

# THE SWITCHLIST

OLD NORTH STATE CHAPTER  
NRHS

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## October Meeting

*From time to time our regular program presenters are not available to bring a show to us, and it becomes necessary to call upon those folks who are ready, willing and able to come on short notice. That was the case when we had to rejuggle our October and November programs; happily, Vince Reh was happy to step into the gap and bring us a program on railroads in French Canada, a complement to Vince's earlier program on the iron ore railroads of eastern Canada. Vince's programs are always most enjoyable, so do plan on being with us.*

*Our meeting will be at our usual venue, Red Hot and Blue at 6615 Falls of the Neuse Road on Tuesday, 11 October. As is regularly the situation, our meeting room will be available around 5:30 pm, with dinner together at 6:00 pm and the program beginning at 7:00 pm.*

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## September Meeting Report

The Petersons took us along on their 9200 mile trip around the country on Amtrak, sharing what they saw both from and on the trains and what they experienced in the eleven cities that they visited. They shared the architectural treasures of a number of stations, some of New York City's subway system and several Art Deco gems. All of us got to delight in the United States' shortest and steepest funicular incline, the Angels Flight Railway in Los Angeles. Their travels were enhanced with a good number of bonus miles, including the Frisco west of St Louis and the Chicago & Eastern Illinois from St Louis to Chicago.

It is always a delight for Art and Lynette to bring a program to the Old North State chapter. Your responses are a great encouragement to us, fueling our enthusiasm and informing us as to what you want in future programs. Thank you for that!

## *Of Interest*

**Art Peterson** began, in the August Switchlist, a recounting of his growing up from 1935 onwards. In this issue he continues the story.

One of Art's jobs while he was in high school was with the local Food Fair. One responsibility that he seized upon when it was offered to him was delivering the weekly report to Food Fair's headquarters in Elizabeth, NJ. After the store closed, the week's sales report was compiled; it needed to be delivered to headquarters that same day, and handling that report meant that Art would both earn overtime pay and get his rail fare to Elizabethport paid. In addition to these benefits, the walk from the Elizabethport station to the mail drop at headquarters skirted the CNJ yard, where there was always something going on.

While attending evening classes at Rutgers, Art avoided being drafted by enlisting in the New Jersey National Guard. The only unit that had openings was in New Brunswick, which had specifically reserved them for college students; the only catch was that he would have basic training in Ft Jackson, SC beginning in November. That did interfere with the school year, but was much to be preferred over the alternative. And it did give Art his first Pullman trip, from Trenton, NJ to Columbia, SC. Happily, it was in one of the classic heavyweight Pullmans, and the view from the upper berth included a N&W streamlined K-class 4-8-2 in Richmond, Virginia.

Coming home at Christmas brought new mileage when our troop train left Ft Jackson on the Atlantic Coast line. At Washington, those of us from New Jersey caught the PRR *Keystone* train, another delightful adventure. Once basic training was over, a contingent of us proceeded, via train, to Louisville, KY for advanced training at Fort Knox. Southern's *Carolina Special* took us from Columbia to Knoxville, TN, where we caught Louisville & Nashville's *Flamingo* to Louisville; both trains brought new mileage for Art.

Later, while in graduate school, he had occasional scientific meetings in New York City. Naturally, he took the train into the city, and generally that was a Jersey Central train out of Plainfield. On one such occasion, Art was surprised and delighted to see Burt Imlay, a trainman who had befriended Art when he was a young teenager and whom Art had not seen in years. They had an opportunity to update each other and both were so pleased to share addresses and phone numbers so that they could stay in touch. Burt was pleased that he had a spare New York & Long Branch switch key with him; he promptly presented it to Art. Forty-eight years later, he still has it.

After Art received his PhD, he went to work for Allied Chemical in Hopewell, Virginia. In his first day on the job he was approached by an older colleague from New York City who had some very good news. He let Art know that when he had to travel on business for Allied, he could use whatever means he wished. He further commented that he used the train whenever possible; Allied shipped a lot of freight, so all the railroads were very accommodating to Allied employees. He also noted that several of the other research people would undoubtedly approach Art about taking on liaison responsibilities with universities around the country where Allied sponsored research. Art quickly determined that the Director of Research was very supportive of Art's doing so.

Between his liaison travels, trips to the corporate research center in New Jersey and scientific meetings, Art often covered up to 25,000 miles of rail travel in a year. He and

Allied's traffic agent got to know one another quite well, and Art's sometimes unusual routing requests were actually welcomed. And, no matter what the routings were, he could always be assured that the accommodations would be excellent. More than once Art found himself one of a few passengers, if not the only one in a Pullman while there were empty rooms over the wheels in an adjacent car.

After a few years with Allied, Art was approached by a recruiter regarding a position as director of research and development with a chemical specialties firm in Huntington, Indiana. He agonized over the change, but health issues with his son commended the Midwest with its winters over the Middle Atlantic region, so Art accepted the position when it was offered. Living in Ft Wayne and working in Huntington provided two routes to New Jersey and Chicago and one to St Louis. Now, in addition to scientific meetings, trade shows and related travel, Art had four sales forces that wanted to use him as a resource. He was delighted to meet their requests, and added many a new mile while doing so. Once the company's comptroller questioned whether it was prudent for Art to always travel by train. Wasn't doing so always more expensive than flying? Happily, Art had just returned from a company meeting at our Dallas, Texas plant. He had taken the train going and coming, while Jack Robb, the traffic manager and a good friend, had flown down and back. They were both there the same number of days. Art got expense information from Jack and deleted any non-comparable information from his and Jack's reports. Going to the comptroller, he told him what he had done, he agreed that was the right approach. Then Art pointed out that he had saved the company \$43.00 by taking the train, and had even been back at the lab several hours before Jack. Art never had his travel expenses questioned after that.

One train became a virtual commuter run for Art. He had to go to Chicago on a very regular basis, sometimes several times a week. The Pennsy's *Broadway Limited* departed early enough to get him into Chicago for a full day's work before catching the return trip on the eastbound *Broadway*. Art got to enjoy both breakfast and dinner on the train, and both were excellent. Much of the time he encountered the same dining car steward; as they got to know one another, Art mentioned an older friend from New Jersey who had been a PRR dining car steward. The current steward not only knew him, but had been trained by him! Art got even better service from then on.

For several years all went well with Art's travels and passenger trains, but little by little the number of train-off petitions that were made increased and more and more were granted. With no great pleasure he rode an increasing number of last runs. Determined to ride some of the survivors that were too good to miss, he worked with some of the sales force to provide "essential" field visits to large customers on lines he had not been on. There were some hoped-for trips that didn't materialize, but Art did get to ride the *California Zephyr*, *Coast Daylight*, *Panama Limited* and *Sunset Limited*. The mechanical problems with the despised "Automat" car on the day that he rode that SP train meant that it had a full service dining car!

The Saturday before Amtrak started, Art and his son David arose early and drove to Chicago to spend the day photographing as many trains as possible, with a special focus on those that were going to vanish. The weather was beautiful and the railroads were allowing fans to go where they pleased for photos, including areas that were normally off-limits. They left the Windy City after sundown, tired, hungry and sad, but having accomplished their mission.