

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

P. O. BOX 7302 PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19101



Cinders

APRIL, 1976

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Our Meeting:

new movie from Model Railroader Magazine, entitled "Model Railroading Unlimited; and 2) "A Steam Train Passes", a color spectacular on steam railroading in Australia, from the NRHS Film Library, 3) "ABC of the Diesel Engine", a film produced by General Motors. Our April meeting will be held on Friday evening, April 9, 1976, at the Engineers' Club, 1317 Spruce Street, downtown Philadelphia. As usual, dinner will be at 6:00 p.m., by Advance Reservation Only, and our meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.

DINNER RESERVATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 5: If you desire to partake of the usual buffet dinner at the Engineers' Club prior to the April meeting, the deadline for reservations is Monday, April 5, 1976. Please contact Frank Tatnall before that date at either 215-828-0706, or by mail at P. O. Box 289, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462.

ELECTIONS TO BE CONDUCTED AT APRIL MEETING: Election of Chapter officers for the year 1976-77 will be conducted at the April membership meeting, Friday, April 9. A Nominating Committee will be appointed by the Chapter President, and additional nominations will be made from the floor at the meeting.

LIBERTY BELL LIMITED CAR 1030 CAMPAIGN: Your Chapter should make a financial contribution to this worthy project, which you have all received a brochure about. Please be prepared to discuss this at the April meeting. Give thought to the amount needed and the amount the Chapter can afford to contribute.

CONVENTION REPORT AT APRIL MEETING: As mentioned in the March issue, a full report of Convention progress to date will be given at the April meeting. Plans for several of the days have reached the finalization stage, while we are still up in the air on the mainline trips, although substantial progress has been made on this front, too. We will be lining up Committee members and Committee heads in May.

(MORE CHAPTER NEWS ON PAGE 3)

COUNTDOWN TO CONRAIL: APRIL 1, 1976 IS DAY TO REMEMBER

As the month of March drew rapidly to a close, the first of April loomed large as one of the most significant dates in U. S. transportation history.

At 12:01 AM on the 92nd day of this Bicentennial year, seven bankrupt railroads would officially end operations for all time. At precisely the same moment a new Federally-backed carrier, Consolidated Rail Corporation, was to assume responsibility for more than 17,000 miles of line, 100,000 employees, 5,010 locomotives and \$1.9 billion in annual freight revenue paid by uncounted thousands of customers ranging from General Motors to small feed mills on rural sidings.

April 1, 1976 represented the culmination of years of frustration and effort on the part of government planners, lawmakers, railroaders, management consultants and interested citizens to reshape the destitute Penn Central and other bankrupts into a slimmed-down and (hopefully) profitable carrier able to serve the needs of the public in 17 northeast states. If ConRail loses its struggle for survival, there is little doubt that the future of the entire U. S. railroad industry will be seriously imperiled.

During the weeks preceding "Day One", Secretary of Transportation William Coleman resorted to some strenuous jawboning in what seemed a futile effort to hammer out an agreement between the solvent Chessie System and Southern Railway, on the one hand, and a group of dissident labor unions on the other. Failure to reach such agreement had scuttled the government's well-intentioned plan to sell off most of the Reading Company and Erie Lackawanna to Chessie and Penn Central's Delmarva Peninsula lines to Southern, in order to maintain strong competition for ConRail in the major market areas. The law, however, required that the solvents agree on wages and work rules with all involved unions before such sales could be progressed. If they could not, U. S. Railway Association's massive blueprint for reorganization (known as the Final System Plan) provided that most of the lines in question instead be included in an expanded ConRail system. Ultimately this is what happened, although it is still possible that certain ConRail routes could be spun off to the solvents at a later date.

A dark horse then emerged. Delaware and Hudson had originally been designated to absorb a few miles of PC and EL track in the Wilkes-Barre area, but with the collapse of negotiations between Chessie and the unions, D&H asked for and was granted trackage rights over ConRail lines to Harrisburg, Potomac Yard, Philadelphia, Newark (Oak Island) NJ, and Buffalo, NY. USRA said it would loan D&H \$28 million to help with the purchase of new locomotives and other equipment necessary for the large-scale expansion of the road's operations. Already beset by a motive power shortage, D&H ordered 20 GP39-2, 2,300 hp locomotives from General Motors and accepted USRA's offer to acquire 20 more GP39-2's from the Reading, 12 GP38-2's from the Lehigh Valley and 12 Alco C420's from the Valley. Many of these latter units would undoubtedly ride the LV on a regular basis, on the head-end of trains between Buffalo and Oak Island (operating via ConRail to Lanesboro, PA, D&H to Dupont, PA, near Wilkes-Barre, and thence ConRail again to Oak Island---a 458-mile trip of which only 65 are on home rails!). The ex-Reading units likewise would visit Philadelphia on occasion, operating on through freights NE-84 and NE-87 from and to the B&O at Park Junction.

A great reshuffling of locomotives was expected to take place shortly after Day One as ConRail attempted to group similar power at maintenance bases around the system. EL's big SD45's and SDP45's, for instance, were to be assigned to Harrisburg, in spite of their lack of cab signals, and LV's Alco C62B's (PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 3)

COUNTDOWN TO CONRAIL, Continued from Page 2

were destined to the former PC yard at Conway, PA. All in all, the days immediately preceding and following April 1 were busy ones for rail photographers intent on recording these and other favorite units on their home "turf" and later in strange surroundings lashed up with newly-found sisters from other pre-ConRail lines.

Late in March a final paint scheme for ConRail's vast locomotive fleet had still not been decided on, but one candidate was a brownish color with "CONRAIL" block lettering on one end of the hood and a curious line and circle design on the other. It was possible, of course, that the originally approved black motif with red end would emerge on the new company's inherited power.

Meanwhile, as the carriers wound down their affairs, USRA presented to a special Federal court more than 30,000 pages of documents which under the law it was required to file in order to begin the legal process of conveying the bankrupts' property to ConRail. This process was to be completed on March 31, the actual conveyance date. The desperate plight of the lines was sharply illustrated as Penn Central in mid-March reported a net loss of \$218,911,958 for the year 1975, compared with a 1974 net loss of \$178,230,320. If various Federal grants had not been taken into account, PC lost a staggering \$326,411,958 in 1975 and \$198,024,162 the previous year. It would, in fact, require some financial wizardry just to keep the huge carrier functioning until ConRail's April 1 takeover.

Congress at the same time was taking steps to fund the Northeast reorganization, House and Senate conferees agreeing on a \$2.14 billion package for the purchase of ConRail securities and other purposes. The same agreement, however, killed Amtrak's request for \$85.1 million to purchase the 456-mile "Colonial Corridor" between Boston and Washington. As a result Amtrak will continue to lease operating rights from ConRail, as it did from Penn Central, with its lease payments being credited toward ultimate purchase of the property. Nonetheless, Amtrak is expected to assume operational control of the Corridor about six months after the start-up of ConRail.

Rail commuter service would not be immediately affected by the April 1 date.



"In Transit"

by ROBERT L. CAMPBELL

.....SEPTA is getting 19 TORONTO PCC cars built 1946-47 by Pullman-Standard for Birmingham Electric Company and will be numbered 2300-2318. They are TTC #'s 4706-7, 4709, 10, 11, 18, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 40, 41, 44, 46. BECO numbers were 3900 less (i.e., SEPTA 2312 = TTC 4731 = BECO 831). Also, there are 11 KANSAS CITY cars to be numbered 2240-2250 (former TTC numbers 4750, 51, 56, 59, 61, 62, 65, 67, 72, 73, 79, and former KCPS numbers 526, 535, 749, 769, 762, 765, 771, 775, 790, 792 and 794). The first 3 cars, TTC 4731, 4750 and 4762 (SEPTA 2312, 2240 and 2245) arrived at 51st and Columbia's PC yard on Tuesday, March 23. They are to operate on Route 60 - ALLEGHENY AVE. and will retain their TTC paint scheme with SEPTA logo and number, and regauged trucks and trolley wheels. Three trolleys will be delivered every 2 weeks until all 30 arrive, and they (PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 4)

III TRANSIT, Continued from Page 3

will be utilizing flat cars NIFX 1002, NIFX 1050 and NIFX 1080.....TRANSPORT OF NEW JERSEY went on strike Tuesday, March 9, after several short extensions. The last company offer had been a wage increase for drivers from \$6.96 to \$7.38 but with abolition of a cost-of-living clause (SEPTA drivers make \$6.38 / hour with first COLA due in September). The 50,000 South Jersey riders either drove, took PATCO (somewhat augmented service) or on the first day stayed home because of snow. On March 22, drivers narrowly accepted a contract 1546 to 1441 which had limited cost-of-living (up to an additional 2% over the 6% contractual annual guarantee. Full service resumed on Friday, March 26. NJ had just put in a major service rearrangement in which Routes 109 - Seaside Park-Philadelphia and 125 - Beach Haven-Philadelphia were eliminated. The inter-urban Broadway routes extended most off-peak trips into Philadelphia from Camden as did Route P from Medford and Marlton. Through service was reinstated from Philadelphia to Berlin and Erial on White Horse Pike, so the leg of LL-MM into Westmont station was eliminated.....Two more cars have been added to last month's list of old Bi-Centennial cars: PRT 5205, a 1923- double-end remodelled and PRT 8042, a 1926 Peter Witt both being restored by Buckingham Valley Trolley Association for \$11,000 each. These two cars stepped in at the last minute to replace some other cars which SEPTA was unable to obtain.....SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL RAILWAY has put in service the first 5 of 343 new trackless trolleys built by Western Flyer. They cost \$74,000 apiece and will be delivered at the rate of 25 per month.....On April 3, one of SEPTA's special Bicentennial routes, the Old City Loop, will begin weekend operations linking Independence Hall, Chinatown, Betsy Ross House and Penn's Landing. Weekday service begins April 19. Service will require 3 buses operating every 20 minutes from 9 AM to 6:20 PM, leaving 3rd & Chestnut and 9:12 to 6:32 leaving 11th & Race.....Also, the Cultural Loop bus will begin 15-minute service on weekends April 3 and weekdays April 19, leaving 2nd & Dock 9:30 to 6:30 and the Zoo 10:00 to 6:30 (requiring 6 buses).Beginning Memorial Day weekend a parking-lot shuttle is planned to operate from 9th and Spring Garden to Penn's Landing.....The MBTA in Boston is again asking for proposal bids on 70 new rapid transit cars for the Blue Line (Revere). To make it more attractive (no one bid the last time because of the supposed unprofitability of building so few cars), the proposal includes bids for either 50 or 150 Orange Line cars (Main Line E1). The T is also requesting bids on rehabilitating 100 present Orange Line cars.....MIAMI, FLORIDA has received a \$15 million UMTA grant for first stage construction engineering of its 48-mile rail rapid transit system and 3.1 mile busway. The grant, going to Dade County, represents a commitment by UMTA to fund construction of 22.4 miles of rail construction and the busway.....CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY, after delivery of 200 new cars within 2 years, now wants to institute a 10-year annual replacement plan of 55 cars per year (total 550) to add to the 330 modern cars already on the property. This project would cost \$222.5 million in future government grants.The first of 50 new trackless trolleys for the MBTA was unveiled at Cambridge's Bennet Street Yard March 3. The 44-passenger coaches are 41' long, 8' 5" wide, 10' high, have left hand center doors (for loading in Harvard Square and on Aberdeen Ave.), will be painted yellow over aluminum lower body and off-white roof. The \$78,000 Western Flyer vehicles have power steering, a solid-state battery charging system, fluorescent lighting and fiberglass double seats.....STATEN ISLAND RAPID TRANSIT continues to be affected by a strike.....At the March 24 Board Meeting, SEPTA voted to study an across-the-board fare increase of 15¢ on City and Red Arrow lines, as well as hikes on RDC and PC Divisions.....Due to Philadelphia's financial problems, the following projects have been eliminated by the City Planning Commission from the 1977-82 Capital Budget: a) Civic Center Station (on PC Media, Wilmington and future Airport line); b) Extension of Route 36 to "Cargo City"; c) extension of Route 66 trackless trolley on Knights Road.....The MBTA has offered to buy 86 miles of Cape Cod branch lines (to Falmouth, Hyannis and South Dennis) for \$275,000 to preserve freight service and restore passenger service (RDC's from Quincy). (PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 5)

IN TRANSIT, Continued from Page 4

SEPTA hopes to restore trolley service on Route 15 (Girard Avenue) with the summer schedule and is looking into operating Route 23 as rail on Germantown Avenue from Venango Loop to Bethlehem Pike with buses on the lower end starting in September. Should this route be operated from Luzerne Depot, it would be necessary to make rail connection eastbound on Venango from Old York Road to the loop at Germantown for pull-outs, and northbound on 13th from the loop to Erie for pull-ins.....As of March 23, 14 SEPTA trolleys have been repainted in the new Bicentennial scheme as follows: 2251 (PA), 2274(NJ), 2252(DE), 2261(VA), 2263(NC), 2271(RI), 2269(SC), 2275(CT), 2270(NH), 2273(MA), 2276(GA), 2285(NY), 2290(MD), and 2259(VA). "Pennsylvania" will be used 3 times.

"ON THE SCENE"**with El Simon**

.....Only 27 "Clocker" coaches which are still on Penn Central's books were in service by March 22, and the number continues to decline as cars go bad and are not repaired - it's assumed eventually all will be gone by April 25, when schedules change..
the 46 cars AMTRAK wants to keep will still continue in service; as I write this, we don't know what Amtrak's plans are for these cars. They may simply operate them this summer and then retire them, or they could give them much-needed heavy overhauls.....Amcoach deliveries had reached 179 cars by March 22. Coaches are up to 21132, clubs 20132, while Amcafes and Amdinettes remain at 20 and 3 units, respectively. Three Budd assembly lines are in use, each building two cars per week. Two lines build Amcoaches, while the third builds some sort of meal service car. For example, 1976 production on this line consisted first of nine Amcafes between January 5 and Feb. 5. Then, three Amdinettes were built between February 9 and February 18; from February 20 on, production has concentrated on the last twelve Amclub cars. Starting in April, production should switch back to more Amcafes or Amdinettes.....From March 16, two more sets of Amfleet equipment entered service. Trains covered were 141, 160, 237, 212 and 144, giving Springfield its first Amfleet service.....On April 1, Amfleet cars will be introduced on trains 173, 174, 143 and 212. This will leave the Night Owl, Southern Crescent, and Montrealer, all of which are special cases, and the Chesapeake/Betsy Ross as the only conventional trains to Washington, and the latter should be an Amfleet train by April 25.....The last two HEP-equipped E60's (970 and 975) are at Wilmington for acceptance testing. This makes a total of seventeen units. The last nine E60's will arrive between now and July as GE replaces boilers with M.A. sets. They are 951, 956 and 958-964. The six-boiler equipped units are eventually to be used on prestige runs like the Silver Meteor, Champion, Montrealer and Broadway (come to think of it, practically everything else will be Amfleet, anyway!).
The first new EMD diesel to pull the new trains was delivered March 20 and is now undergoing testing - by early April, they should begin to close out the reign of E8's and E9's east of New Haven. The new units are to be numbered 200-229, and most will go to New Haven. A few will go to California for the San Diegans, as well. The new units will also release power cars to run with GG1's, if Amtrak chooses, on clockers pending the arrival of the last seven E60's noted above.....All of the P30CH's have been noted in service out of Chicago with the following exceptions: 712 and 714 are at Washington for the Blue Ridge, while 715, 722-724 are still at General Electric. As they debug the units at Chicago, it's hoped to introduce Amfleet cars to the Milwaukee trains and the Blue Water, and Michigan Executive. All trains out of Chicago except the Abraham Lincoln should then be equipped with Amfleet if they are not long-haul types with sleepers, etc.

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"ON THE SCENE", Continued from Page 5

.....Only two EMD FP7's (116-117) will be retained - for helper duties over the Sierras on the SOUTHERN PACIFIC. Seven others remain in use on the Reno Fun Train and San Joaquin, but several 40F's are moving to Oakland for the latter train and the Reno Fun Train's season ends soon. The seven FP7's will then move to EMD as trades on the new 200-series units.....The conversion of six E9B units to steam generator cars has been completed by Paducah Shops. Units 1916-1921 have mostly operated on the Panama Limited with P30CH's.....Incidentally, two trains between Chicago and St. Louis now have Amclub cars - the 20123 and 20125 are among 24 Amfleet cars now assigned to Chicago. (The others are 17 Amcoaches and 5 Amcafes).....In other news, LONG ISLAND has retired most of its old sleeper-type parlor cars in favor of eight converted MU cars. Cars 2011-2018 have lounge-type seats in an arrangement like the Amclubs (they're not as elaborate as an Amclub, however). Still remaining are the two-ex-UNION PACIFIC lounges, the two ex-ERIE LACKAWANNA observations and the ex-B&O sleeper-observation. In addition, LI still has three ex-PENNSYLVANIA sleeper-lounges (Peconic, Ponquogue, and Pogquott) and two ex-NEW HAVEN sleepers (Mecox and Moriches).....Thirty-nine former LI MU cars (motors) have been converted now to push-pull cars - 27 coaches, 8 parlors and now 4 "bar-generator" cars numbered 2101-2104 are going into service.....READING has retired motor 893 and 14 trailers so far. Trailers are unconfirmed, however, 15 cars I could not account for in service are 772-74, 776-81, 783, 787, 794, 795, 797 and 799 - these are one more than are retired. The units retired include most of the trailers assigned to the 889-896 "Bride and Groom" sets. Therefore, the seven surviving motors have been assigned new trailers as follows: 889(791), 890(786), 891(793), 892(775 - the only original trailer left), 894(789), 895(798), 896(796).....PENN CENTRAL's MU roster shows that four more old MU's have been stored, so only 80 cars remain in active service, including seven E2's.

Odds & Ends....

BY FRANK G. TATHALL, JR.

.....Here's another update on Boeing-Vertol's Light Rail Vehicle program: Among the cars for BOSTON, #3400 has returned to Boeing's Eddystone plant after tests at Budd Company. It will go to Boston in late April for "pilot" demonstration. Still at the Pueblo (CO) test center is #3401---this car may be assigned as a demonstrator on SEPTA by this summer. The first "pilot" car in Boston is 3402, which arrived there March 22 via PENN CENTRAL. On the production line are 3403 through 3423 -- Boeing hopes to deliver 33 cars to Boston by the end of the year.....SAN FRANCISCO LRV's 1201 and 1202 are testing at Pueblo, 1203 through 1210 are under construction, 1211 is under test at Boeing, and 1212, 1213 and 1214 are stored at the plant awaiting modifications.....CONRAIL has decided to paint a pair of Bicentennial locomotives. One will very likely be a GG1.....RINGLING BROTHERS & BARNUM & BAILEY's 37-car circus train passed through Philadelphia March 30 on the PENN CENTRAL enroute from Baltimore to New York. Known as the "Blue Unit", the train will return June 6 for a six-day stand at the Spectrum. The 36-car "Red Unit" will move from Washington, DC, to Niagara Falls, NY, via Harrisburg on April 26.....PENN CENTRAL closed its passenger station at West Chester on March 19. From now on, passengers will have to buy their tickets downtown or on the train.....DELCO ELECTRONICS DIVISION of General Motors has received a contract to develop a new propulsion system for the two State-of-the-Art rapid transit cars now in PATCO's Lindenwold Shops. The contract is expected to be worth about \$2.5 million of UMTA's funds.....Total employment on U. S. Class I railroads in January, 1976 was 483,135, compared with 516,497 in January a year ago, according to Interstate Commerce Commission reports. ICC's first labor force report in 1889 showed total rail employment of 704,743.....On March 15, James C. McConnon of Montgomery County was re-elected to his eighth one-year term as Chairman of the SEPTA board. (PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 7)

ODDS AND ENDS, Continued from Page 6

.....DELAWARE RIVER PORT AUTHORITY has voted unanimously to increase PATCO fares by about 20 percent, effective June 2. The increase, which will become final after public hearings this month, is needed to offset an expected deficit of \$859,000 in PATCO's \$8.9 million operating budget for 1976.....There's a new railroad-type movie in town, "Breakhart Pass", now playing at the Duke. The shoot-'em-up western stars Charles Bronson, with help from ex-GREAT WESTERN 2-8-0 #75.....PENN CENTRAL's Bicentennial-hued inspection car 76 (formerly 30) was used to carry ConRail officials on a tour of the ERIE LACKAWANNA March 9-12 from Hoboken to Chicago.....PENNSYLVANIA-READING SEASHORE LINES passenger trains will continue to roll at least until October 1. The New Jersey Public Utilities Commission held another public hearing March 26 in Trenton, assuring that no action would be taken on PRSL's train-off petition prior to the April 1 start-up date of ConRail. Under the law, rail commuter services in operation on that date will continue for a minimum period of six months with Federal subsidy.....PENN CENTRAL's decrepit North Philadelphia station was severely damaged by fire on March 11.....READING COMPANY Vice President-Operations F. May retired on March 16, rather than December 31 as we reported in a previous issue.....The CITY OF PHILADELPHIA has drawn up a new funding proposal designed to break the deadlock between local and Federal officials on who will pay how much for the \$300-million center-city commuter tunnel. Long in the planning stages, the tunnel would link Philadelphia's two rail commuter systems by allowing trains to operate through Reading Terminal and Suburban Station.....TRI-STATE CHAPTER will hold its annual "Sell and Swap" days May 1 and 2 at Dover Senior High School, Dover, NJ. Details at our April meeting.....Work is progressing at READING SHOPS on the first two of five RDC's acquired by SEPTA for Bicentennial passenger service out of Philadelphia. It is hoped they will be available by the first of June. One of the remaining cars, former PC #98, is still leased to the BALTIMORE & OHIO for commuter service between Baltimore, Washington, and Brunswick, MD. The former READING push-pull train will apparently not receive the red-white-and-blue paint scheme as originally planned because of time restrictions.....KALMBACH PUBLISHING COMPANY, blaming higher costs of paper, printing and binding, has announced that it no longer will publish hard-cover railroad books. The current list of such books, however, will remain in print as long as demand warrants. From now on Kalmbach Books will devote itself exclusively to soft-cover publications dealing with model railroads.....DELAWARE & HUDSON's two Baldwin Sharknose units, their Binghamton, NY-Sayre, PA run eliminated with the onset of ConRail, have reappeared in freight service out of Whitehall, NY.....D&H and ERIE LACKAWANNA participated in a "Bicentennial Spectacular" at famed Starrucca Viaduct, Lanesboro, PA, on March 20. EL's red-white-and-blue SD45 #3632 and SDP45 #3638 pulling piggyback train CX-99 were posed on the 128-year-old span while D&H Bicentennial U23B #1776 stopped below with northbound train WR-1. A second D&H commemorative unit, rebuilt RS-3 #1976, was also supposed to be on hand with a southbound train, but was delayed enroute.....READING COMPANY commuter service was disrupted by the brief but violent windstorm which struck the Philadelphia area on March 21, the day of our Port Reading excursion. Overhead wire was downed near Wayne Junction but service on all lines except Chestnut Hill was restored by the Monday morning rush hour.....Admission charge to the State Railroad Museum, Strasburg, has been increased to \$1.00 per head.....A supplemental appropriations bill for AMTRAK introduced in Congress last month would also authorize the passenger corporation to set up through routes and fares with motor bus operators to furnish feeder service along rail routes.

WANTED: Original or high-quality duplicate 35mm color slides of Philadelphia Chapter "Farewell to the Reading" excursion on March 21. Please contact Larry Eastwood.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER NEWS (Continued from Page 1)

NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE: Chapter member Ron DeGraw, through his Bryn Mawr Press, is offering two new soft-cover books on the Philadelphia scene.

The first is Philadelphia in Motion, by J. W. Boorse, Jr., covering transportation in the area between 1902 and 1940. Many of its 125 photos are rare views of railroads and streetcars produced from glass-plate negatives. The second book is Centennial Philadelphia, by Richard B. Nicolai, which, as the name implies, describes the era of this city's famed celebration in 1876.

Both books will be published this month and will list for \$7.95 each. However, they will be available to early purchasers at a 30 percent discount direct from Bryn Mawr Press, Inc., P. O. Box 690, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010.

EXCURSION MUGS IN LIMITED SUPPLY - AVAILABLE ONLY BY TELEPHONE RESERVATION: There are only a very limited number of mugs remaining from the Port Reading excursion, and they will be available ONLY by telephone reservation to Larry Eastwood, 215-947-5769, any evening between 7 and 9, as long as the supply lasts.

READING EXCURSION COMES OFF FLAWLESSLY: This Chapter had the privilege of operating the only "good-bye" trip on any of the bankrupt rail lines entering ConRail, and the "Farewell to the Reading" trip was operated on March 21 and will be remembered by all who took part.

The trip, using FP7A's 903 and 902, and the six coaches in the push-pull set, left Reading at 9:30 a.m., travelling via the Main Line to Norristown Junction, then the freight-only line to West Falls, up the Blue Line to Nicetown Junction, then through the cut and low-grade line to Newtown Junction, and on out the New York Short Line to Meshaminy Falls, and New York Branch to West Trenton.

Freddie's Tavern put on a fine dinner of filled capon, and those who took part thoroughly enjoyed their meal. We suggest you return to Freddie's any Sunday afternoon and enjoy a meal, home-style, within full view of West Trenton station. Also, the West Trenton Volunteer Fire Company displayed pieces of fire apparatus for the excursionists, including their new Aerialscope, and many passengers enjoyed an aerial view of West Trenton station and the yards from the scope.

Our trip on to Port Reading was followed by the violent storm which did much damage in the Philadelphia area, including disruption of Reading commuter service. The storm caught up with us at Port Reading, pelting us with wind and rain.

Our return trip to Reading found passengers reminiscing over trips on the lines we had covered, and each carried home pleasant memories. We also had coverage from the various rail enthusiast publications, their photographers and editors spotted at lineside all throughout the day. Hopefully, we'll be seeing photos of our trip in the national rail enthusiast magazines shortly.

The cooperation of those who assisted on this excursion is sincerely appreciated. It was financially successful, as well, for the Chapter. We sincerely appreciate the interest of the Reading in arranging the trip.

DEADLINE - MAY ISSUE OF CINDERS: Please note an early deadline for the May issue of CINDERS-----All material must be in the hands of Larry Eastwood by Saturday, April 24, 1976 for inclusion in the May issue, which will be mailed on April 29.