 109 feet, 2 inches**
- Width: 11 feet, 2 inches**
- Height: 16 feet**
- Locomotive weight: 494,000 pounds**
- Fuel type: Coal**
- Water Capacity: 20,000 US gallons**
- Maximum speed: 80-110 MPH**



**A nighttime picture of a crew member oiling the locomotive at the end of its day, presented in black and white as a tribute to noted railroad photographer, O. Winston Link**

**Below: Historical photographs of the last trip of the 611 in regular passenger service on Norfolk and Western during 1959. Images courtesy of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania**



"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"  
UPCOMING LANCASTER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

(NO CHAPTER MEETING IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY)

MONDAY NIGHT, JANUARY 15th, 2024 "UNDECORATING THE FREIGHTHOUSE" AT 7:00 PM. ALL HELP IS APPRECIATED.

MARCH 17, 2024 - SUNDAY, 3:00 PM CHAPTER MEETING AT CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE

**CHAPTER CHRISTMAS PARTY MEETING MINUTES**

A brief meeting was held during the chapter Christmas Party on December 18, 2024. 27 members were in attendance.

The meeting was opened by Harold "Smoke" Shaak at 7:45 PM with The Pledge of Allegiance.

Steve Himpl reported the following Chapter income:

|                                    |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Open House Sales (12/9 and 12/10): | \$ 536.00       |
| Christiana Lions Club (12/9):      | \$ 230.00       |
| Strasburg RR Ticket Sales          | <u>\$ 90.00</u> |
| Total Income:                      | \$ 856.00       |

It was also reported that the SMS Railroad donated \$ 750.00 in exchange for the plans and manuals that the Chapter gave them for the former Reading FP7A.

Richard Rutledge gave the Treasurer's report.

Glenn Kendig asked for donations toward the "Roof Fund," as work must be done on it shortly to obtain building insurance.

Tony White's donation to the Chapter at the Annual Banquet was acknowledged.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Fluck

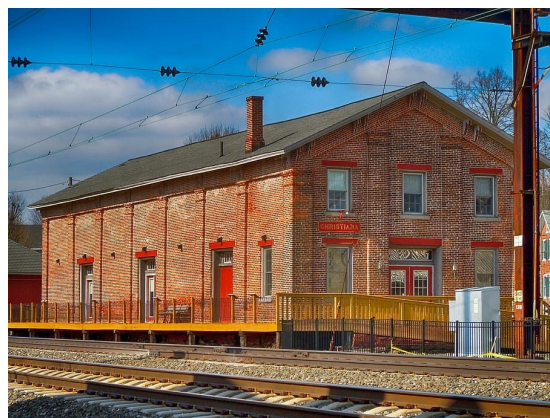
Secretary

In Memoriam

On January 2, 2024, the Chapter was advised that long-time member Mary Kerschner has passed away.

Recuperating

Lifetime member Nelson Strubel advised that he is in an extended care facility at this time.



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NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

**LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., N.R.H.S.**  
**MARCH 17, 2024 - SUNDAY, 3:00 PM**  
**CHAPTER MEETING**  
**CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE**  
**10 RAILROAD AVENUE**  
**CHRISTIANA, PA 17509**

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