

SEMAPHORE

October 2010

THIS MONTH:

The next meeting of LIST will be on **Friday, October 15th at 8:00pm** at the Christ Episcopal Church, South Carl Avenue and Prospect Street, Babylon, New York.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Due to a need for this issue to go to press a bit earlier than usual, "Stack Talk" was not yet available for inclusion. Instead, we have provided a few other interesting articles for your reading pleasure. Stack Talk will return next month. Also, this month's "mystery speaker" was not yet known.

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**For regular updates and other important information,
visit the Chapter website at:**

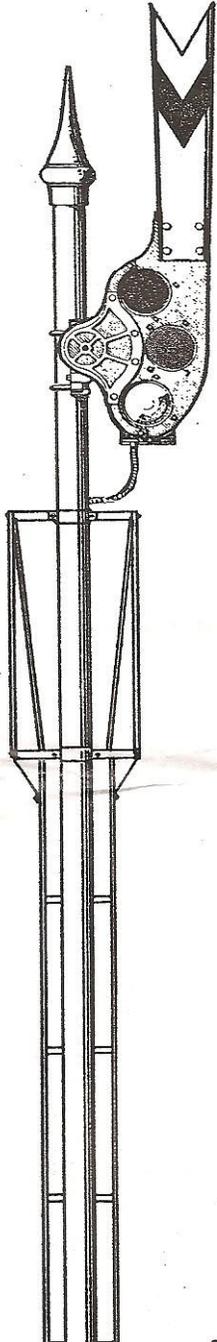
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THE PUBLICATION OF THE
LONG ISLAND-SUNRISE TRAIL CHAPTER
OF THE
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



LIST ORDER FORM

The following price list is for LIST members only!

The 2011 LIRR calendars are here and available for shipping. Thanks to John Scala, the "Weekend Chief," they look great! They are his usual fantastic quality! Please see below to order. The calendar prices are the same as last year.

_____ 2011 LIRR calendar @ \$8 each Total _____

_____ 2010 Penn Station Calendar @ \$7 each Total _____

_____ LIRR 175th Anniversary 60 page book @ \$10 each Total _____

_____ NY Connecting RR Book @ \$27 each Total _____

_____ LIRR 175th Anniversary pins @ \$3 each Total _____

_____ Babylon RR pins [Trolley drawing] @ \$3 each Total _____

_____ The Late Great Penn Station book @ 16.50 ea Total _____

_____ The Long Island Rail Road, In color @ \$48 each Total _____

_____ Miles of Smiles, the story of Roxey @ \$12 each Total _____

Shipping for 1 calendar or 1 of the books, \$2.50

Shipping for 2 to 5 calendars, please add a total of \$5.00

For more than 5 calendars, please call or e mail for the shipping cost.

Each additional book, add \$2.50.

Shipping for 1 to 3 pins, \$1.50

[NY State Residents, please add 8.625% tax to the total of the merchandise PLUS the shipping. For example, 1 calendar shipped to an address in NY State would be a total of \$11.40]

Report on Annual NRHS Convention

More than 500 rail enthusiasts, families and friends journeyed to Scranton, PA, for the 2010 National Rail Historical Society Convention. This year's theme, "Endless Mountain Rails" came alive through excursions, photo shoots and lectures. The convention's headquarters was at the Hilton but the beautifully restored DL&W terminal, now a Radisson hotel, served as the site of the annual banquet. Scranton's historical importance to the railroad industry is well known to most of us; Scranton was a major coal-mining center as well as home to the invention and manufacture of steel "T" rails. (A seemingly endless supply of anthracite coal to generate electricity earned Scranton the moniker, "Electric City".) These topics, and others, were the basis for many of the events held during the June 21-26 meeting, an extraordinarily well-planned convention. The rest of this article focuses on some of the highlights of those five days.

Tuesday's excursion on The Susquehanna Limited took us some 80 miles over the CP's Sunbury Subdivision along the Susquehanna River. We were treated to a stunning view of the Wyoming Valley as the train passed over the river on a steel trestle nearly a third of a mile long.

Wednesday featured multiple excursions. "Roots of the American Railroad" traveled to Honesdale, PA, site of the first operation of a steam locomotive in North America, the "Stourbridge Lion". A replica of the locomotive is in the local historical society. Gravity railroading was explained and a trip on the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce's "Stourbridge Line" to Lackawaxan completed the day. A second excursion, "The Anthracite Explorer" featured a visit to a restored anthracite mine. That evening, we rode the Electric City Trolley to the Lackawanna County Stadium to see the Red Sox play the Yankees – well, OK, it was the Pawtucket Red Sox vs. the Scranton Wilkes-Barre Yankees, but you never know. Stars of these Triple A teams may be future greats in the major leagues!

Thursday's excursion, the Pocono Express, featured both diesel and steam power. Ex-Canadian National 3254, a 1917 Canadian built 2-8-2 was joined by three RS-3's owned by the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad. The excursion covered some of the most beautiful territory in the northeast, climbing over 1,200 feet to Tobyhanna and then descending 1,500 feet to the Delaware River basin. We also had some unscheduled excitement. First off, the lead engine derailed as we left Scranton forcing a three-hour delay. Our discomfort was minimized when the hosts arranged for the passenger coaches to be uncoupled and towed back to Steamtown for the layover. Then, on the return trip, an errant truck struck a railroad right-of-way underpass and knocked the rails out of alignment. After an hour's delay, we continued our journey at "walking" speed over the damaged track saving the need to order replacement buses.

Friday featured the usual complement of lectures, workshops, the annual meeting of the NRHS and the fabulous banquet.

And the best was saved for last as Saturday's "Lehigh Rambler" covered more than 100, largely unspoiled, miles traversing rails of the former DL&W, Lehigh Valley, CNJ and Reading Railroads. The trackage at present is operated by the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern (RBMN) Railroad. The lead engine was the beautifully restored RBMN #425, a 4-6-2 "Pacific" type locomotive built in 1925 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works. Painted a brilliant blue the engine made for some excellent photos on the scheduled "run-bys".

The lunch break was at Jim Thorpe (before 1953 and possibly soon again, according to *The New York Times*, Mauch Chunk.) The restored CNJ depot anchors the town, which is a picture-perfect tourist delight.

The final 27-mile trip from Jim Thorpe to Port Clinton covered Lehigh Valley trackage and featured nearly 20 miles of loops, bridges and spectacular views of country that is accessible only on foot, by raft or viewed from our train. And best of all, from a personal perspective, I got to ride in actual smoke belching, ear splitting, hot-as-hell steam engine cab. I always knew steam engines were complicated, but I had no idea to what extent. Although I wasn't allowed to drive, I did get to fulfill every child's dream (and railroad enthusiast's as well) with a pull on the whistle cord (in accordance with FRA regulations, of course). I may have sweated away 10 pounds and later found cinders in every nook and cranny of my clothing and body, but I wouldn't have traded that experience for anything. Not even to be 45 again and dating Sophia Loren.

Next year's event, Cascade Rails 2011, will be held in Tacoma, WA, during the week of June 20-25, 2011.

Review of September Chapter Meeting by Al Castelli

The Chapter's meeting on September 17 featured a presentation by John Turkelli on the history of Pennsylvania Station. John showed many photos from his collection with commentary about each one as well as his long interest in the great monument to transportation.

It was interesting to see how the station changed in the years and decades following its opening in 1910. One of these changes was in the appearance inside the station – not a man-made change, but one as a result of the station's environment. This was in the appearance of the walls and columns and the contrast between the accumulation of dirt and where this dirt had been cleaned. The PRR cleaned the walls and columns for a height of about 10 or 12 feet above the floor. The "clean line" between the two areas was quite striking.

John talked about his collection of photos and artifacts and how he acquired some of them. Many of these items cost a considerable amount of money, with some photos costing over \$100. An item that he won on an Ebay auction is one of the glass-globe light fixtures seen throughout the station on walls, poles and even in the carriage/taxi-drive areas. John didn't mention the final bid, only that bidding started at about \$1500. That elicited several "wows" from the audience.

Several photos were shown from the 1960s before and during the demolition. Although these photos were from different sources, there seemed to have been a recurring appearance in several of them of a Chevy station wagon from about 1963. That became sort of a running joke as John described the photos. He added some humor to a rather depressing subject. When he showed one photo of a demolition worker going about his business with a sledge hammer, John said, "See that guy?" Expecting the next sentence to be the man's name or some similar description, we instead heard, "I don't like him!" That got some chuckles from the membership.

One common thing can be taken from the photos of the construction and demolition of Penn Station. It was a huge undertaking in both instances. The amount of work to destroy it certainly proved the statement that the station "was built to last 500 years." Too bad that wasn't able to be proven.

We thank John for a lively presentation that was another way of marking this milestone in railroad history.

If you want to learn more about the original Penn Station and the entire PRR project to reach Manhattan, there are several books available in book stores and your local library. One of these is "The Late, Great Pennsylvania Station" by Lorraine Diehl. She provides plenty of photos as well as an ample amount of text describing all that went into the design, planning and building of the river tunnels and the station. Our Chapter has a limited number of copies available, so pick one up at the next meeting before they're gone. The Internet also has many websites that provide contemporary news accounts of the building and opening of the New York Tunnel Extension as well as photos and movies of the great station.

Rob Benkovitz photo of LIST Chapter group while visiting the anniversary display at Penn Station's 34th Street entrance.



LIST Chapter Tours Penn Station

The September issue of the *Semaphore* included an Extra Section about New York's Pennsylvania Station. Also in that issue was mention of a ceremony at the station on September 8 to commemorate the first LIRR train to leave from there in 1910. Continuing with this milestone was a tour, on the eleventh, of the current station that highlighted various elements from the original that are still around.

The tour was sponsored by our Chapter and hosted by John Turkelli. John has been studying and researching the history of Penn Station for the past 25 years or so. He also has collected photos, postcards and other artifacts. Before September 11, 2001, John gave tours of the station, taking over from Lorraine Diehl who had conducted them previously. Diehl is the author of the book, *The Late, Great Pennsylvania Station*.

Our tour included sixteen Chapter members and non-members. We met outside the 7th Avenue entrance, and then proceeded to the bronze statue of Samuel Rea outside Two Penn Plaza. (Rea was vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad when the station was built.) After a brief introduction, we paused for a moment of silence, remembering the significance of the tour's date.

The tour started outside the station and Madison Square Garden. John pointed out where different parts of the original station were and how the area surrounding the station has changed. Two parts of the original station outside the current one are the two marble eagles, described in the Extra Section mentioned earlier. One eagle seemed to be alive; well it was sort of – a pigeon was perched between the eagle's feet.

The eagle on the right side of the station entrance overlooks the Hotel Pennsylvania across 7th Ave. The hotel's entrance has columns reminiscent of Penn Station's. Sadly, it has been reported that the hotel will be coming down, making way for a new skyscraper that will rival the Empire State Building.

Another building with a connection to Penn Station is on 31st Street opposite the Garden. This was originally a power building for the station and now is used by Amtrak for other purposes. Significant about this building is the building material of its front wall – the same granite used on the old station. John mentioned that the color was obscured by decades' worth of accumulated city grime.

We headed inside the station through NJ Transit's entrance at the corner of 31st Street and 7th Avenue. This entrance is quite interesting in that its design pays tribute to the original station. The entry way is glass-enclosed like the roof of the original station. The walls of the stairway and escalator area going down to the station are adorned with about a dozen mosaics depicting various parts and scenes of the 1910 station.

Our tour went through the NJ Transit and Amtrak areas where several large historic photos are displayed. In the Amtrak baggage area are two plaques. One commemorates the rail-air service begun in 1929 as a joint venture between the PRR and Transcontinental Air Transport. This service took passengers coast-to-coast in 48 hours via train and plane. The day part of the trip was by plane and the night portion by train. The other plaque was displayed in the original station to honor PRR's baggage workers who served our country. John mentioned one artifact not accessible to the public. Located in the baggage handling area is one of the original track indicator posts.

On the LIRR level of the new station are several parts of the old station. Several of these are original staircases with brass railings. You wonder how many of the 1000s of commuters who climb these stairs each day notice them, let alone know their significance. One staircase still has its decorative arch on the track platform and a couple have their original decorative iron posts topped with arrowheads, and with their original wired-glass panels.

One of the interesting, and functional, design elements of McKim, Mead and White is the glass block floor panels. These small squares of glass allowed light to pass from above down to track level. Some of the platforms still have these glass blocks as part of the ceiling area, although they've been painted over. We did see two sections of the glass blocks in near perfect condition. One section is in the ceiling of a corridor near stairs to Track 17. The other section has been restored and is showcased in a wine store on the LIRR level.

The tour ended at the photo display where the September 8th ceremony took place. The display was set up by John and Mike Charles of the LIRR Public Relations department. Many of the photos are from John's collection. We took a group photo and thanked John for an interesting tour. A few of us went for lunch at Tracks Raw Bar & Grill located to the left of the LIRR ticket windows. As mentioned by John, this is located where the original station had a lunch counter. Besides great food, Tracks is almost a small museum to railroading. The walls are decorated with photos of the LIRR and other railroads and the placemats depict various trains and railroad scenes. The next time you have some time to waste, I mean spare, while waiting for your train, stop in for a quick bite to eat or at least a drink to wet your whistle.

THE LIRR MODELER by Mike Boland***THIS MONTH'S FEATURE: THE CONCLUSION OF OUR
SERIES ON THE mP54 COACH, PB54 COMBINE AND BM62 (BM54) BAGGAGE-MAIL CARS
BY CON-COR***

Let's take a look at the Con-Cor baggage-mail car that came out over the summer; it is the last of the three cars in the mP54 series of steam-hauled railroad passenger cars built for the Pennsylvania and the Long Island Rail road. We're talking about the BM54 and it has come out in the Tuscan Red body and black roof paint scheme with good, crisp lettering. The car is available in two numbers, 744 and 747. There also is an undecorated version this car, molded in the same Tuscan Red used for the decorated PRR and LIRR cars.

Comparing the model to the prototype, we find that the model has two rather oversized windows in the RPO (mail) section of the car while prototype photos reveal different variations of window arrangements used through the years.

We have what looks like a builder's photo of #739 that shows lettering at the bottom of the car and six windows in the car side in addition to the car windows at the ends of the car. These six (6) windows are small and do not extend to the letterboard.

Cars 746 and 748 in photos taken between 1938 and 1940 show three large (high) windows and one smaller window. Lettering has been placed on the letterboard; in the case of 746, the car number is midway up the side of the car with UNITED STATES MAIL and RAILWAY POST OFFICE on two lines below the belt line and centered. Car 748, photographed two years later, shows that this lettering is now U. S. MAIL, RAILWAY and POST OFFICE in the middle of the car in three lines.

These cars did NOT have diaphragms.

Later photos of car 743, rebuilt and renumbered 7743, show that it has five windows, one of which is covered by a piece of metal. This covered window is closest to the RPO door. This car was equipped to run in MU trains as well as diesel trains and it ran between Penn Station, New York and Patchogue. It also ran behind RDCs.

At Babylon it would be moved between an MU train and a "scoot" or RDCs to and from Patchogue.

One car in this class, 740, was rebuilt with its RPO section door enlarged and windows removed. The car was given standard 6-foot baggage doors at both ends, unlike the other ACF-built B62s, making it unique. The ACF-built B62s had a single-baggage door at the left side of the car and a wider, double-baggage door at the right side of the car, similar to the MB62. (This car would be an interesting kitbash project.)

While the position and/or location of both doors are off on this car—compared to the prototype—the car, which really needs to be called by its correct nomenclature...the BM62—needs just a little tweaking to make it more prototypical.

THE LIRR MODELER continued by Mike Boland

Items that need to be done to it are:

Removal of the battery box on one side of the car.

Reposition the one existing battery box closer to the baggage door on the side of the car with the RPO at the left.

Correct the deck sash by removing the four square-sized utility vents on each side of the roof.

Remove the vertical grab-irons on the end sills; these cars only had horizontal ones.

Remove the old door and replace it with a new one, or make a new one of .010 or .020 styrene and place it over the old door.

Reshape the window in the storm door. The door window on the Con-Cor models is more square-ish; the prototype is longer, more narrow and a double-pane. It's similar to MP54 and MP54A cars.

The corner windows need to be elevated, similar to what we did with the PB54 combine.

Extend the height of the baggage door by half the width of the letterboard. This entails some work and the baggage door has to be extended; do this with styrene.

As for the window arrangement in the RPO section, consult prototype photos. We're hesitant to suggest a reworking of windows here since the model has five panels while the prototype has four.

Early BM62s had a third "high" window and a small window in height almost in the middle of the car. This can be made by drilling holes into the car side and widening them into the correct shape. Frame the windows and give them security bars.

Consult photos for the correct lettering and placement. Later versions of the car—in dark gray with dark green roof—show car 7743 with three smaller windows in the RPO section, a single window that was later covered with a steel plate and a single window in the baggage section of the car.

Use photos of the specific prototype car for details and era-specific paint schemes. Details of these cars varied through the years.

This concludes our series on the mP54; we look forward to Con-Cor's MP54 models coming out next year. Until next time, happy modeling!

The Long Island Sunrise Trail Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is a non-profit 501c3 Educational Organization. The Chapter was founded in 1966 to serve the Long Island area. The SEMAPHORE is the official publication of the Chapter. Articles appearing herein do not necessarily express the attitude of the Chapter or the NRHS. Please address all correspondence and membership inquiries to: LIST-NRHS, PO Box 507, Babylon, New York 11702-0507

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ATTENDING MEETING AT CHRIST CHURCH BABYLON



**LONG ISLAND-
SUNRISE TRAIL
CHAPTER**



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY