LANCASTER DISPATCHER

1935-2025

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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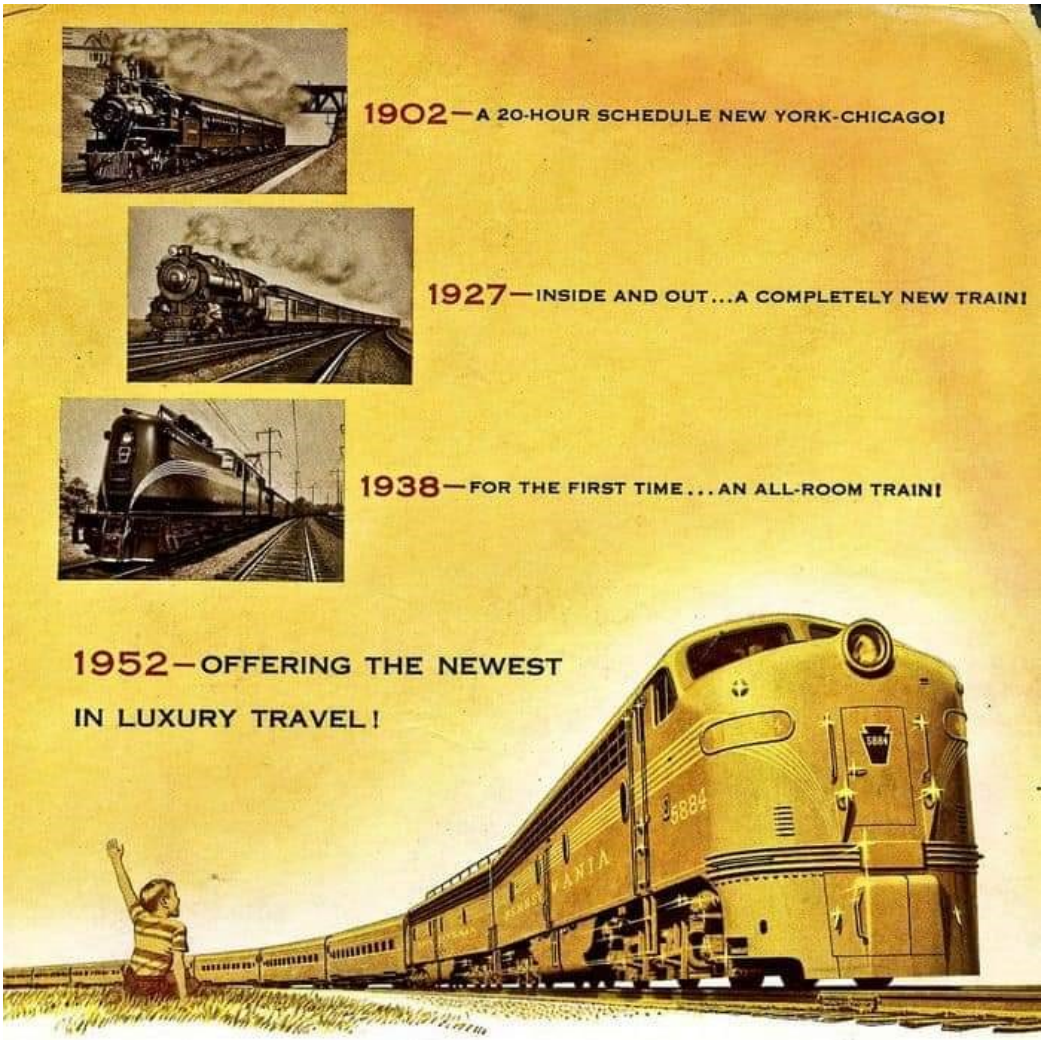


Railway News Flash

By Steve Ferrell

Gathered from press releases and revised for this publication

OCTOBER, 2025

- On September 8th, SEPTA announced that they will restore full service on its regional rail, light rail and bus routes on Sunday, September 14th. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation approved SEPTA's request for a one-time use of the state capital assistance fund to cover operations for one year. The fare hike of 21.5% will also be reinstated on September 14th.
- Good News! The Wilmington and Western Railroad has reported significant work is being carried out to bring the line back to operation. They expect to operate Christmas trains this year. It is remotely possible that they could indeed run some trains this fall!
- The federal government has taken over management of Washington DC's Union Station from Amtrak. Recent visits by this author were marred by a large homeless population and very forceful begging throughout the station. I did personally not feel safe. Amtrak was fine with this change.
- Amtrak launched the new Acela NextGen service on August 28th, after years of planning and adjustments to the equipment. Reports say they are moving slower than the old Acela's.
- Amtrak and the U.S. Department of Transportation released their timeline for New York Penn Station's Transformation project. Construction is set to begin by the end of 2027.
- On October 11th, the Strasburg Rail Road will hold a "Super Hero Day". With seven Superheroes on site and one mystery hero it promises to be an exciting train ride.
- Nova Scotia, Canada has started a study of possible light rail and commuter rail operations in and around Halifax. This has the potential to reshape travel for Nova Scotians by providing a safe, reliable, and high-capacity service.
- Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize are studying the creation of cross-border rail connections. This would center on extending the Interoceanic and the Maya Train route.
- Great News! The East Broad Top reopened their Main Line Segment after 69 years. Their beautifully restored steam locomotive with five passenger coaches arrived at the Southern Huntington County High School Campus after a 2.5 mile run from their Rockhill Furnace headquarters. This is the first operation on this route in 69 years. The plan Is to reopen another 11 miles of track with a horseshoe curve and two tunnels. This will include operations to the towns of Robertsdale and Woodvale.
- New Jersey Transit will take over operation of the River Line, a diesel light rail route that operates between Trenton and Camden from Alstom, the previous operator. The process of changing operators started September 3rd and will continue till the end of the year. The line needs major investment in rolling stock and maintenance.
- New Jersey Transit has exercised their option for 200 new multi-level passenger cars and 12 more ALP45's. This new order of rolling stock will join some 174 multi-level Electric Multiple Unit and unpowered cars ordered in 2018 from Bombardier, now owned by Alstom.
- Thanks to a significant partnership and donations from the Roanoke Chapter of the NRHS, the historic former Norfolk and Western tool car #1407 is being restored and reunited with the Norfolk and Western 611 steam locomotive. This iconic J class locomotive and the tool car are inseparable, as it traveled behind the 611 over a thousand times.

THIS MONTH ON THE PENNSY

PRR, PRSL & LIRR EVENTS IN OCTOBER

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

October 1 , 1911 Hudson & Manhattan opens from Grove Street to Manhattan Transfer, interchange with PRR trains to and from Penn Station; runs over PRR west of "SC" ("WALDO") Interlocking, Jersey City; American Car & Foundry builds 60 PRR Class MP38 and 36 identical H&M Class "D" cars for this service; in contrast to other H&M cars, are painted Tuscan Red.

October 11, 1921 Port of New York Authority rejects North River Bridge Company plan in favor of tunnels.

October 6, 1931 PRR announces it has closed a contract with Consolidated Gas, Electric Light & Power Company of Baltimore to supply power for the Washington electrification from the Safe Harbor Dam for 20 years starting in 1933.

October 24, 1931 PRR's Central Region is awarded the E.H. Harriman Medal for safety; had no fatalities in 1930.

October 11, 1936 PRR operates its first “Autumn Leaf” excursion between New York and Stroudsburg, Pa., running via South Amboy, Bordentown and Trenton, and returning directly from Trenton.

October 14, 1936 PRR Board authorizes preparation of plans for electrification of low grade freight line between Enola and Morrisville, the Port Line and Monmouth Jct.-South Amboy; also authorizes development of new types of motive power and passenger cars at discretion of President Clement.

October 19, 1936 PRR contracts with Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad for electrification of northern end of Potomac Yard and the freight tracks leading to the south end of the Long Bridge.

October 9, 1941 PRR receives its second off-the-shelf diesel locomotive, 1,000 HP EMD Model NW2 No. 3909 (PRR Class AA6); is assigned to Linden, N.J., yard, which serves a General Motors plant.

October 22, 1941 PRR Board approves purchase of first EMD 4,000 HP passenger diesel (2 E7A units); authorizes modernization of Pittsburgh Union Station including respacing of tracks and replacement of train shed.

October 20, 1946 Electric Railroaders Association holds fan trip over PRR from Exchange Place, visiting Harsimus Cove, Meadows Shops and South Amboy; runs south to Jamesburg and returns to Penn Station via Monmouth Jct.

October 14, 1951 LIRR announces it has placed in service four 2,400 HP Fairbanks-Morse "CLiner" passenger diesels; eight 1,600 diesels are to be in service by end of month, replacing last steam locomotives in passenger service; last four leased PRR K4s's returned in October.

October 1, 1956 PRR assumes direct operation of all parlor and parlor-buffet-lounge cars from the Pullman Company; parlor car service discontinued on The Union, The Red Bird, The South Wind and The Blue Grass Special; New Haven also assumes operation of parlor cars via Hell Gate Bridge Route from Pullman.

October, 1956 PRR is experimenting with various weights of welded rail on the Pittsburgh Division main line.

October, 1961 PRR has invested $2.4 million in 200 tri-level auto rack cars and unloading facilities at Kearny, N.J., Ernest, Pa., and Baltimore.

October 14, 1961 Washington Chapter of NRHS operates excursion between Washington and Strasburg. PA.

October, 1966 PRR is installing 2,700 portable radio transmitters and receivers in locomotives, cabin cars, and towers; inductive trainphone does not work in electrified territory as induces a current in the pole lines along the right-of-way.

The New York and Long Branch, a railroad that never operated its own line!

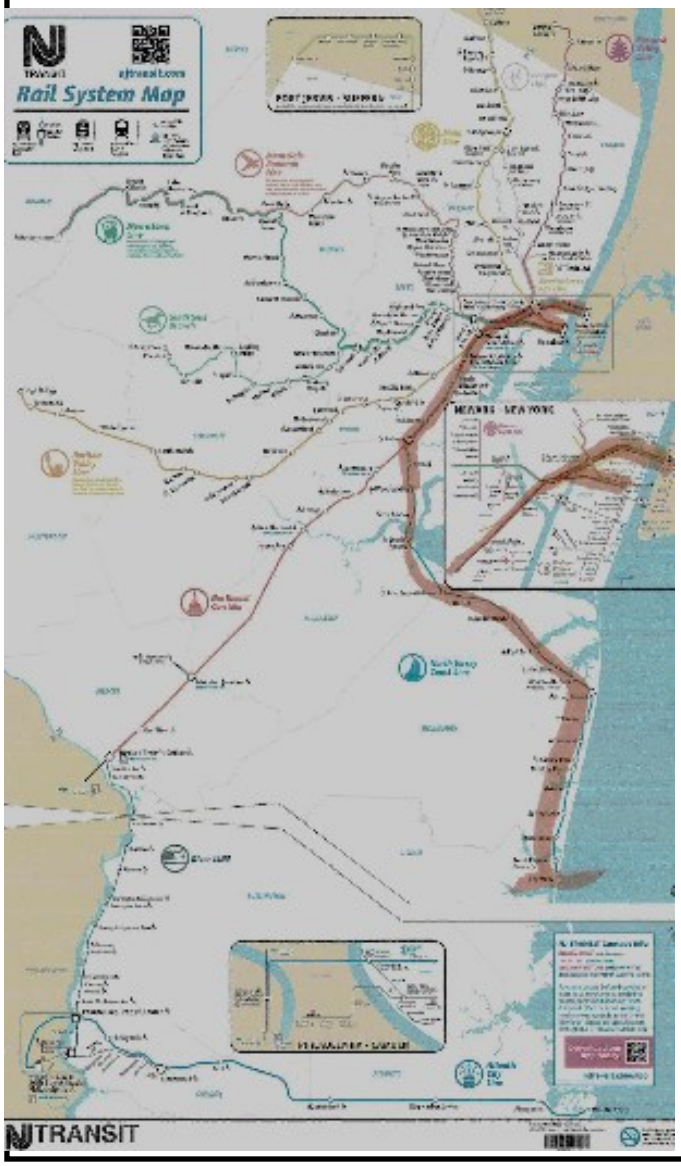
By Steve Ferrell

All pictures courtesy of the Archives of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, except when otherwise noted.
My rail riding group, "Ride with me Steve" has ridden the former NY&LB route to Bay Head (now operated by New Jersey Transit) quite a few times. We enjoy eating at the Ark Restaurant about a quarter of a mile up the roadbed in neighboring Point Pleasant and taking a dip in the ocean at Bay Head's pristine beach.

At most times during the line's history, it was a rail fan's dream with interesting locomotives and equipment on the line. If you rail fanned at various points of the line in the 1950's, you could observe the final operations of the CNJ's camelbacks and the last years of Pennsy steam using the famous K4s's. In addition to diesel locomotives like the Baldwin shark nose you could see consists of Budd RDC diesel multiple-unit cars. On the Pennsy side you could see GG1's among other electrics and after South Amboy, they switched to K4's and in later F8's diesel locomotives. All steam locomotive operations ceased after 1957. (Note: the CNJ never ran electric locomotives on this line or any other route for that matter).

Current New Jersey Transit of the line – NJT website

Initially started and planned by the New York and Long Branch Railroad (NY&LB) investors, they did not have the wherewithal to operate their railroad so they sold their shares to and then leased the operation to the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ) for 99 years. They built the railroad with the CNJ in mind. The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) threatened to build a parallel line to compete with CNJ. To address this potential loss of revenue, CNJ agreed to a joint operation, granting the Pennsylvania Railroad half the stock and a 99-year lease. They both ran it until the end of each of their operation, short of their leases expiration dates.



The line was incorporated in 1868. It constructed the line from Perth Amboy to Long Branch by 1875. Five companies were merged into the New York and Long Branch and by 1880 it had reached Bay Head. The terminus was once called "Bay Head Junction" as a line from Camden NJ ran to Bay Head. This PRR line ran to Tom's River and then headed north serving Seaside Park, Mantoloking, and ending at Bay Head.

The New York and Long Branch Railroad changed the demographics of the northern New Jersey beach resort towns. Formerly isolated, they were transformed into thriving beach towns used by wealthy New York residents. This in turn spurred real estate development within those formerly sleepy towns. The NY&LB also boosted local industries, agriculture and opened new markets by providing fast connections to towns like Long Branch and Asbury Park.

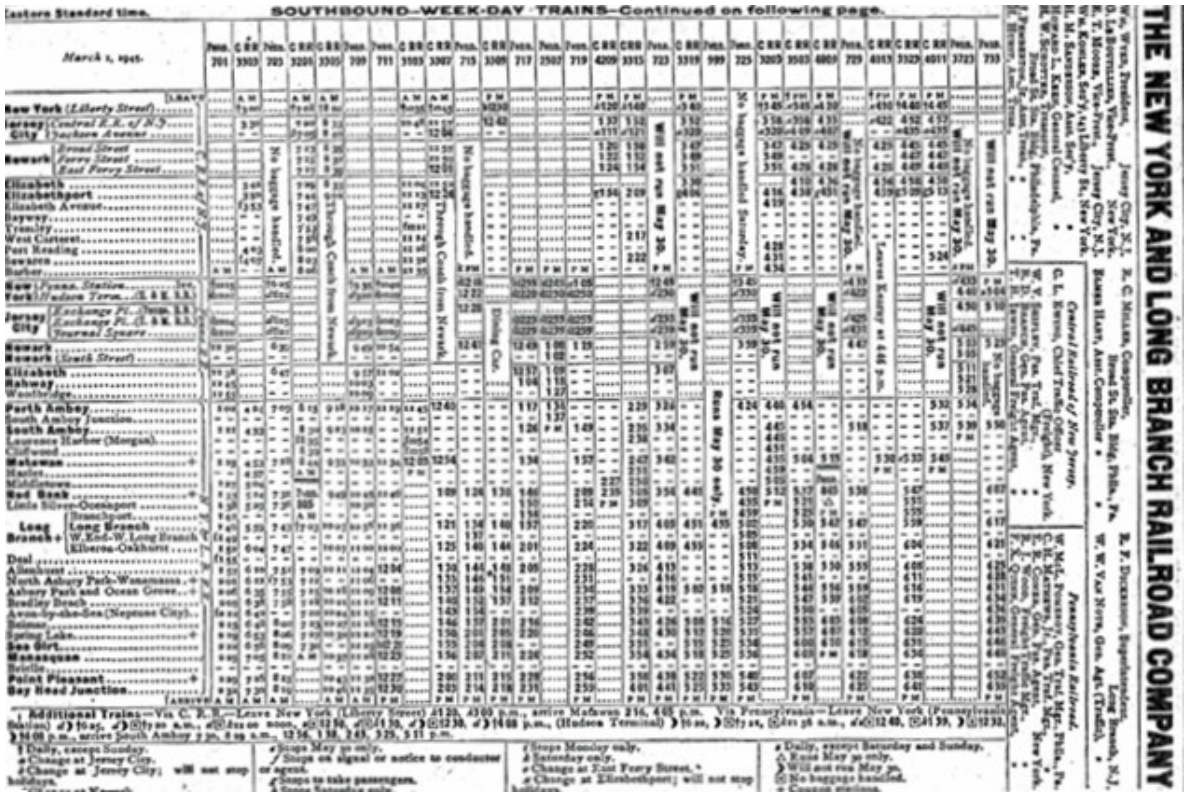
Right: Camelback steam locomotive at Bay Head New Jersey in 1954 at end of it

The New York and Long Branch, a railroad that never operated its own line! (continued)

E8 Diesel Locomotive and K4s Steam Locomotive South Amboy, switching to steam for the trip down to Bay Head NJ.

From 1892, commuters could board a steamer ferry for the long journey to Atlantic Highlands train station. This was named the "Sandy Hook" route. At Atlantic Highlands, they could board a Central Railroad of New Jersey train that would connect with the North Shore and Long Branch at Long Branch to points south.

From 1929 through 1941 luxurious Blue Comet, Central Railroad of New Jersey's elite train ran along this line before cutting off at South Amboy for the trip to Atlantic City. Featuring observation and parlor cars. Its fast steam locomotive made it from New York (Communipaw Terminal in Jersey City after a ferry ride from Manhattan) to Atlantic City in three-hours! With reserved seats, this train was initially a success, but as the depression wore on ridership dropped dramatically.


SOUTHBOUND—WEEK-DAY TRAINS—Continued on following page.

THE NEW YORK AND LONG BRANCH RAILROAD COMPANY

Showing CNJ and PRR operations, this schedule represents two-thirds of the total southbound weekday traffic on the line in 1945, quite busy. Image from the 1945 Official Guide of Railways

The New York and Long Branch, a railroad that never operated its own line! (continued)

The Jersey Shore Commuters club was started in 1933 and used their own parlor car for luxury commuting by its members. It was disbanded in 2013 when their car was damaged by Hurricane Sandy.

New Jersey Commuter Club coach heading southbound, behind a GG1.

Originally, the Pennsylvania Railroad operated their southbound trains out of Exchange Place in Jersey City. Opened in 1834, this terminal was Pennsy's main connection (via Ferry) to Manhattan until Penn Station opened in 1910. Service continued until 1961 from here. From 1910 onwards, most trains on the New York and Long Branch operated out of New York Penn Station in Manhattan. For most of its history the CNJ operated trains to Bay Head from Communipaw Terminal in Jersey City or its predecessors at the same location. Ferries transported passengers from Manhattan on the Hudson River to connect with the trains at this terminal. After Communipaw closed in 1967, they operated their trains out of Newark's Penn Station. In later years, Conrail and New Jersey Transit trains on this line originated from Hoboken Terminal and Penn Station.

The Pennsylvania Railroad include this line in their electrification project during the 1930's. This was completed between Rahway on the Northeast Corridor at Rahway and South Amboy 1936. Later during the Conrail then New Jersey Transit years, electrification was extended to Matawan in 1982 and then to Long Branch in 1988. Note the Central Railroad of New Jersey ran only steam and diesel, never electric locomotives.

Right: An EMD E-7A and a K4s in the Bay Head yard around 1955. Far right: Early NJT or Conrail years, a GG1 and Comet III Electrical Multiple unit at South Amboy

Bay Head was and still is an interesting place for rail fans too! A large yard with a big turnaround loop track in the wetlands, added to the enjoyment of seeing several types of steam and diesel locomotives during the years. It was always a railfan's joy to talk the crew into allowing them both a cab ride around the loop. Alas, with push-pull operations on this part of the line, the loop is usually not used except for freight. It is interesting to note that the railroad yard is still manually switched by the conductor or another crew member.

Left: Bay Head Station looking south toward the yard. Right, conductor switching the train onto the northbound track in the yard prior to departure.

The Maps of Todd Sestero and his Railfan Guides of the U.S. Website
By Steve Ferrell, featuring maps by Todd Sestero

If you love railfanning like I do, a great website to go to before selecting a location to railfan is:

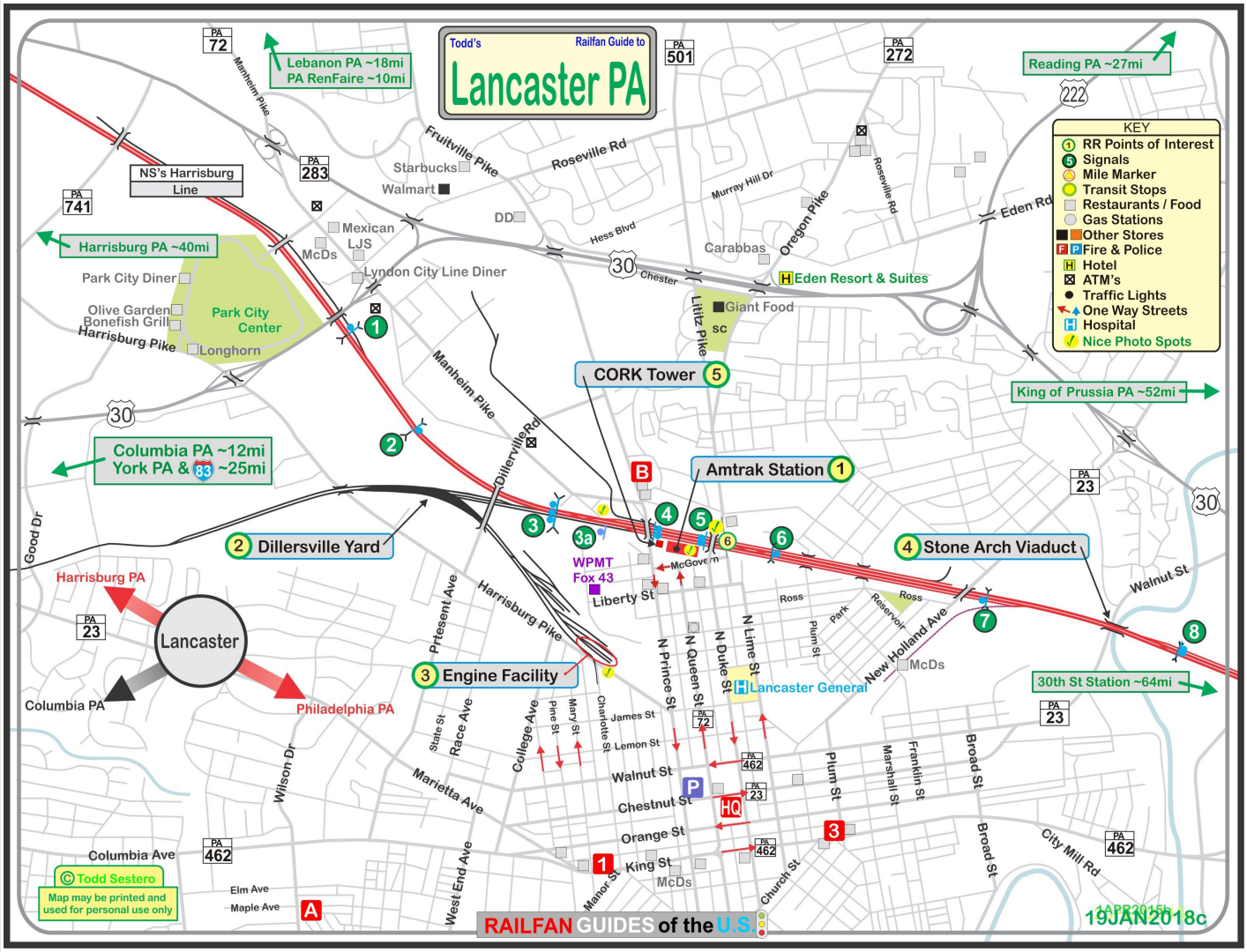
https://railfanguides.us"

This site covers many areas of rail activity in the United States and Canada (with some Europe) and points out interesting activities for rail enthusiasts. The maps are hand drawn by Todd Sestero and he points out things to do, signaling and radio frequencies around the site, plus great pictures of these areas and railroad activity.

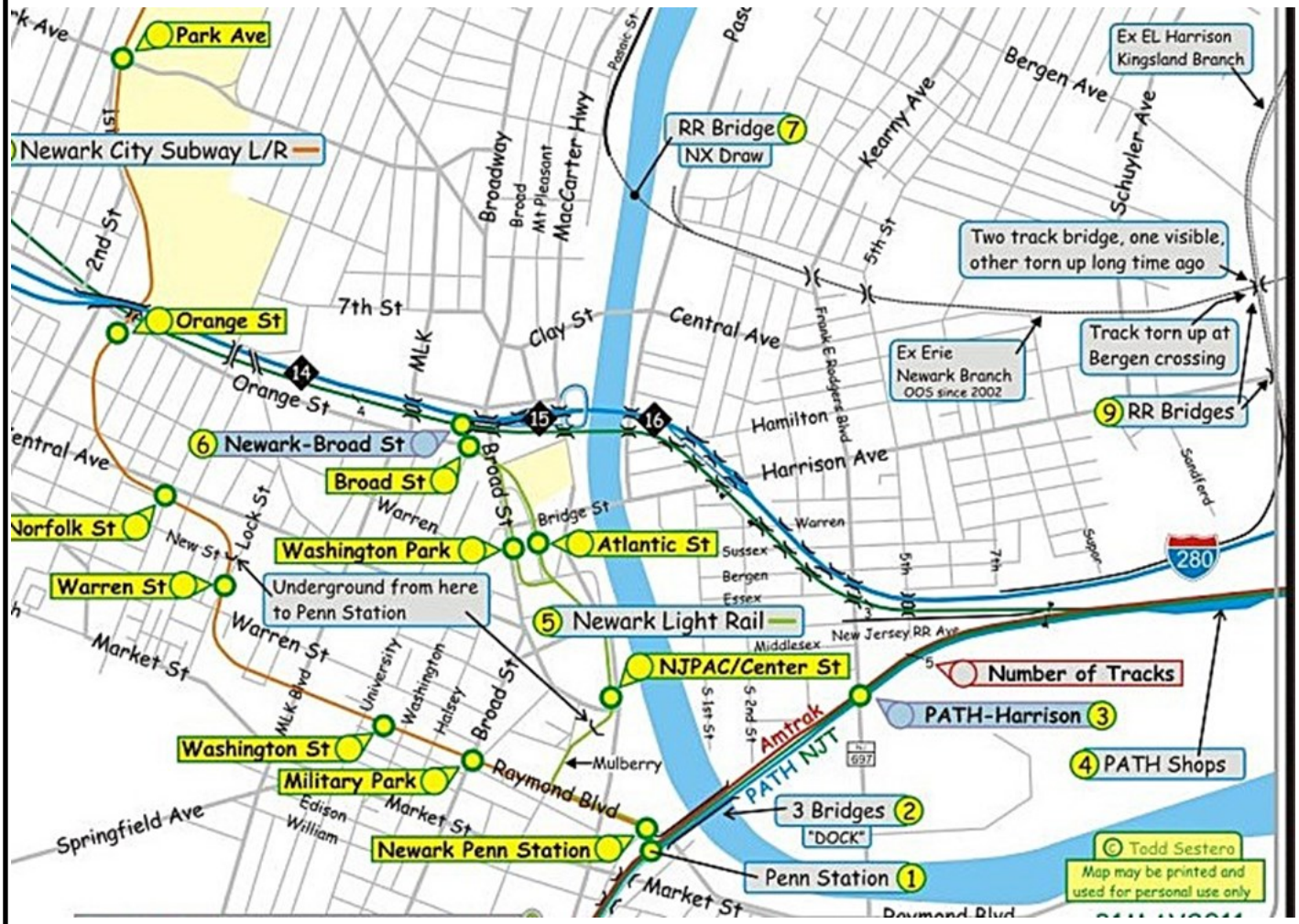
Todd is interested in speaking at the Philadelphia Chapter, and currently I am working on arranging just that! He also said he may be willing to speak at other nearby chapters, such as Lancaster of West Jersey if so requested.

Todd also has given me permission to freely use his maps within any of my articles. Additionally, Todd is willing to draw maps by request if necessary.

Here is Todd's map of Lancaster, PA.



.The Maps of Todd Sestero and his Railfan Guides of the U.S. Website (continued)



Above is an example of how useful his maps can be at Newark, NJ:

A wonderful place to watch trains is Newark, NJ. At this location you can look over two trolley lines, the PATH line, Amtrak, Acela, and New Jersey Transit lines. The upper-level platforms are open to train watchers and there is activity every minute!

At Newark Penn Station you can observe Northeast Corridor operations from the platforms and see through the gates PATH operations. Also, for a small fare you can ride both light rail lines. At Broad Street Station to the north, reachable by light rail, railfans can observe the busy former Erie Lackawanna, Boonton, Morris-Essex, and Gladstone lines. Railfans can take PATH from Newark Penn Station to Harrison (first stop) to observe the busy Northeast Corridor and PATH trains operating. In the distance one can see the former Erie Lackawanna lines coming into the corridor via the Kearny Connection. At Harrison you are about a half mile west of the former Manhattan Transfer, where at one time steam locomotives and electric locomotives were interchanged to allow use of the tunnels for New York's Penn Station.

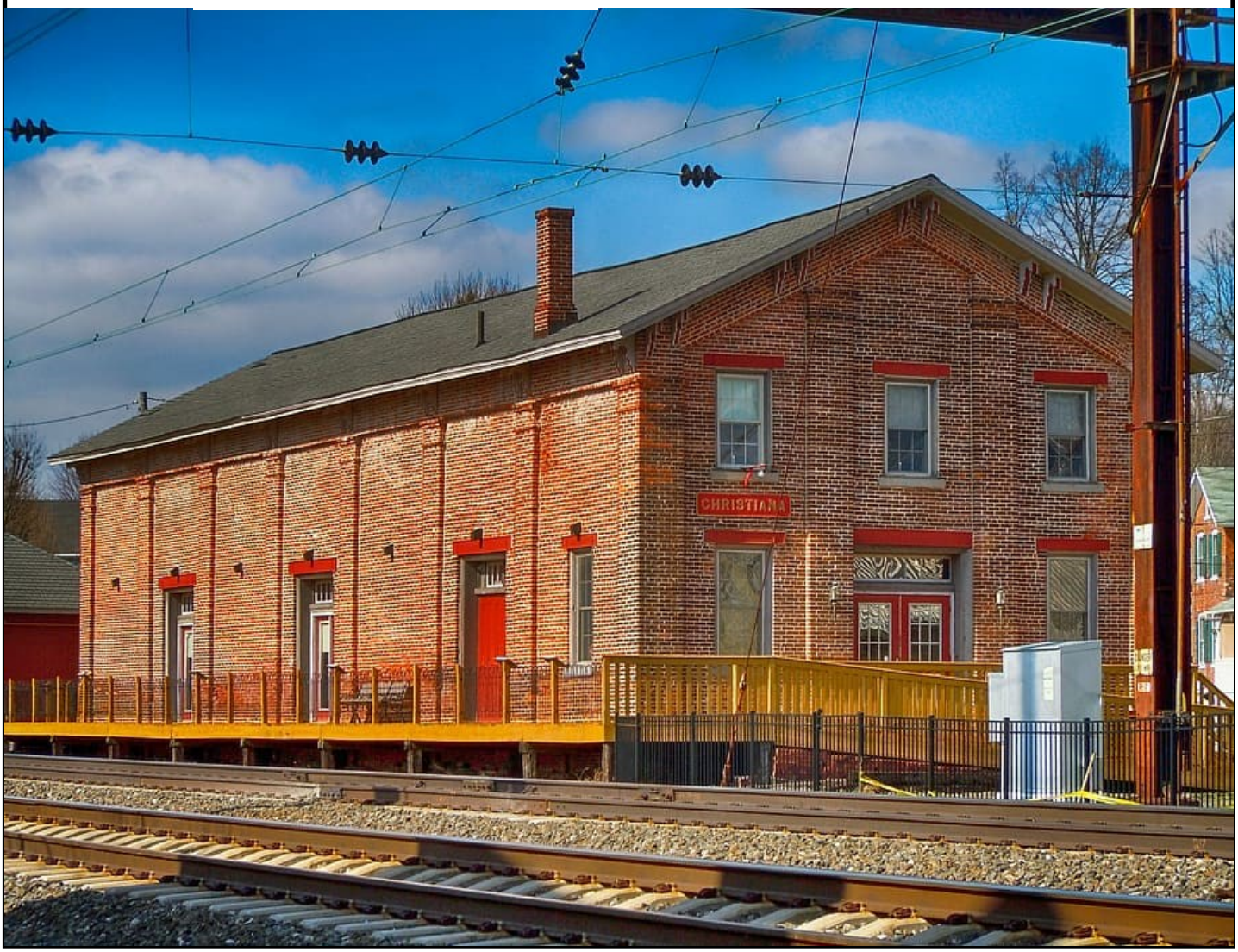
HAPPY 90TH ANNIVERSARY TO…..US!

The Lancaster Chapter (#1) of the National Railway Historical Society turns 90 this year.

The Chapter's Anniversary Celebration will be Sunday, October 19th, 2025, beginning at 2:00 PM.

The location: Our own Christiana Freight Station. We will be serving cake, ice cream and soft drinks.

All members are cordially invited.



LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC., N.R.H.S.
ANNUAL BANQUET
FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 21st, 2025
HERSHEY FARMS RESTAURANT
240 HARTMAN BRIDGE RD., STRASBURG, PA 17579

JOIN US AT HERSHEY FARMS RESTAURANT FOR A WONDERFUL EVENT WITH GREAT FOOD AND THE FRIENDSHIP OF YOUR FELLOW CHAPTER MEMBERS. MAKE THIS YOUR FIRST EVENT OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON!

6:00 PM - DOORS OPEN - NO EARLY ENTRY
6:30 PM - DINNER SERVED—FAMILY STYLE
7:30 PM PROGRAM: This year's Lancaster Chapter's Annual Banquet Speaker will be: Richard Stewart, owner of the famous Pullman car "Francis L. Sutter."

THE ANNUAL BANQUET COST FOR 2025 IS $35.00 PER PERSON

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE OCTOBER CHAPTER MEETING OR YOU MAY MAIL THIS COUPON.
ALL TICKET ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7th, 2025

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"INSIDE THE BACK PAGE"

UPCOMING LANCASTER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 19, 2025 - SUNDAY, 2:00 PM. LANCASTER CHAPTER 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION. CAKE, ICE CREAM AND SOFT DRINKS PROVIDED. REGULAR MEETING TO FOLLOW.

NOVEMBER 21, 2024 - FRIDAY, 6:00 PM - ANNUAL CHAPTER BANQUET AT THE HERSHEY FARMS RESTAURANT 240 HARTMAN BRIDGE RD., STRASBURG, PA 17579 (TICKET ORDER FORM ON PAGE 10).

CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2025

September 21st 2025, at the Christiana Freight Station. The Lancaster Chapter NRHS scheduled its annual Chicken BBQ Picnic for 3pm. At 2pm a board meeting was also scheduled.

At 2:14 pm the Board Meeting was called to order by President Tom Shenk. Six board members were present; Harold *Smoke* Shaak, Tom Shenk, Glenn & Cindy Kendig, Richard Rutledge, Steve Himpsl, Dave Stambaugh and Tom Fluck. Chapter Chaplin Dave Stambaugh led a prayer.

Treasurers Report
Our irreplaceable Chapter Treasurer Richard Rutledge once again demonstrated his unmatched ability to handle our chapters financial dealings. Richard has spent a lot of time to create a budget for the upcoming year by carefully documenting our past performance, as he detailed in his customary Treasures Report. Thanks once again to Richard for doing a great job at this otherwise thankless duty. Tom Fluck made a motion to accept Richards reports and Tom Shenk seconded. The motion carried.

Other Business

Cindy Kendig reminded us of the Chapters 90th Anniversary celebration to be held at The Christiana Freight Station October 19th, at 2pm. Plans were finalized for this as it is in place of our October Meeting. Think Ice Cream!

Steve Himpsl is planning for a trip to Gettysburg for May of next year, Details to follow.

At 3:10pm President Tom Shenk ended the Board meeting because the Picnic began!

At 4:20 pm, after a wonderful chicken BBQ picnic meal with many side dishes brought in by members, the regular meting came to order. 25 were present.

Richards financial reports and budgets were reviewed. Any member interested in these reports can contact chapter treasurer Richard Rutledge for more information. Richard brought up the need to form committees for various projects that members can participate in order to stimulate member involvement.

Steve Himpsl reminded us about the Annual Banquet: The presentation will cover Private Varnish! Steve also reviewed some donations made by the Chapter to better manage the Chapters collection.

Tom Fluck shared a press release from the West Chester Railroad. They are fundraising for the ongoing restoration of their Glen Mills Station, specifically addressing exterior masonry deterioration.

Tom Shenk adjourned the meeting at 4:20 pm.

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

West Chester Railroad - Campaign to raise $ 85,000 to restore exterior of Glen Mills Train Station. To donate, visit the Association's GoFundMe page:
www.gofundme.com/charity/west-chester-railroad-heritage-asso

LANCASTER CHAPTER BOARD ELECTIONS FOR 2026

THE ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE FOLLOWING THE **OCTOBER 19TH** MEETING.
THEY WILL BE HELD AT THE CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION.

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NEXT CHAPTER EVENT

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

OCTOBER 19, 2025 - SUNDAY, 2:00 PM

LANCASTER CHAPTER 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT CHRISTIANA FREIGHT STATION

LANCASTER CHAPTER, INC.
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