

NEWSLETTER

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B&MRRHS Newsletter
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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1990

December 8, 1990

Annual members night with slides, movies and whatever, as we return to our new Lowell meeting room on the fourth floor of the Mack Building on Shattuck Street in the Lowell Heritage State Park. A projector and screen will be available, but if you intend to show movies, please bring your own projector. Traditionally, we've allotted members a maximum of 25 slides or 200 feet of film plus or minus. We aren't going to count slides, of course, but please consider your fellow projectionists. If time permits, maybe we can be more flexible. Remember, if you aren't in the building by 8:00, we'll have to close and secure the door. We'll reopen it every ten minutes, or so until about 8:30 p.m. After that, it's up to your ingenuity, but please keep it respectable!!!

January 12, 1991

Not confirmed as we go to press, but rumor has it that Howard Pincus, President of the Railroad Museum of New England operated by the Connecticut Valley Railroad Museum at Essex, Connecticut, and President of the Valley Railroad will be visiting us in our Mack Building home in Lowell. Because the engagement has not been verified and subject to change, it's best to check with the Society meeting information phone listed above.

The B&MRRHS, its Directors, Officers and Staff wish you and your families a safe and joyous holiday season. May the coming year generate peace and prosperity for all.

B&MRRHS ELECTION 90

One of the first orders of business in the new home of the B&MRRHS meeting hall in Lowell was the collection of last minute ballots submitted at the beginning of the October 13th meeting and opening them along with the ballots that had been mailed in prior to the meeting.

There were a total of 103 ballots cast, six of which were voided for a violation of bylaw procedure. Of the 97 ballots that were valid, there were unanimous and near unanimous results, the highlight being Carl Byron who in his bid for President of the Society collected all 97 votes cast. Results were as follows:

President:	Carl Byron, 97 votes
Vice President:	Scott Whitney, 71 votes Oliver Gaudette, 26 votes
Clerk:	John Allen Roderick, 2 votes
Board of Directors:	John Goodwin, 95 votes Jim Nizgus, Jr. 95 votes Joseph Mulligan, 92 votes
Alternates to Board of Directors:	Buddy Winiarz, 92 votes Carroll Robbins, 91 votes

Congratulations to all for the spirit of serving the Society and competing for the leadership. It has been said many times that the Society does not happen by itself; it results from the many hours given by these folk and other volunteers like them. And as can be seen by elections all over the nation recently, the pot needs to be stirred once in a while to overcome complacency and instill new ideas. The challenges facing the B&MRRHS today are as great as they ever were.

Thanks are in order for three members who preempted their own attendance at the wonderful program for the night. These were the tellers for the election who counted votes and tabulated the results as provided by the society bylaws. Thanks go to Sara Burdett-Thomas, Jim Nizgus, Sr., and Dennis Adams. [ABT]

CONRAIL/GTI MARKETING CONNECTION

During the fall, a communication in the form of a brochure crossed the desk of this editor. With large, white letters emblazoned across a Conrail/Bluebird (take your pick) blue background, the brochure spirited, "Introducing The New Standard in Transportation Performance For New England."

The back cover had the familiar Conrail logo alongside the big "G" with Springfield Terminal spelled out. A potential customer, in or out of New England, who did not know that the Boston & Maine, or the Maine Central railroads were part of GTI would have no way of knowing from the brochure. This, of course, is further evidence of withering of

the identity of the constituent railroads. The brochure was sent out of a Philadelphia address bearing the Conrail logo. Conrail, of course, had no interest in promoting either the B&M or MEC, but the corporate team of Conrail/GTI. In it were phone (800) numbers for both Conrail and GTI-Springfield Terminal.

The brochure discusses the alternatives to shipping by truck. It appears right on when it describes the needs of all freight railroads, even competitors to unite so that they might overcome a competing industry. Results in faster transit time, consistent delivery schedules and reduced handling are all required at both the national level and regional levels. The bro-

chure goes on to tell of Springfield Terminal's connection delivering faster access to key shipping lanes - at highly competitive prices.

The main attraction expressed by Conrail is the use of their Selkirk Yard, near Albany, as a single classification point. It promotes minimum handling and maximum efficiency.

The colorful brochure continues with typical transit times expressed in days. Some connections move faster than others, and the whole picture looks rosy as described. It does describe, however, a transit time from the south as "three days sooner than CSX", which is a case of competing railroads in teams.

What does the brochure mean to the B&M shipper/receiver or to the shipper/receiver in Maine from which B&M might be a bridge railroad? Probably very little. The B&M with its rapidly declining identity would be transparent to users at each end, unless they've been with the B&M all along. For both railroads, or all railroads as a team, they all benefit collectively.

This brochure's main punch is to beat out trucking competition. With that in mind, it probably is good. I would guess that the B&M is not hurt by it, but as it crosses my desk, I can see the aggressive marketing style by Conrail. Has anybody seen a marketing brochure by GTI lately? [ABT]

GUILFORD GLANCES

As this was written in mid-November, the clock is still ticking, as Guilford has about two months remaining to decide if the offer by CP Rail to buy them out is still alive. Inside sources say the upper management has remained firm on the no-sell-out-under-any-circumstances. Billerica shops remains open into November, although heavy machinery and any unfinished locomotives have been sent to Waterville. Billerica is now doing light repairs until the doors shut for good. This is a far cry from a half-dozen units that were being worked on six months ago. The

fleet of SD39s and 40s along with nine remaining SD26s keep the traffic rolling. GP40s and -2s are now the common sight of yard switchers.

Helm Leasing now has the #320, 321, 323, and 341, all B&M GP40's, and MEC #255, 256, 258, and 263. The 263 is leased in on the MEC; it has been seeing a lot of service in Maine. The trend is back to painting locomotives, namely the B&M #302 and the 1732 to ST 68. The U18s are also supposedly getting the GTI gray paint. SD39 #693 remains out-of-service for a main generator. ST 1400 and 1407 remain in Maine, while the 1411 is at Billerica for the terminal switcher. St #1424 is stored outside for tests and repairs. Currently the average number of operating units has been around 92 on a daily basis. [Don LeJeune 11/13/90]

NINE FORTY-FOUR

No, nine forty-four is not the time that your editor's train leaves for Boston. Neither is it the number of the train that your editor rides to Boston. Because it is an even number, it signifies an inbound commuter rail train, and with a "9" prefix, it would probably signify an inbound train on the Attleboro/Stoughton/Providence line on the Northeast Corridor. But that line does not currently have a 944 symbol train. If "944" is not a time of arrival or departure, and it's not a symbol designation, what is "944"?

Nine forty-four is the new post office box number in Ipswich, Massachusetts for the B&MRRHS Newsletter only. It is being used to replace the former rather lengthy Cambridge address. Shown on the masthead of this newsletter, the new P.O. Box 944 is in effect immediately at the post office in Ipswich, MA. 01983-0944.

There is an overlap, and both mail boxes will be monitored continually for a few months, but the change is to the new box, 944. After having used the private business box in Cambridge for other business besides the Newsletter, and even if it is tax deductible, I watched the price

increase from an annual rate of \$144.00, to \$180.00 last year, to a new rate of \$240.00. That's it, folks; it's time to change. Although I lose some convenience and other services, it doesn't justify a rate four times that of a U.S. Postal Service box.

Please be reminded that the box 944, that I use is primarily for the B&MRRHS Newsletter. I can, and I will handle other business, but it means that I must forward the communication to another address, which introduces a delay. Because of the geographical diversity of the Directors, officers and staff, and the multidisciplinary needs of the membership several post office boxes are used so that we may better serve you. This was discussed in the last issue of the *B&MRRHS Newsletter*. [ABT]

FROM THE MACK TOWER

On Saturday evening October 13th, a new page was turned in the history of the B&MRRHS. Following a Board meeting in the late afternoon, and an impromptu dinner with most of the directors, officers and staff present in a nearby restaurant, the Society members ascended to the fourth floor for a slide show, and the annual election of Officers and Directors in the new Society home.

Murphy's Law was soon to appear, as the power cord for the projector was missing. Thanks to the resourcefulness of a Lowell Society member, name unknown unfortunately, the feature of the evening was saved.

Most of those attending had driven to the evening's show in a rather heavy rain, and drove home in a full fledged heavy thunderstorm with torrents.

Scott Whitney presented an extensive show of railroad scenes in New England which are now no longer visible, or are drastically changed from bygone days. Not only rolling stock, but stations, signal towers, foundations, cuts through the rock and woods provided a lot of entertainment and reminiscing to those old enough to remember.

While we waited for the new power cord, the group conducted the election of Officers and Directors, the results of which appear on Page 2 of this issue. The Mack building hall on the fourth floor high above the B&M tracks used by the trolley system has plenty of parking nearby. And there are elevators to the fourth floor.

There is only one drawback to this arrangement, and that is that we are the sole occupants of the building at that time and are responsible for its security. Thus it is imperative that we control who enters, leaves, and when. Thus, as outlined in other communication, we must all try to arrive in time. As stated, we shall monitor the door at intervals until 8:30 p.m. unless some prior arrangement is made. After 8:30, you run the risk of not getting in. We are searching for some communication system, by phone, or otherwise, but at this writing, nothing has been found.

We welcome back Joe Mulligan, who has been a member of the B&MRRHS for many years, and moved away for some time. Joe has returned, and has become very active, first by being elected to the Board of Directors, and also, Joe is picking up the slack as Program Chairman for the Society. In so doing, Joe is relieving John Allen Roderick of some of the tasks. John, as you know, wears several hats in the Society, as Clerk, and as the dedicated editor for the *B&M Bulletin*. Our heartfelt thanks go out to both of these men.

It was another wild and woolly night on Saturday, November 10th when some 30 or 35 souls donned hip-boots and carried their Prince Spaghetti cars to the North Shore Model Railroad Club in Wakefield.

Joe Shaw handed this editor a copy of a "*Certificate of Appreciation*" from WGBH Public Broadcasting, Channel 2, Boston for the B&MRRHS support of the 25th Silver Anniversary Auction held earlier in the summer. Our thanks to John Allen Roderick and others who again contributed time, effort and goods to further the aims of the Society. [ABT]

COASTAL MAINE FREIGHT SERVICE RESUMES

In a story in the Portland Press Herald by Staff Writer, Jill Lang, documented the resumption of freight service along the former Maine Central (MEC) Railroad's, Brunswick to Rockland line. On October 31st, two locomotives and two passenger coaches took about 60 invited passengers to Rockland and return as the Maine Coast Railroad celebrated the return of freight service to the coastal communities along the 52-mile line. MEC abandoned the Brunswick-Rockland line in 1985.

The seven-hour ride at 25 mph, with stops in Bath, Wiscasset, Waldoboro and Thomaston, was also used to promote a \$4.5-million bond question for the state to acquire more rail lines. Maine Coast officials said, however, that the trip was not planned to coincide with Election Day.

Some state officials and other observers on board that day used the occasion to look into the future, when passenger trains may shuttle workers to the Bath Iron works, and tourists to Wiscasset, Rockland and beyond.

Wednesday's excursion was far different from a run Amtrak took into the state earlier this week. Amtrak wanted little publicity while they tested the tracks in central Maine.

The Maine Coast train, thanks to newspaper announcements, was met at almost every crossing by marching bands and well wishers. The tracks wind like a ribbon, weaving a trail up the coast, through country few have the privileged to see. In Wiscasset, the midmorning sun danced off the Sheepscot River as the train crept across a single-track bridge.

It was reported that Chemrock, a Thomaston, Maine company that uses perlite ore for use in filter systems and insulation, began receiving rail shipments from Colorado and other midwestern points, through Brunswick. It had previously had perlite trucked to its plant, and paid more to do so.

Dragon Cement of Thomaston hopes to move coal and cement soon between its Thomaston plant and a barge terminal on the Sheepscot River in Wiscasset.

Maine Coast Railroad, which took over the line this spring, is talking with several other midcoast businesses, including Crowe Rope of Warren and FMC Marine Colloids of Rockland, about establishing service for them. No one can put a dollar amount on the freight line's potential, but Clayton Fowlie, executive director of the Rockland-Thomaston Area Chamber of Commerce, said any time goods can be moved faster for less money, it makes an area more attractive for businesses.

Rail line rehabilitation will cost \$450,000 paid for by the state and reimbursed by Maine Coast Railroad. Company President Robert Bentley couldn't say how much freight business is needed for the venture to succeed, but he's optimistic that it will.

Although the Halloween day ride was to celebrate freight service, talk on the train centered on passenger service and its role in the state's transportation picture.

Rail and state officials believe passenger service on the coastal rail line can begin as early as next summer. An hour after leaving Brunswick, the train squealed around a sharp curve and Bath Iron works came into sight, the U.S. Route #1 overpass loomed overhead.

State Transportation Commissioner Dana Connors noted that the excursion was on the 119th anniversary of the Halloween inauguration of passenger rail service to Rockland.

In Bath, city officials gave Connors a proclamation noting the city's hopes for passenger service for workers. Shipyard spokesman, James McGregor, said wants train fares, not subsidies from the state or, to support any commuter line. But company officials haven't asked workers whether they'd be willing to give up their cars for a train ride.

He also said doesn't like some rail supporters thinking that the success of a rail line for tourists will depend upon the success of a commuter line for workers.

Bentley said passenger service can be successful, whether or not BIW is involved. But such service isn't possible until 1992, because the railroad lacks passenger coaches. Connors said that rail service will not solve all the traffic problems that plague midcoast communities, especially in summer.

"There will still be the Carlton Bridges that need expansion and the highways that need widening," Connors said. "There may still be the bypasses that are justified even with rail service."
[Portland Press Herald, 11/1/90 through Steve Cook]

OTHER RAILROADING ACTIVITIES

This column contains news of other railroading events such as excursions, modeler shows, flea markets, open houses and demonstrations which may be of interest to B&MRRHS members and other railfans interested in the education and preservation of railroading activities and history.

Although some of these events are popular among B&MRRHS members, listing in this column is neither an endorsement, nor an affiliation with the B&MRRHS, but is listed simply for information only. Every effort is taken to ensure that a listing is timely and that dates, hours, locations and costs are accurate. Events produced by, or affiliated with the B&MRRHS are listed on the front page of this Newsletter.

Continuing through Friday, December 21, 1990; *Rails and Sails*, a holiday celebration of the historic Newburyport City Railroad will be on exhibit at Newburyport's Custom House Maritime Museum. In addition to artifacts and memorabilia from this important part of Newburyport's maritime heritage. There will be working displays of miniature railroads, and a

circus train and participatory activities for children. The Custom House Museum is located at 25 Water Street in downtown Newburyport, with parking nearby. Museum hours are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$2.00 for adults, \$1.50 for seniors, and \$1.00 for children. For further information, call (508) 462-8681.

NH PBS RAILFAN SHOW

On Sunday at 12:30 p.m. and on a weekly basis thereafter, *New Hampshire Public Television*, Channel 11 in Durham, Channel 49 in Littleton and Channel 52 in Keene will telecast a series of programs of interest to railfans through the end of December. The series contains all kinds of information about trains, model and real, not usually shown on other programs including trolleys, manufacturers, history and museums. Based in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, the crew also traveled some 12,000 miles from Pennsylvania to California. [Priscilla Phenix, Programming Dept, NH Public Television through Paul Kehoe and Joe Shaw]

BOSTON TO MAINE PASSENGER SERVICE???

The market is big enough in southern Maine to restore passenger train service between Maine and Boston, a long-awaited rail study has concluded.

The study released by the Governor of Maine on November 2nd at the former site of Portland's Union station, gives rail proponents a boost in their efforts to get passenger trains running again between Portland and Boston.

If all goes according to plan, train service could conceivably be reestablished in two to three years. Passenger trains stopped running between Portland and Boston in 1965.

"The question now is not 'if we will see the return of service from Portland to Boston, but rather 'when' that passenger service will be available." Governor John

McKernan said at the press conference.

The study, done by Stone & Webster Engineering corporation of Boston for the Maine Department of Transportation, is another step in the continuing efforts for the restoration of train service.

Before passenger trains can return to Maine, additional cost studies must be done, tracks must be upgraded, a bond issue must be approved by the voters, and train cars and locomotives must be bought.

The Stone & Webster study looked at a rail corridor between Brunswick and Boston with seven possible stops in Maine, and three each in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

It concluded that by the year 2010, communities in the rail corridor could have a population of nearly 700,000, with the fastest growth in York County (Maine) and in New Hampshire.

To determine the potential for rail service, the study looked at the size and nature of current use of automobiles in the rail corridor, the likelihood that drivers might find rail to be an attractive alternative, and the potential growth in the travel market by the year 2010.

Overall, the study forecasts annual ridership at 520,000 roundtrip fares in the year 2000, increasing to 610,000 in 2010.

"From the above estimates of demand, it appears quite possible that rail service consisting of three round trips per day would be viable by the end of the decade," the report concluded.

The report comes at when interest in rail service between Portland and Boston continues to increase. Proponents say trains would lessen dependence upon foreign energy sources, decrease pollution, and cut down on highway deaths.

At the November 2nd press conference, Governor McKernan was joined by representatives from the Department of transportation, Trainriders Northeast rail group, Amtrak, the National Association of Railway Passengers (NARP) and Stone & Webster.

David Carol, Amtrak's senior director of Government affairs, said Amtrak is

now studying what the capital and operating costs would be to restore passenger rail service.

If the Amtrak study indicates that the service is economically feasible, Maine voters would likely vote in November 1991 whether to finance the capital costs of train service.

If voters approve a bond issue, it would take between one and two years to upgrade tracks, track beds, signals and stations to accommodate high-speed trains, and to buy the needed train cars and locomotives, Carol said.

MDOT Commissioner Dana Connors said it has been estimated that it could cost \$40 million to upgrade the tracks for passenger service. He declined to speculate on what the operating costs would be to run the railroad.

Additionally, the state or Amtrak must negotiate with Guilford Transportation Inc. to use the Guilford-owned track from Portland to Haverhill, Massachusetts now used for freight trains. The track from Haverhill to Boston is now operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority as a commuter rail line.

Carol said the demand for passenger service is increasing nationwide. The only states beside Maine without Amtrak service are Wyoming, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Hawaii and Alaska.

Last year, for instance, Amtrak had 350 requests from congress and 15 requests from individual states to study new potential passenger routes, Carol said.

Governor McKernan said that he envisions a Portland to Boston line to eventually be expanded to reach Brunswick, and then to Augusta and Rockland.

Voters will have a chance to vote on a \$4.5 million bond issue Tuesday, November 6th election day, that would be used to buy a Brunswick to Augusta rail line now owned by GTI. [Results of the bond issue initiative weren't available as this issue went to press, ABT]

[Clarke Canfield, Staff Writer for the Portland Press Herald, 11/3/90; submitted by Steve Cook].