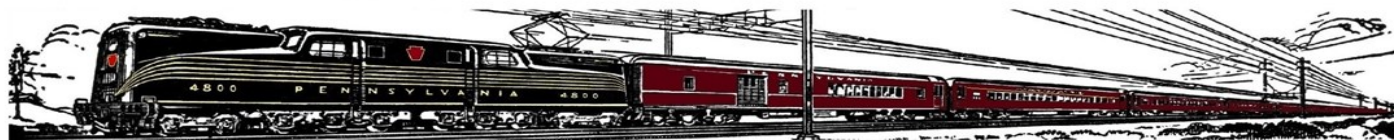


LANCASTER DISPATCHER

1935-2025



LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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APRIL 2025

ON THE JOB 365 DAYS A YEAR
whether it rains, blows or snows!

THE GREAT
All Weather
FLEET

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD



Railway News Flash

By Steve Ferrell

Gathered from press releases and revised for this publication

April 2025

The Board of Directors of the Wilmington and Western Railroad announced that they have decided to pause their operations for the 2025 season to conduct important maintenance and repairs to their equipment. They do not have an exact date for resumption of the excursions on the tourist railroad.

The East Broad Top Railroad has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from the John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust. This Trust is a prominent supporter of historic passenger rail projects across the United States and the EBT will use the funds for roof repairs of the Railroad's unique 1927 gas-electric self-propelled car, the M-1.

A pair of New Jersey Transit Arrow III Electric Multiple Units are now wearing logos of Penn Central and the New Jersey Department of Transportation. These units are now part of their growing heritage fleet.

On March 15th and May 17th, the Strasburg Rail Road will operate two Saturday night special excursions named the "Elegant Express"! These excursions give passengers a sophisticated dining experience aboard the train.

April New York Governor Hochul announced a major expansion of Metro-North Railroad's railcar fleet. In a first for North America, the New Haven Line passenger trains serving Penn Station will soon be powered by battery and electric powered locomotives for clean, green zero emissions. The locomotives will generally draw electrical power from the overhead catenary and then switch to battery mode in and around Penn Station, where the electric traction power has different characteristics.

The parent agencies of Virginia Railway Express have approved a \$155 million agreement for assistance in purchasing the railroad's Manassas Line from Norfolk Southern. VRE will control and dispatch approximately twenty-four miles of track. The purchase also includes Alexandria's Seminary Yard, where VRE will build a layover facility. Alaska's Governor signed a bill to build a new cruise ship / Alaska Railroad dock in Seward, Alaska. The existing dock is at the end of its useful life. The new floating dock with two berths will be 748 feet long and 100 feet wide.

The Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission announced recently the opening of the bid process for contractors to undertake the building of a 16,000 square-foot, six stall roundhouse at the Railroad Museum. Bids will be accepted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of General Services. Hopefully the recently imposed tariffs on steel and lumber won't adversely affect this long overdue project.

Amtrak announced that their new mobile app will now allow riders to complete seat selection. This feature is available on select trains that allow riders to select their seats, such as Acela trains, business class trains on the Northeast Corridor, plus the Palmetto, Vermonter and Carolinian.

The National Railway Historical Society is relocating to a new location and is also moving its historic collection. The chapter has purchased a 16-acre site of the former Virginia Scrap Iron and Metal in Norwich and is currently working to design and build a rail yard at the new sight. After this the chapter will begin by refurbishing existing structures and building a new restoration and maintenance facility.

**THIS MONTH ON THE PENNSY****PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN APRIL**

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

April 27, 1916 Association of Passenger Traffic Representatives of the Pennsylvania System holds ninth annual meeting, the last of which there is any record; rules that proposal for private office space for use of business travelers on Broadway Limited and St. Louisian would be a waste of space, as travelers interested in privacy can always book a compartment; the idea is later resurrected for Northeast Corridor trains; also approves placing electric drumheads on rear of Broadway Limited and other principal trains.

April 13, 1921 At noon, all PRR locomotive and shop whistles system-wide are blown for 30 seconds to mark company's 75th anniversary; American flags are flown on all company stations, shops and other large buildings.

April 15, 1931 In a speech to the American Society of Civil Engineers, VP Elisha Lee announces adoption of new 130-lb. and 152-lb. rail sections; 152-lb. rail is heaviest in world, 80% stronger than previous PRR standard but only 17 lb. heavier; designed for 100,000-lb. axle loads at 100 MPH vs. 80,000-lb. at 80 MPH for old 130-lb. rail section; 130-lb. rail is redesigned as 131-lb. for 22% gain in stiffness.

April 13, 1936 Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company (Red Arrow Lines) incorporated by the merger of the Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Company and Philadelphia & Garrettford Street Railway Company; comes to dominate public transit in the western suburbs between the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, the main competition to the PRR in this quarter.

April 21, 1936 Test Dept. issues final report on tests of diesel demonstrators No. 511512; PRR believes tests show 3,600 HP paired units perform slightly better than a K4s when all motors are running but no better than a K4s's at higher speeds and would require an extra crew member for in-service maintenance; also objects to high noise level in the engine room and odor of exhaust entering trains; but notes also that diesel fuel is only 61% of the cost of coal per train-mile.

April 23, 1941 Raymond Loewy submits a design for a business compartment for The Congressional with sofa, two chairs and a folding table; not implemented until 1952.

April 28, 1946 First major schedule revisions since war; PRR reduces running time of The Broadway Limited to 16:00; The General, Admiral, Trail Blazer and Golden Arrow to 17:00; extra fare on Broadway dropped.

April 28, 1951 Last run of passenger service between Sunbury and Wilkes-Barre, PA.

April 27, 1956 PRR leases 12 Santa Fe 2-10-4's to ease motive power shortage caused by upturn in traffic and delay in receiving new diesels; cost is cheaper than making heavy repairs to restore its own J1's to service; they are used in coal drag service between Columbus and Sandusky.

April 8, 1961 Ford Motor Company introduces the "Levacar", its plan for an aircushion tracked vehicle capable of speeds "up to 500 MPH" and using a propeller for forward propulsion; PRR, NYC and Santa Fe express an interest; PRR considers a 200-passenger double-deck car capable of 150 MPH.

April 6, 1966 Full ICC announces approval of Penn Central merger at 12:00 noon; adds two new conditions: to include the New Haven and its passenger service; at same time, rejects New Haven's bid to drop all passenger service but permits it to drop 21 of 37 trains on Shore Line and 19 of 37 trains on Springfield Line, or about half of its long-distance passenger service, on July 1; must operate rest through Jan. 1, 1967; PC must indemnify Erie Lackawanna, Boston & Maine, and Delaware & Hudson for any losses from rerouting traffic; at same time ICC also announces its denial of Burlington Northern merger, implying that New Haven bailout is prime rationale for Penn Central; new Pennsylvania New York Central Transportation Company to have assets over \$4 billion, 19,000 route miles and handle about 1/8 U.S. freight; in press conference, Saunders and Perlman say they do not anticipate any problems with merger.

A Reading Interlude

Photos by Chapter Member Fred Schneider



Reading Terminal, May 13th, 1970



RDG Train # 8 Reading-Philly between Shawmont and Manayunk. March 27th, 1970.

Left: RDG # 1134
Norristown, south
of Main St. Sta-
tion. January 30th,
1970.Right: RDG Train
416 at
Pennbrook on
May 13th, 1970.Left: RDG
Train # 1146
South of
Doylestown.
April 18th,
1970.Right: RDG
Local in Phila-
delphia, May
13th, 1970.

A Reading Interlude (continued)**Photos by Chapter Member Fred Schneider**

Undated photo RDG FP9 901 at Reading Terminal



Above, RDG Blue Car # 9103 (rebuilt from combine. Note wide windows at far end in former baggage compartment). February 5, 1966. Photo by John J. Bowman, Jr, collection of Fred Schneider.



Left, RDG train # 481 Chalfont PA "Rural Bucks County" November 7, 1972

Above, RDG Norristown Train at Manayunk March 27, 1970

Ferry Trips in New York City
With some connections to Trains
By Steve Ferrell

Combining ferries and trains is always a fun experience for myself and other riders in my rail riding group: “Ride with Me Steve”. New York City has three ferry services that can provide such an experience. A fourth company, Seastreak, provides much longer and very expensive trips to the New Jersey North coast and to Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard. While my group would relish the trips to Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard, the cost and the lengthy time of the trip are much more than we could plan in a one-day trip.

NYC Ferry by Hornblower, operates seven ferry routes for the city of New York. One-way tickets are \$4 and riders with the “Fair Fares” discount program (that includes seniors) pay only \$1.35! The line has routes serving Rockaway, Soundview, South Brooklyn, St. George, East River stops and Astoria. A nice stop on the Astoria line is Roosevelt Island. Most lines run out of Pier 11/Wall Street, about a half a mile from the Wall Street #2 and 3 subway lines. Their ferryboats are fairly large and have a snack bar and an open upper deck for great views!



Hoboken Terminal historic ferry slips
 – Photo by Jim Donohue



Our ferryboat approaching the dock at Wall Street / Pier 11
 – Photo by John V. Smith III

Ride with Me Steve members have ridden the Soundview line round-trip from Pier 11. This ride included great river and city vistas, a nice spectacle of airplanes landing at LaGuardia Airport, plus a great view going under the Hell Gate Bridge. We have also taken the round-trip route to Rockaway. This amazing trip includes a closeup sailing near the Statue of Liberty, then cruising under the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. We entered the Atlantic Ocean with great views of Coney Island. After about 10 minutes of ocean cruising the ferryboat enters Jamaica Bay within sight of Rockaway’s bayside pretty beaches and later JFK Airport traffic.



Left: Heading under the Verrazano Narrows Bridge – Photo by John V. Smith III

Right: Getting ready to board the arriving ferryboat to Brookfield Place for the World Trade Center – Photo by Steve Ferrell



**Ferry Trips in New York City
With some connections to Trains
(continued)**



**Aboard the line to Rock-
away – Photos by Randy
Lennon**



A future trip is planned from Pier 11/Wall Street to Roosevelt Island using the Astoria Line. We will then walk to the Roosevelt Island ariel tramway and have a very scenic view of the East River shoreline and Manhattan. The group can then take the subway back to Penn Station after stopping at Serendipity 3, a famous (in a major motion picture) ice cream parlor.

NY Waterway operates mostly in the Hudson River, with one route operating only a rush-hour service to Pier 11/Wall Street. Operating out of the bustling Hoboken Terminal (with NJT train and light rail plus PATH trains), the boats use the historic ferry slips used by the Lackawanna Railroad. The slips have been modified with one loading level for the smaller boats. Routes operate to and from: Hoboken Terminal, Hoboken 14th Street, Lincoln Harbor, Port Imperial-Weehawken, Edgewater Landing, Paulus Hook, Liberty Harbor, Port Liberte' and South Amboy in New Jersey. In Manhattan, they service Pier 11/Wall Street, Brookfield Place (close to the World Trade Center, and Midtown-West 39th Street. Fares vary with length of the route. An example is that the line from Hoboken Terminal to Pier 11 is \$8.50 while the senior fare is \$8.

My rail riding group has this ferry service from the Hoboken Terminal (connecting from a NJT or PATH train) to Brookfield Place to go to the World Trade Center viewing platform or museum. We have also used the same route from Hoboken Terminal to Pier 11 in order to connect with the NY Ferries system various lines.

In the future, I would love to plan a trip using the Perth Amboy line and back as this could be quite scenic and include some nice sailing through the Lower Bay and near the Port Liberty Cruise Terminal (hopefully with a cruise ship or two in port).

Another service is provided by the Staten Island Ferry and it is absolutely free! The one and only route operates between St. George on Staten Island and Whitehall Street near the southern tip of Manhattan. With very large former car, bus and truck carrying ferryboats that are now only used for passenger operations, the route provides a smooth, scenic and frequent service between Manhattan and Staten Island.

Ferry Trips in New York City With some connections to Trains (continued)

Ride with me Steve has twice used the Staten Island Ferry to get to the Staten Island Railroad and ride it to the southern tip of the island at Tottenville. Here there is a group favorite Italian restaurant, the Towne Deli and Pizzeria with great cheesesteaks, pizza and other Italian delicacies. We capped this off with great views at the elevated Tottenville Station of New Jersey and Perth Amboy across the narrow Arthur Kill.

While New Yorkers users mostly use these ferry services for commuting or going to a beach resort, the Ride with me Steve group just has lots of fun riding trains and ferries on the same trip!



Above: Tottenville Station with Arthur Kill and New Jersey in the background – Photo by Jim Donohue



Above: Departing Manhattan on the Staten Island Ferry
- Photo by Bill Cole

Map of NYC Ferry System (on left) and NY Waterways Ferry System



Our Annual April 1st
Belief It or Not....

June 30, 1911 Westbound PRR passenger train stopped by ties placed on tracks five miles east of Erie; six robbers engage in shootout with mail and express clerks.

June 29, 1926 Mrs. Cyrus H. McCormick, Jr., arrives in Chicago, having chartered a three-car PRR train for her sole use, making the trip in 16:55; requires 125 cash fares and cost exceeds \$7,000.

July, 1931 PRR reduces Charles A. Lindbergh's salary as aviation consultant from \$10,000 a year to \$1.

October, 1931 25% more hoboes are being pulled off PRR trains in 1931 than in 1930.

November 21, 1936 VP Charles D. Young in a memo to VP's John F. Deasy and Walter S. Franklin questions why they are planning for 102 seats in the new Broadway Limited, when the train only carries 30-35 passengers; suggests running lightweight equipment as an entirely new train without extra fare.



House move over the Central Railroad of N.J. at Somerville, NJ in 1913.



There simply is no explanation for this!

Lancaster Chapter 2025 Dues - PLEASE Renew Now!!

Mail to: H. L. SHAAK, JR
P O BOX 813
ADAMSTOWN PA 19501-0813

Make check payable to: LANCASTER CHAPTER NRHS

Name: _____

Family Member: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-mail address for Newsletter: _____

Phone Number: (____) _____

2025 Chapter dues \$20.00 – plus \$2.00 if you have a family member _____

Student Dues – ages 13 to 24 \$ 10.00 or Youth ages 05 – 12 \$5.00 _____

PAPER COPY OF NEWSLETTER - \$12.00 _____

Donation to Lancaster Chapter _____

Total amount of check payable to Lancaster Chapter NRHS \$ _____

LAST DATE FOR RENEWING 2025 MEMBERSHIP IS APRIL 30, 2025!!

**DO NOT ADD YOUR NATIONAL DUES TO YOUR LANCASTER CHAPTER CHECK!
INCLUDE YOUR NATIONAL DUES NOTIFICATION LETTER FROM NATIONAL WITH
YOUR CHECK**

If you would like us to forward your National Dues, **please make a 2nd check payable to NRHS**

National Dues \$50.00 – plus \$7.00 if you have a family member _____

Student Dues – ages 13 to 24 \$ 16.00 or Youth ages 05 – 12 \$5.00 _____

Donation to National _____

Total amount of check payable to NRHS \$ _____

Questions: Contact Helen Shaak 717-484-4020 – email hshaak@dejazzd.com

"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"

UPCOMING LANCASTER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

**APRIL 15th, 2025 - MONDAY, 7:30 PM CHAPTER MEETING AT CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE
10 RAILROAD AVENUE, CHRISTIANA, PA 17509**

The March Meeting of the Lancaster Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was held at the Christiana Freight Station, Christiana PA on Sunday, March 16th 2025. In Tom Shenk's absence, Harold 'Smoke' Shack called the Board meeting to order at 2:15pm. Nine board members were present.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer Richard Rutledge presented traditional monthly report summary for the months of December 2024, January 2025 and February 2025.

Richard continues to do an outstanding job keeping the Chapters CD's and other accounts up to date and profitable... Thank you, once again, Rich

Other:

Steve Himpsle is planning to order chapter Polo style shirts soon. Stay tuned for details or contact Steve if interested. The price will be \$27.00 each.

Cindy Kendig announced that Saturday June 12th will be spring clean-up day for our Freight Station. Please come out to help. Work begins at 9am.

Glenn Kendig made a motion to raise the rental fee for the Freight Station to \$275.00 up from \$255.00. Steve Himpsle seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Upcoming Events:

Saturday June 14th is another chapter clean-up day. 9am at the freight house. Come out and help!

Monday April 14th- Board meeting at our Christiana Freight House for future events planning.

Monday April 21st- regularly scheduled meeting at our Christiana Freight House.

Adjournment:

Smoke adjourned the Board meeting at 3:10pm.

General Meeting:

Smoke called the membership meeting to order 3:20 directly after the Board meeting. 24 were in attendance.

Smoke led the pledge of Allegiance.

Most of the topics covered in the Board meeting were reviewed for the membership.

At 3:35 the meeting was adjourned, and most attendees stayed to enjoy an historic video of the Strasburg RR presented by Glenn Kendig.

Respectfully submitted by Tom Fluck.

General News and Notices to Members

Orders now being taken for Polo Shirts with our Lancaster Chapter NRHS emblem.

✦ Navy blue with embroidered emblem on left hand side

✦ 65/35 poly/cotton pique, flat knit collar and cuffs

✦ MENS: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL, 5XL, 6XL

LADIES: S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3XL, 4XL, 5XL, 6XL

Orders can be placed at the regular chapter meetings at the Christiana freight station at 7:30 pm on April 21st, or May 19th. Orders can also be placed by calling Steve Himpsl 717-285-4283, by email SHimpsl@aol.com, or by mail: Steve Himpsl, 390 Dale Ave, Mountville, PA 17554-1302. Include your name, phone number, shirt size and quantity. No orders will be accepted after May 31st.

Price: \$27.00 Shirts must be picked up at the Freight Station when payment is due. No Shipping.

- At the April 21st meeting, there will be a presentation on the Reading FP7 restoration.
- The Chapter donated 53 Issues of the Conestoga Traction Company's employee magazines to The Lancaster History Archives. There were from Nelson Strubel's collection. These are very rare and very much appreciated by the Archives.
- On June 14th, the Chapter's annual clean-up day will take place. All help is appreciated.
- **Lastly, if you have not renewed your dues for 2025, please use the form and on page 10 and do so as soon as possible. Thank you!**



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NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., N.R.H.S.

APRIL 15, 2025 - MONDAY, 7:30 PM

CHAPTER MEETING

CHRISTIANA FREIGHT HOUSE

10 RAILROAD AVENUE

CHRISTIANA, PA 17509

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC.

NATIONAL RAILWAY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10 RAILROAD AVENUE

CHRISTIANA, PA 17509-1416

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