

**BOSTON AND MAINE RAILROAD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**

P.O. BOX 302, READING, MASS. 01867

SECRETARY'S NEWSLETTER

29 APRIL 1974

Dear B & M Fans:

The April meeting of the Society was attended by 60 members and guests who thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Don Robinson's movie program of B&M steam operations in the early 1950's. He also screened scenes of Canadian National 6218 in action.

SPECIAL NOTICE: The May meeting of the Society will be held at the First Unitarian Parish Church, corner of Winn and Pleasant Streets, Woburn Square, at 8:00 p.m. on THURSDAY, May 9, 1974. We are very fortunate in having the Executive Vice President of the Boston and Maine Corporation, Mr. Alan Dustin, as our speaker that evening. Mr. Dustin will speak on contemporary operating procedures of the B&M and will also comment about the recent attempt on the part of the B&M to stay out of the newly-conceived Federal Railroad plan which will affect the entire rail industry in the Northeast. We hope that as many members as possible will attend this meeting - please feel free to bring a guest. Coffee and doughnuts will be served after the meeting. This meeting is also important because the slate of nominees for office for the next fiscal year will be presented by the nominating committee.

Don't forget to contact Roy Hutchinson if you can spare some time for the "Mountaineer" restoration project. His phone number is (617) 944-6233. Please call between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

The tour of the Billerica Shops will take place on Saturday, May 18, 1974. The group of 20 people is almost complete, but there may still be a couple of vacancies available. Check with the Secretary at the meeting on May 9. There is the possibility of an additional tour this fall.

The B&M's last 44-tonner, No. 119, is now out of service. In a classic insult-to-injury case, some miscreant recently stole both of its builder's plates. No. 1177 is also inoperable at the present time, due to a crankcase failure.

"The savage in man is never quite eradicated." - Henry David Thoreau's Journal, Sept. 26, 1859.

When Mr. Thoreau penned these words in his hut at Walden Pond, it is unlikely that he could have foreseen the absurd incident that was to take place 115 years later. On April 14, shortly after midnight, a group of youths began stoning the crew of a B&M freight which had stopped near the pond due to a hotbox. Many of the youths then looted several piggyback trailers, smashed windows in the caboose and engine, and tampered with the air brakes as the crew tried to get the train out of the area. The vandalism, added salaries for overtime and additional crews, and the investigation could cost the B&M as much as \$25,000. The train was imprisoned there for four hours.

Both Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations DOT's filed affidavits on March 20 with the ICC aimed at a show of public support for P&W operation of the former B&M branch between Worcester (Barbers) and Gardner. ICC has held up final approval of the P&W operation pending some show of public support, although the P&W has been operating the service under a temporary agreement. (The 470.)

The B&M doesn't like the recent DOT report which plans to eliminate many B&M lines. The major concern is that the DOT study lessens the importance of the B&M Hoosac Tunnel route west. Alan Dustin of the B&M told the ICC hearing in Boston that the Hoosac Tunnel route is superior (better grade) than the Boston & Albany route over the PC. Officials also pointed out that they hope to have the B&M reorganized if the traffic continues to grow, and proceeds of the B&M's sale of its commuter lines to the MBTA are carried out. (The 470.)

The G.A.F. Corp. recently announced that they are planning to close down their Lowell, VT operation in March 1975. The reason is that they cannot afford to install federally-required environmental control devices at the mine. The mine gives the Lamoille County Railroad \$125,000 in originating freight which amounts to one-third of the railroad's annual gross. (The 470.)

D&H Railway President Sterzing points out in his proposal for the Northeast Rail Reorganization that it would be far more logical to unite the bankrupt and solvent lines of the Northeast into two strong competitive systems rather than create a single giant largely dominated by the PC with headquarters in Philadelphia. Mr. Sterzing feels strongly that it is essential to maintain the close personal relationships now existing on roads such as the Reading, EL, D&H, B&M, and LV. By having two competitive railroads, vital rail gateways could be preserved. It is also felt that some of the above lines are very close to reorganization, more so than some realize. The D&H President believes strongly that competitive rail service can be maintained, and he uses the VTR, Lamoille County, and Green Mountain as examples. (The 470.)

On Monday, March 25, B&M train JU-1 enroute from White River Junction to Berlin, NH derailed 25 cars near the so-called Second Moose River Bridge which is on the steep grade between Gorham and Randolph, NH. The cars were reportedly all upright and apparently the B&M was going to try to rerail them without the use of the big hook, instead using heavy equipment and a work train from White River Jct. The head end of the train continued on into Berlin, so there were locomotives on each end of the wreck. (The 470.)

B&M ALCO RS No. 1500 is not only alive and well but was recently spotted in Gardner as the power on a local freight.

Henry Marrec, 11 Overlook Road, Arlington, MA 02174, offers a special price to B&MRRHS members on 8X10 black & white glossy diesel photos: 4 for \$1.00. Offer good until August 1, 1974. B&M, NYNH&H, MeC, Reading, EL, Western Maryland, CPR, CN, and many others. Send \$1.00 for updated list including two sample photos. If you already have the list, order directly from it. Sorry, no steam photos left.

At the March meeting of the Society the possibility of a B&M class T-1a 2-8-4 in an HO scale brass locomotive was discussed. Members Harry Frye and Don Valentine have put in a considerable amount of time working out the details of such a model. Any member of the Society who would seriously be interested in a quality model of the B&M 2-8-4 at a cost in the area of \$200 to \$250 should drop a postcard indicating that interest to Mr. Donald Valentine, Jr., King's Arrow Sport and Hobby Shop, Bennington Battle Trail, Wilton Centre, NH 03086. Mr. Valentine has also been working on the building of models of Central Vermont 2-10-4 and 4-8-2 locomotives with the Pacific Fast Mail firm. He can offer a 15% discount on most model building supplies. Imported brass locos, however, are usually an exception. New England Rail Service, which is the operating title of Mr. Valentine's railroad insurance business, "is considering hiring one of New England's better known shortline railroads for a Saturday in late May or early June solely for the purpose of taking pictures of a train wherever we would like to on the railroad. This would allow ample opportunity for both still and motion pictures as desired, the movement of the train being subject to our whim. The expected cost would be about \$20

per person and the group would be limited to about thirty people. The group would not ride on the train but would meet it at photogenic spots and have it move as we wish at each location to afford the best shots." Interested persons might mention their interest to Don at the meeting, or drop him a note.

We would very much like to thank Mr. Charles Blake of Bradford, NH for his gift to the Society of B&M paperwork, an order hoop, and other assorted railroadians.

For interested members, Mr. George Barth, 268 Grove Street, Apt. A, Charleston, SC 29403, has a plan of the Rutland's wooden Cafe-Coach. He will soon have a matching plan for the B&M and MeC wooden diners, and perhaps the B&M's wooden Cafe cars.

Mr. James Odell sends us the following information: The Mohawk and Hudson Chapter of the NRHS has acquired custody of the Builder's photo collection of Alco, ranging from 1880 to 1956. This collection is available to interested individuals. It provides a series of high quality builder's shots of B&M power, both steam and diesel. In addition, a limited number of photopasters are available. Those interested in learning more about this service should contact Mr. John Harbeck, Alco Historic Photos, P.O. Box 655, Schenectady, NY 12301.

Back issues of the B&M Bulletin are available at \$1.00 each plus 40¢ for first class postage and handling. The following issues are available:

1972: September (very few), December.
1973: March, June, September.

Also available are a few copies of the 1899 Hoosac Tunnel Route timetable at 25¢ each plus 10¢ postage, and the February 1932 Snow Train menu at 15¢ each plus 10¢ postage. If you buy both the timetable and menu, the postage charge is only 10¢.

Mr. Gene Baxter, 3145 Sixth Avenue, Troy, NY 12108, wishes to purchase photographic negatives of circus trains on the B&M or in the Boston area. He is mainly interested in the period from the 1930's to the mid-1950's.

Mr. Richard K. Barry, 1300 White Orchard Lane, Creve Coeur, MO 63141, is interested in obtaining original 35mm color slides of the B&M. He will purchase them or exchange them for slides of midwestern railroads.

Mr. Charles P. Atherton, 21 Lochardil Road, Inverness, Scotland, has for sale several thousand locomotive and station photos, tickets, passes, and other railroadians of the B&M Railroad and antecedent roads. The collection is too large to be listed, but he will make a list regarding specific requests. Inquiries are invited.

Jack's Trains of Rutland, MA, offers lists of Kodak-processed duplicate slides which include B&M subjects. His impressive full listing of slides may be obtained by forwarding four ten-cent stamps, or send \$1.00 and receive the lists plus two sample slides. Please mention the B&MRRHS in your inquiry. Write to member John F. Kane at Jack's Trains, Christmas Tree Lane, Rutland, MA 01543.

In the last Newsletter, mention was made of the fact that member George Drury of the Kalmbach Publishing Company was fortunate enough to be aboard the PA-1-powered inspection train that followed the so-called alphabet route from Rigby Yard in Portland to Potomac Yard, Virginia, near the District of Columbia. True to his word (would you expect anything less from Kalmbach?), he sent us a report of the trip as he saw it, and it is reproduced on the next pages, virtually intact.

Monday, March 18, 1974:

United serves a passable martini, offers a fine panorama of Cleveland, spends more time on the ground than it does getting to Cleveland from Milwaukee or getting to Boston from Cleveland (there's time for transit-watching during the layover), serves an unmemorable dinner (like most airlines), and turns out the cabin lights for the descent to Boston as the last vestige of twilight disappears. The city looked like jewels on black velvet, to use a well-worn simile.

Delta seems a strange way to go Down East, but it is only two corporate removes from the Pine Tree Limited and the Flying Yankee. South Portland has Cadillac taxis. The driver asks if I'm part of that Amtrak train. I explain briefly.

I check in at the motel, call Mary Davis, D&H Road Foreman of Engines, to verify tomorrow's departure time (and get him out of bed, but he says "When we're on D&H, come forward and ride the cab"), and wait for TRAINS associate editor Dave Ingles to show up. He does, and we compare notes on flights, the weekend (they went covered-bridge hunting), and what happened at 1027 North 7th. Street this morning (nothing unusual).

Tuesday, March 19:

D&H drives us from the motel to the south end of Rigby Yard. We genuflect in the falling snow to get low-angle shots of the PA's, climb aboard, and nail down a couple of seats in the lounge. Precisely at 8:00 we're rolling. The track is better than the Milwaukee Road's track between Milwaukee and Chicago. Snow flies past the windows, and Old Orchard Beach looks bleak. Over the speaker system we have the freight equivalent of the Zephyrette's spiel on the CZ - on-line industries, traffic, grades, and so on.

On the counter at the end of the car (an-ex-Rio Grande lunch counter lounge) are coffee and doughnuts. On the tables are nuts, candy, other munchies - have D&H and B&M no regard for waistlines and will power? The fellow next to me at the counter helping reduce the doughnut population looks familiar. I ask. He's Jerry Angier of the 470 Club in Portland. I met him last fall on the Grand Trunk trip. He's riding as far as Lowell. He was standing at Rigby talking with Bruce Sterzing, D&H President, who asked (at about 7:58) if Jerry wanted to come along.

We make passenger stops at Dover and Exeter and pick up several members of the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission. At Shawsheen we meet NY20 (Selkirk to Rigby via Rotterdam Jct.), and at Lowell WR2 is waiting for us. At Lowell Junction we turn west. From here to Ayer I color in a new line on my map.

Ten minute stop at Lowell: The snow stopped just north of Haverhill, and the sun is shining, kind of. Ingles and I grab cameras. We both concentrate on the PA's, but we don't neglect the RDC-1 idling there. The Stony Brook branch is pleasant scenery, and I pick out the point where the old line from West Concord to Nashua crossed over. (It doesn't show in my crumbling, yellowed November 1929 Official Guide.) At Willows we slide onto the main line of the Fitchburg Division and past the new auto-unloading facility. At Ayer, where we stop, I point out to Ingles the line to Worcester and the branch to Greenville and the old WNP line (the Hollis branch). Just west of Ayer we pass a group of low yellow wooden buildings on our left. At least half the men in the car recognize Fort Devens, where they spent the coldest winter of their lives.

The scenery becomes more hilly as we roll west. The stewards pass out brown-bag lunches (this is a business trip, and I'd be eating a brown-bag lunch in Milwaukee anyway - it turns out to be a pretty respectable lunch) and Ingles and I sit down with B&M trustee Benjamin Lacy. It turns out to be an educational lunch, and Ingles and I decide there is hope for the B&M.

West of Fitchburg I wash off the residue of the orange, pick up the camera, and vestibule it for a while. A little knoll at Gardner west of the junction with the line from Worcester is crowned with several fans and cameras. The sun glints from the PA's. More film is burned up.

An hour west of Fitchburg we meet NE84 (107 cars) whose route we are following. We stop at East Deerfield for 15 or 20 minutes and then at Greenfield for more than one hour. We haven't been racing, but we're well ahead of our schedule. At Charlemont TC100 meets us. The scenery is more rugged than I'd remembered. We stop at East Portal. Last time I rode a train through here my mother pointed out the electrics through the window of the Pullman on the Minute Man. I have vague memories of a bright-colored engine - did the Minute Man Pacifics keep their orange and white as late as 1944?

The tunnel takes 22 minutes. Some hardy souls stay out on the platform. Not me - though I do go out as soon as I see light gleaming from the west portal. The day and the run are downhill now. Ingles and I retreat forward to a coach and talk for a while with Sterzing and then with a Lehigh Valley trustee. West of Hoosick Falls we meet MB6, pulled by Styles Bridges, Franklin Pierce, and Daniel Webster. We arrive Mechanicville at 6:50 p.m., with a freight headed by three GP38-2's on our tail. We head for the world's most wind-swept Holiday Inn (Latham) and have dinner with Jim Shaughnessy, who followed our progress from the tunnel west.

Wednesday, March 20:

I'm in the first wave heading back to Mechanicville. I have coffee and a roll in the lounge - with Shaughnessy, as it happens - and then walk forward. Marv Davis says "Come on up," and I do. (The PA's are known on the D&H as "Marv's Engines.") Marv is the kind of person who, while the PA's are idling at Colonie waiting to leave with an excursion train, will invite a father and son (son wearing a D&H T-shirt - young enough so he's unsure of his name, but he knows those are PA's) up into the cab so Dad can get pictures of son in engineer's seat, and who will put Carol Ingles one-up on Dave - Dave has never been in the right-hand seat of a PA in motion, but his wife has.

There are at least four in the cab - me, the engineer, Marv Davis, and, in the right-hand seat, Bruce Sterzing. Marv turns to the engineer and says "I'll bet you thought you were at the top of the extra board." We get under way, and I unleash the two Pentaxes - a few shots of Sterzing at the throttle, some attempts at the classic Parsons shot into the rear view mirror, oncoming freight (TC100 with 117 cars west of Delanson). Sterzing admires a freshly painted bridge and says the signals along the line will all be painted this year. He makes sure I get a picture of the newly repainted depot at Cobleskill. The chocolate and cream color scheme is handsome. (No, they didn't use Floquil.) The track is better than B&M's, and welded rail is being installed on Richmondville Hill. Sterzing handles the train quite well; Marv tells him that he'll qualify with two more trips.

At Oneonta I move back to make room for others. Waiting to pull out of the yard is a run-through freight with a shiny Lehigh Valley C628 on the point - No. 628, in fact. Lunchtime comes, and the stewards set out an impressive array of edibles - cheese, crackers, shrimp, and so on - as a prelude to the bag lunch. Hurrah for stretch slacks.

We stop at Lanesboro under Starucca Viaduct. I guess it's a photo stop, and perhaps a chance for cab passengers to change places. The run over the summit and down into Carbondale and Scranton is in the sleepy part of the afternoon - I stay awake, but others doze. At Dupont, just southwest of Scranton, we cross over the Lehigh Valley's line that bypasses Wilkes-Barre and then swing onto it. This is a recently-built connection that allows through freights interchanged between LV and D&H to avoid the congestion of Wilkes-Barre. We start the climb over Moosic Mountain. The line coils

up over the hill, curve on curve - it's the kind of mountain railroading you didn't expect to find east of Denver. For part of the way we're on ex-CNJ track, but soon we're back on LV proper - on excellent track that permits the PA's to stretch their long legs. The Lehigh River gorge is deep, wild, wooded, and completely inaccessible, it seems, by anything but train and foot. We roll along at 60. The announcement is made that the train will stop at the LV-Reading station at Bethlehem and discharge those passengers who want to go to the hotel. Then the train will circle through the steel mill to point itself in the right direction for Thursday and come back through the station - but that will take about an hour. Ingles and I decide that the steel-mill trackage doesn't appear on any map and therefore can't be colored in; besides, it will be too dark to shoot pictures of any diesels that happen to be around. We detrain and shoot the rear end - the setting sun, which hasn't been behind a cloud once that day, glows golden on the platform of Car 200. The Hotel Bethlehem picks us up and drives us across the river - with comely bellhopesses (bellhopettes?) at the wheel. Check-in is quick and efficient. Ingles and I have dinner with Chuck Crouse of WEEI. Ingles opts for bed; Crouse and I walk off the hotel's excellent dinner in search of Ektachrome (futile) and Reading Budd cars from Philadelphia (also futile, but we see LV freights). We discover when we return that the Hotel Bethlehem is the kind of hotel that turns down your bed, leaves a light on so you don't have to fumble for a switch, and gives you an apple and a chocolate mint - to keep the doctor and hunger away. Hardly the sort of thing that your Landmark-for-Mundane-Americans type of motel would do for the traveler.

Thursday, March 21:

It's spring. It's raining something fierce. LV drives us over to the station, and just as we get back there Budd car No. 9152 leaves for Philadelphia. The train backs across the river into the station; on board is that nice snug feeling you get on a train in bad weather. Rolls and coffee supplement that apple.

The Reading takes us through the yard at Allentown. Freights don't operate via Bethlehem but rather change ends at Allentown and go west to Reading, avoiding congestion in Reading's suburban zone around Philadelphia. The Reading's track is good. Branches diverge here and there, and the Rand-McNally railroad atlas comes in handy. We circle Reading (PA) on a belt line and then head down the Schuylkill River toward Pottstown and Philadelphia. We're in passenger territory, and we move at passenger speeds on excellent track. For a couple of years I've been riding mostly Milwaukee Road and Penn Central, and I'd forgotten what good track was like. At Norristown we stay on the west bank of the river; passenger trains cross the Schuylkill and enter electrified territory. This trackage is freight-only and slow; through Philadelphia it's essentially yard track.

B&O takes over in Philadelphia. At least five freights are waiting for us there, and as we head south we don't pass an empty siding. B&O single-tracked the line when passenger service was discontinued in 1958 (I think) for tax purposes. The line sees a lot of freight traffic, and the track is rough.

The B&O box lunches take the prize - two sandwiches, potato salad, pickles, pie, a banana, a chocolate-peppermint patty, and maybe a couple of other things.

As we roll through Newark, Delaware, I point out the apartment I lived in, marvel at how much the University of Delaware has expanded, and notice that the good little restaurant at the corner of Main Street and the B&O is now a water-bed store.

Just east of Baltimore the clouds part and the sun comes through - I borrow a roll of Kodachrome from Ingles and head for the vestibule. We circle to the west and then head south past Mt. Royal Station, now an art school, and into the Howard Street Tunnel,

location of America's first mainline electrification (1895). (It's described in When the Steam Railroads Electrified - unless we think of a better title - by William D. Middleton, on the Kalmbach shelf of your hobby shop probably by Christmas. The Hoosac Tunnel is in it, too.)

We pause at Camden Station to change crews and then roll south toward Washington. We curve across Thomas Viaduct and then the engineer opens 'em up to 70. Just outside the District of Columbia we turn southeast, cross over the Pennsy's passenger line, shutters cocked, and then cross and parallel the freight line down the east bank of the Anacostia River. We cross the Anacostia, which is kind of a backwash of the Potomac, on Pennsy track, duck into a tunnel, and eventually emerge and glide by L'Enfant Plaza. We wave, and Amtrak waves back. Several Amtrakers are standing at trackside with cameras (having been alerted). Then it's onto the bridge over the Potomac, and the trip is just about over.

Ah, but look! Coming up on our right is a headlight and a red nose. It doesn't catch up very fast, and we're well into Potomac Yard before the southbound Silver Star passes us on RF&P's passenger tracks. A Burlington E unit is in the consist behind a dirty Amtrak E; the train includes a classic Pennsy heavyweight B60 baggage car and the usual array of red-and-blue striped products of Budd, Pullman; and ACF. The E's belch out more smoke than our PA's do.

We stop by the yard office. We get off, take a few pictures, the train disappears into the yard, and suddenly it's all over. Ingles departs for National Airport, and I call my father. As I head out to Route 1 to await pickup, the PA's come into view again, way down in the yard. The color film is gone, but there are still a few frames of Plus-X left. I dig out the telephoto lens and take a farewell shot.

Dad pulls over to the curb, blocking home-bound commuters. I stick the bags in the back seat, climb in - and he asks "How do we get to Falls Church from here?" (It's about 7 miles west.) I'm incredulous. "How should I know? You've lived here 11 years!" (Come to think of it, all those years in Boston he never did figure out the MTA.)

The weather over the weekend was sunny and shirtsleeve-temperature. The punctuation mark of the trip was the pilot's announcement as we landed that it was 11° in Milwaukee. Ah, Milwaukee!

- George Drury-

Best regards,

David R. Squires

David R. Squires, Secretary