

## BSRA Entertainment Report for January 10, 2015

### LONG FORM (for historical record) Entertainment Report for January 10, 2015

**January 10, 2015.** That '70s (Slide) Show, Part 2: Outside Boston. George Chiasson presented archived scenes from the 1970 - 1979 period, showing transit in New York City, including Staten Island Rapid Transit (SIRT) and Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH), Philadelphia, the Boeing-Vertol plant in Ridley Park, PA, Washington DC, Cleveland, and Chicago. George acquired these slides from several people, especially Gerry Landau, and included a few of his own. All along, George gave us historical tidbits from times before, during, and after the time of the photos in this show.

We started with the New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA) on the 125th Street elevated in 1970, showing a train of R12 and R14 cars, which were in service until the early 1980s. The older NYCTA cars were a mix of single unit cars and married pairs, which could be easily combined to make trains of various lengths (from 6 to 10 cars). George showed us various low-numbered R-series cars and some World's Fair cars. Fan trips were common in the 1970s, and we got to see some photos of these. He also showed us a photo of Tracy Towers, which sits over an IRT yard on the system. One of George's historical tidbits from the time of the photos in this show was the fact that the first air conditioned cars arrived in 1977, and were usually mixed into trains composed chiefly of cars lacking air conditioning. He showed us truss bridges on the elevated extension of the line to the Bronx, which have speed restrictions (apparently often ignored) due to the lack of support pilings in the middle; these bridges were built for an elevated extension of the line that was by contract supposed to be all subway within the Bronx, but was built elevated in a portion of the Bronx that was at the time not yet technically part of the Bronx. He showed us the Third Avenue El in the Bronx, which was abandoned in 1973. Then he showed us the State of the Art Cars built by St. Louis Car Company in 1973 - 1974 (using modified R44 car shells) and promoted by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, which were demonstrated on several city systems. We got to see this in Boston in a previous show, and in New York City and some other cities in this show; these are now on static display at Seashore Trolley Museum. Another historical tidbit (from after the time of the slides George showed us) was the information that subway cars that the NYCTA has acquired in recent years have been in train sets of 4 or 5 cars, which are not necessarily optimal. This makes train reconfiguration (to accommodate changing ridership) much less flexible, since train lengths must be multiples of these larger numbers: Adding two of these sets together produces trains of 8 or 10 cars; adding three of these sets together would produce trains of 12 or 15 cars. The next slides were of the JFK Airport shuttle trains when they were new in 1978.

Next, George took us to Staten Island, to show us Staten Island Rapid Transit (SIRT), starting again in 1970. At the time, Staten Island still had 1925 vintage MUE-1 cars in service. Staten Island Rapid Transit uses 75' cars, and its shops are configured exclusively for these (although Hurricane Sandy flooded the shops recently, requiring SIRT cars to be trucked over to the NYCTA for service); although the NYCTA has 75' cars, all recent NYCTA orders have been for 60' cars. George showed us a photo of a B&O locomotive delivering SIRT cars. The next few photos were of Hudson Terminal on Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) in New Jersey about a year before its closure in 1971, and then of the Newark City Subway, then still running PCC service.

From PCC service in Newark, George took us to PCC service in Philadelphia, on the streetcar lines of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA). George gave us a mini-show within a show (including an interior photo) of streetcars that SEPTA received from various cities, which were initially painted in their original cities' paint schemes (except for replacement of their logos with the SEPTA logo) as well as some experimental SEPTA paint schemes, and then were later repainted into a standard SEPTA paint scheme. SEPTA got streetcars from Toronto (TTC) that had originally operated many years previous in Kansas City (distinguishable by their lack of standee windows) and Birmingham, as well as having a PCC fleet of its own (the streetcars that were not from Kansas City all had standee windows). In addition to numerous PCCs, we also got to see a Blackpool "boat car" (now in San Francisco, running on the Market Street heritage streetcar line) running in Bicentennial service (1976) and a Peter Witt streetcar that was also

visiting Philadelphia. Everything that was not originally from Philadelphia had to be re-gauged from standard gauge (4' 8+1/2" = 1435 mm) to the less broad variant of Pennsylvania Trolley Gauge (5' 2+1/4" = 1581 mm). We got to see several photos of streetcar lines that no longer exist: 50 (discontinued in 1980 and replaced by bus line 57) and 60 (discontinued in 1977 and replaced by buses having the same route number). Trackless trolley wires were often visible alongside or crossing streetcar wires. George showed us a Kawasaki car when it was new (these were delivered in 1981 - 1982), and then took us to suburban Philadelphia to show us Red Arrow cars in service. Back in central Philadelphia, George showed us the Market-Frankford line, which runs on the broad variant of Pennsylvania Trolley Gauge: 5' 2+1/2" = 1588 mm (same as used in Pittsburgh). These photos showed us the temporary alignment and elevated structure used before I-95 construction was completed. After this, he showed us SEPTA electric trolleybuses (Marmon-Harrington and Brill), which were in poor condition, with severe alignment problems. Back to SEPTA rapid transit, we saw the Broad Street Subway, including the State of the Art Cars that George showed us in New York.

Next, George showed us a special treat: an Electric Railway Association visit to the Boeing-Vertol plant in Ridley Park, PA, where we saw Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) elevated cars and Boston LRV cars being assembled. Then he took us to Washington, DC, where the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority (WMATA) maps already showed the whole system, but only portions of the Blue Line (1977) and the Red Line (1976) were open; we got to see photos of new 1000-series cars (including interior photos) in or about to enter service, and the interiors of stations on these lines just before opening for service, along with some construction photos.

Next stop was in Cleveland, Ohio to see service on the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA). The RTA initially inherited used PCCs from several cities for its Shaker Heights system: Twin Cities; Newark (ex-Twin Cities); Illinois Terminal (two double-ended PCCs); St. Louis; Toronto (ex-Cleveland). As with the SEPTA streetcars we saw above, they temporarily retained the paint schemes from their original cities, and some were repainted later in RTA colors. The RTA used island platforms, and had a provision for left-hand doors on its own cars built for the Shaker Heights system. The left-hand doors proved to be unnecessary as left-hand running was employed along with the island platforms, and these were eventually modified as such for the Cleveland rapid transit in 1955. Instead, seats were installed in front of the doors (with level floor over the stairwells). In some later cases sheet metal and windows replaced the left-hand door provision. After this, George showed us the Cleveland Airporter cars (and the State of the Art Cars also visited this line), and then MBTA (Boeing) LRV 3401 visiting the RTA for a trial.

Last stop was on the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) in the 1970s, when rapid transit cars made from PCC parts were still running (including an interior photo of one of these cars). We saw photos from various parts of the system, including the Evanston (Purple) and Ravenswood (now Brown) lines, the line to O'Hare (now Blue), and the Skokie Swift (now Yellow). The Evanston (Purple) Line used overhead wire electrification until 1973 and the Skokie Swift (Yellow) until 2004, so we got to see a variety of current collection devices on various equipment: trolley poles and bow collectors on older cars, and pantographs on newer cars, including the visiting State of the Art Cars.

#### **SHORT FORM** (for Annual Report) Entertainment Report for January 10, 2015

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