

# Train Magazine

Volume 5a Edition 1 The 26th issue ever

February 2001

## Special points of interest:

- Train Magazine is starting Volume 5a because this is the fifth calendar year when Train Magazines were published. The 'a' is there to distinguish between the other Volume 5.
- All articles in this issue were written by David Emer unless it is noted otherwise.
- All Train Magazine articles and photos are copyright 2001. All rights reserved.
- Train Magazine has increased its size by 40%. See page 3 for more details.

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## Front Cover Photo Flash: Acela Express vs. NortheastDirect

When I went to Rt. 128 Station near Boston I saw two Amtrak trains. One of them represents Amtrak's past as a non-contender in the transportation world and the other represents Amtrak's bright future. The former is an Amtrak NortheastDirect train. The NortheastDirect train will bring you between Boston and New York City in 5 hours. By car you can get between Boston and New York City in 4 hours. It is run by a diesel engine. The latter is the Acela Express. This train can bring its passengers between Boston and New York in 3 hours and 28 minutes. It is an electric engine.

Here are some photos from my train watching trip:

Above: Amtrak's Acela Express passing a NortheastDirect train.

Below: Amtrak's Acela engine waiting for passengers with a NortheastDirect coach next to it.

Both photos were taken by David Emer



## Keyworth's Train Fun

By Ian Keyworth

Try this math problem:

Thomas the tank engine and his friend Harold have a race to the next station.

Using one of the ways on the rails, it is 20 miles to the station with alternating turns (left-right-right-left-left-right, etc.) every two miles. If they are both going 50 MPH using different paths (Harold using the one that doesn't zig-

zag) which train will reach the station first? How long is Harold's route?

Don't look at a Harry Potter book for this one

What is the name of the train that takes Harry Potter to Hogwarts: School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and what station platform does it meet the students at?

# Commuter Rail Spotlight: Cal Train and Champlain Flyer

## Cal Train

The San Francisco area known as the Bay Area has been interested in rail service since 1851 when a line was proposed between San Francisco and San Jose. Today, San Francisco operates a commuter rail system called Cal Train that runs from San Francisco to Gilroy on weekdays and from San Francisco to San Jose on weekends. It operates trains on the half hour on weekdays. Cal Train can claim that it is the friendliest rail service provider to bicyclists. Cal Train announced its biggest recorded annual ridership in June of 1996 since 1958 with 7.4 million riders. There only has been commuter rail transit between San Francisco and San Jose since 1971 when Amtrak took over intercity passenger rail service and re-routed a line.

The idea for this article came from Robert Fox and the information came from [www.caltrain.com](http://www.caltrain.com).

## Champlain Flyer

On Monday December 4, Burlington, Vermont became the 22nd metropolitan area to have commuter rail service. It is being dubbed as the shortest rail line with 13 miles of track. For now, the service is free and runs two daily round trips on weekdays between Charlotte and Burlington with a stop in Shelburne. South Burlington will soon be added to the schedule. The 2-car train is powered by a VRS GP38-2 and can hold about 300 people. "This is the beginning, I hope, of a real renaissance in rail," said Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, a supporter of the \$18 million project. In April, there will be 10 trains each weekday going in each direction with some weekend service. The inaugural day saw 250 passengers step onto the train. The train goes along Lake Champlain and corn fields.

The information for this article came from the Associated Press and Trains Magazine's web-site.

Update: 2000 people rode the Flyer in its first month of operation.

## MagLev Trains: Could They Be More than A Dream?

Since May, 1999 7 Maglev projects designated by the DOT (Department of Transportation) have been being researched. On Thursday, January 18 the DOT chose two projects for further consideration. One is a 45-mile route between Pittsburgh, the BWI airport and the eastern suburbs. The other is a route in Maryland. The 40-mile line in Maryland would go between Camden Yard sports complex, BWI Airport and Washington's Union Station.

The government will give \$7 million to each project and the finalist to be announced in 2002 will receive \$950 million. Magnets repelling each other propel magnetically levitated trains. MagLev technology is also being researched in China, Germany and Japan.

"It has been extremely difficult to select from all of the meritorious projects, but we must now focus the remaining effort and funding on the Maryland and Pennsylvania projects, the ones best positioned for early demonstration of Maglev's promise," said Secretary Slater.

The other projects that were eliminated should receive a little less than a \$1 million and are encouraged to receive funding from other sources.

The information for this article came from "U.S. trims list of Maglev rail projects to 2 metro areas" - A Reuters, press release, Maglev Train Race Narrows, an Associated Press, press release and [www.Maglevpa.com](http://www.Maglevpa.com).

## Letters to the Editor

I've read every issue of Train Magazine and most articles are about Eastern trains. I'd like to tell you about Bay Area Trains. The **Cal train** runs from San Francisco to Gilroy on weekdays, and on weekends it runs from San Francisco to San Jose. **Amtrak** runs from San Jose to Sacramento everyday.

—**Robert Fox**

Editor's Note: See article at top of page

Editor's note: Do not write to the Hotmail Train Magazine account any more. The new E-mail you should send articles, letters to the editors and other Train Magazine related things to is [Editor@trainmagazine.com](mailto:Editor@trainmagazine.com)

## Emer Notes: Make the Whistle Blow in Cape Cod Again

Many people go to Cape Cod each weekend and MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority or Amtrak service would help make the roads to Cape Cod less congested as well as help the environment. First, The Sagamore Bridge is frequently congested and the roads leading to Cape Cod are sometimes backed up for miles going into Cape Cod. In other words, the roads are clogged yet the railroads have not had passenger trains go down them since 1948. In other places MBTA and Amtrak have reduced automobile traffic. So, why aren't there trains going down the Cape? Second, now is the perfect time to bring train service back to Cape Cod because of the recent MBTA fare hikes. If the MBTA brings back train service to Cape Cod it might not get as much criticism for the new fare hikes (Volume 4a Edition 5).

Cape Cod is a beautiful place with beaches and quaint towns. So why should cars make it polluted and ugly? Trains can save Cape Cod. Eventually, if traffic becomes so

bad going down to Cape Cod they may need to expand the roads to make Route 6 look like interstate 495. A 4-lane highway would ruin the atmosphere and beauty of Cape Cod. Tracks in Cape Cod still go to Hyannis so they should be used. Trains are definitely the answer to Cape Cod congestion, so please help bring trains back to Cape Cod.

*To make the whistle blow in Cape Cod,  
write a letter to your State  
Representative or Senator if you live in  
Massachusetts and tell them to start  
and vote for measures to bring MBTA or  
Amtrak service to Cape Cod.*

## Amtrak Guest Rewards

To go along with Amtrak's new Unconditional Satisfaction Guarantee (Volume 4a Edition 4), Amtrak has now started Amtrak Guest Rewards. Amtrak Guest Rewards do not only include free train trips after riding on Amtrak but also flight tickets, and other gifts. United Airlines, Continental Airlines and Midwest Express are part of the plan. Hertz, Barnes and Noble, Marriott hotels are also involved in the program. Amtrak Guest Rewards will give you 500 starting points if you take Amtrak 90 days from when you enroll. Amtrak will give you two points for every dollar spent on Amtrak travel. The exception is for Acela

Express and Metroliner where between select city pairs you can get 500 points for each trip in business class (the lowest class.) If you took Acela Express often you might be able to quickly get 7,500 points, the amount needed to get a free trip fairly quickly but if you are not a frequent Amtrak traveler it would take you a long time. To sign-up call 1-800-307-5000.

The information for this article came from Reuters and [www.amtrakguestrewards.com](http://www.amtrakguestrewards.com). Check out <http://www.amtrakguestrewards.com/> to find out more information on Amtrak's Guest Rewards.

## Train Magazine Is Expanding— Become a Member

Starting this issue Train Magazine has expanded into a 7-page magazine. We also are raising our fees to \$12 for new memberships and membership renewals. Despite, the slight increase Train Magazine is giving you a lot more for a small increase in fees. Train Magazine hopes this will give you an added incentive to become a member (color subscriber) or renew your membership to this fantastic publication. If you become a member you will receive two of the pages in color in each edition for 8 issues.

You also will receive an exclusive train museum list with ratings of the museums in it.

If you want to receive Train Magazine in black and white and didn't receive Volume 6 Edition 1 you can get 8 issues of Train Magazine for \$6.

Please send cash or checks to 20 Blackhorse Dr. Acton, MA 01720. All checks should be written to 'David Emer.'

## Acela What?

Amtrak has successfully confused people with its three Acela brand names. Acela Express (start date article: Volume 4a Edition 5) started in December of 2000 and is the 150 MPH high-speed service between Boston– New York and the nation’s capital. You can get between Boston and New York in 3 hours and 28 minutes on Acela Express. Acela Express replaces Metroliner service, which has been the premier electric service between Washington D.C. and New York. Acela Regional (start date article: Volume 5 Edition 5) service runs slower trains between Boston– New York and Washington and other places in the NEC (Northeast Corridor.) Acela Regional started in January of 2000. It will eventually replace NortheastDirect, Empire and Keystone service. Empire service runs from New York to Albany and then on to Niagara Falls. Keystone service runs from Harrisburg to Philadelphia to New York. Acela Regional can get you



between Boston and New York in 4 hours because it uses electric trains instead of diesel like NortheastDirect uses. NortheastDirect gets you between Boston and the Big Apple in 5 hours. Amtrak’s third Acela service is Acela Commuter. Acela Commuter goes between NYC and Philadelphia. Acela Commuter replaces Clocker service. Amtrak’s first train was a Clocker train. On May 1, 1971 Clocker train no. 235 left New York’s Penn Station at 12:05 a.m. going to Philadelphia. Despite the name confusion hopefully Acela will lead Amtrak out of the title of “national joke” to “serious competition” to airlines.

For more information go to [www.Acela.com](http://www.Acela.com). Acela.com has a map of the Acela routes, Acela schedules and news about Acela. The information and Acela logo for this article came from that site.

## Train Log News Briefs: Rail News Highlights From Train Log

1/12/01— In 1993 some black employees that work for Norfolk and Southern NS in Alabama and Georgia thought they were being discriminated against because they couldn’t get management positions through promotion. This group of people grew to all of the black employees of NS since December 16, 1989 who were denied management positions on the basis of race. The settlement calls for 7,700 former and current employees of the Virginia based company to be eligible to share a \$28 million settlement and forces NS to change its promotion procedures.

1/12/01— The Acela Express train which runs one round-trip everyday carried 11,000 passengers to bring in 1.25 million, 12% more than expected.

12/24/00— Norfolk and Southern agreed to allow Septa, a Pennsylvania commuter rail line to build a 62-mile passenger rail line on their track because Septa agreed to fix up an abandoned line to reroute Norfolk and Southern’s trains. The passenger rail line will go between Norristown and Reading.

12/12/00— The third scheduled Acela Express train couldn’t run because of damage between the contraption that connects the overhead wires and the train. The train did make its afternoon run.

12/11/00— The first revenue Acela Express train ran between Washington D.C.— New York and Boston.

Train Log is at [www.trainmagazine.com](http://www.trainmagazine.com). Sources are credited at Train Log.

## Train Travel In The Netherlands

By David Rachlin

What's long, segmented and yellow with a blue face? A caterpillar, you say? No! It's a Dutch train. Leave it to the friendly Dutch to have such pleasant looking trains and a simple system of country-wide travel. I have traveled in the Netherlands both by train and bus on numerous occasions, and each time I was delighted by the convenience and available options for tourists. My main entry point for travel has always been the huge Amsterdam

Centraal Station, slurred by the natives to what sounds like "straal shown", at the end of the Damrack, the major street in this fascinating city. The pace of the station, like most anywhere, is hectic and hurried, but once it is your turn to buy a ticket at the window, the agent will converse with you in excellent English and answer your questions. The station is also a place to purchase postcards and other travel essentials, including a bite to eat before or after your trip.

Continued on next page

## Train Travel In The Netherlands

By David Rachlin

Continued from 4th page

Train stations away from large cities are often little more than a small building with a few ticket agent windows and a covered walkway to the tracks. Whether you are in a large station or a small one, the service is always friendly and the information is displayed the same way. One of the best features of Dutch tourist travel is the "dagtochtje," which roughly translates as "field trip." For one modest price, you receive a round trip ticket and an added attraction, such as a museum admission and/or a meal at a specific place at your destination. They often include special rides on steam trains or boat rides. I once took a dagtochtje to a forested area outside Amsterdam, took a lovely walk with a friend and had a pancake lunch. The restaurant was a quaint little place in a clearing in the forest, often visited by bike riders and, of course, people like me, who bought the special ticket.

Dagtochtjes include open-air museums and canal rides, visits to working windmills and many other wonderful sites. When you speak to an agent, ask for the dagtochtje catalogue, which describes several trips. Don't make your decision at the window, or the agent and the people behind you will not be very happy. Study it closely and then get back in line or come back when you intend to travel. That's very important because a dagtochtje ticket is only good the day of travel and the money is not refundable if you decide not to go. The country is so small, that reading the train map couldn't be easier. There are a handful of major routes drawn on an outline map of the country, with dots labeled with city names. The maps are behind glass in different places in the station, next to arrival and departure listings; everything is in yellow and dark blue. I do not recommend using the "spoorboek" or train schedule book, which is best left to the natives and the train agents, unless you are comfortable reading complex tables, listing all the connections. Don't forget to learn the 24 hour time system. After 12 noon, the numbers keep going up to 24, so 6 PM is listed as 18.00. Once you learn to find your way around the station and learn the simple system of maps and schedules, you will have a great time traveling by train (and bus) in the Netherlands.

*David Rachlin has been reading Train Magazine since its public distribution started. This is his first Train Magazine article. Train Magazine encourages its readers to write articles about interesting trains trips, opinions on issues related to trains, short stories mostly about trains and more. Just send in your article by E-mail to [editor@trainmagazine.com](mailto:editor@trainmagazine.com) or by snail mail to 20 Blackhorse Dr. Acton MA 01720.*

## Photo Flash: Trains In Spain— Part II

Left: The outside of the Estacio de Franca in Barcelona, Spain. It is an old station and most of the service has been switched over to newer stations.

Right: Two Renfe trains sitting in the station. Renfe is the rail transportation provider for Spain.



These photos were taken by David Emer

## Amtrak Wants \$30 Billion Over the Next 20 Years

Amtrak wants to be able to get \$1.5 billion each year for 20 years from the government to improve its system so that some of the strain is taken off the roads and air travel. Amtrak believes that private and state funds will match the government's offer. Amtrak says that this Capital Plan would modernize and expand its system to pay for new tracks and trains, railroad crossings needed to start high-speed rail service.

The railroad also wants to fix fire hazards in New Jersey and New York tunnels and renovate stations. The Capital Plan will also improve trip times around the country and accelerate plans to build the 11 additional high-speed rail corridors. 65% of the funding will be used to help other corridors that aren't in the Northeast even though the Northeast Corridor is the busiest in the western hemisphere.

Amtrak believes that the 1% amount of money for transportation that is being spent on Amtrak is extremely low for such an industrialized and developed country. The amount spent on rail per person is near the amount spent on rail per person for Tunisia and Estonia. The new plan will raise the amount of money spent on rail compared to other forms of transportation to 2.5%. Last year Amtrak only received \$400 million from the federal government. This plan also is nothing comparing the fact that \$33.5 billion is spent on aviation and roads annually. If more highways were built to give Americans the same capacity as this plan for rail it would cost 5-10 times more.

Amtrak believes that this does not break its operational self-sufficiency goal because these costs are not operational. The railroad believes that they will become operationally self-sufficient by 2003. The national railroad also says that the new plan is not related to the High-Speed Rail Investment Act (HSRIA) because the HSRIA plan calls for more trains while the Capital Plan calls for the existing system to be improved. Talk about the HSRIA just resumed in the Senate recently after it was put on hold last year.

"America's transportation system needs to be strengthened to keep pace with the demands of the 21st century," said Amtrak President and CEO, George D. Warrington. He also said, "We tend to live from hand to mouth, from year to year, and, as they say, that's no way to run a railroad."

Amtrak sent this plan to the White House and congress on Friday February 2, 2001.  
The information for this article came from Reuters and [www.Amtrak.com](http://www.Amtrak.com)

### **MCHUMOR** by T. McCracken



"Oh great. I just missed the once a millennia commuter train out."

**This issue of Train Magazine introduces an exclusive new feature that will appear in some issues. This cartoon was drawn by Theresa McCracken. She has drawn cartoons for the Saturday Evening Post but mainly specializes in small trade journals.**

#### **Quote of The Issue**

**There isn't a train I wouldn't take, no matter where it's going.**

**—Edna St. Vincent Millay**

**TRAIN MAGAZINE IS AMERICA'S ANSWER TO PLANES SINCE NOVEMBER OF 1997**

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24-Nov-99	28.94	37.12	21.94	48.69	34.17
28-Dec-99	24.00	32.12	20.62	43.19	29.98
18-Feb-00	22.56	21.81	14.81	37.75	24.23
20-Apr-00	24.00	20.63	17.13	41.31	25.77
06-Jun-00	24.94	22.00	17.88	42.44	26.82
03-Jul-00	24.44	22.31	15.63	38.25	25.16
31-Aug-00	22.38	23.75	16.06	39.75	25.49
01-Dec-00	25.25	25.50	14.31	46.00	27.77
19-Jan-01	28.81	27.69	16.13	51.94	31.14

BNI= Burlington Northern and Santa Fe  
CSX= CSX  
NSC= Norfolk and Southern  
UNP= Union Pacific  
TMTA= Train Magazine Transportation Average. It is an average of the stock prices. The TMTA is at it highest price since November 24, 1999 boosted by a \$5.94 increase since the last Stock Track on December 1. Check out Weekly Stock Track on www.trainmagazine.com.

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