PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

In this issue, we highlight a locomotive that was unique to CSXT, the General Electric BQ23-7. Only ten of these locomotives were built, and all spent their life running in what would become and what is CSXT territory. Doug Riddell, on page 6, gives his perspective on what it was like to be the engineer of one of these locomotives.

The CSXT Historical Society’s 2020 convention will be here in three months. If you have not made your hotel reservations or sent in your registration form, time is running out. See you at Evansville, Indiana, June 5, 6, and 7.

As we went to press, Everett Young sent in a series of photos of the CSXT train wreck at Draffin, Kentucky. See page 3. More can be found under “railfanning” on our web page.

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COVER PHOTO: CSXT 3003 at Anderson, South Carolina, in June 1992. (John Jones photo)
THE DRAFFIN DERAILMENT

Everett Young

At approximately 7:00 AM on February 13, 2020, CSXT locomotives 169, 571, and 384 pulling an oil train hit a mud slide at Draffin, Kentucky, on the Big Sandy Subdivision. All three locomotives went into the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River. Unbelievably, the locomotive crew, while injured, survived going into the river and the resulting fire. More photos of this incident can be found at http://csxthsociety.org/railfanning/railfanning.html All photos Everett Young

The earth slide that caused the derailment can be seen just to the left of the tank car in the upper right of the photo.
THE BQ23-7 - UNIQUE TO CSXT

The B23-7 was General Electric’s successor to the U23B locomotive, which was first put into rail service in 1968. The B23-7 was 2-feet 4-inches longer than the U23B, at 62-feet 6-inches. It was powered by a GE FDL-12 diesel, which could develop 2,250 horsepower and if geared to an 82:20 ratio could develop 70 miles per hour. In freight train service, the B23-7 ran at a considerably lower speed. As built, these locomotives came equipped with a variety of new and used trucks to meet purchasing railroads’ specifications. The first B23-7 locomotive was outshopped in September 1977 and the last in December 1984. A total of 412 B23-7 locomotives were produced in the United States. CSXT’s predecessor railroads owned 34 B23-7 locomotives, Louisville & Nashville Railroad fifteen, and Seaboard Coast Line (SCL) nineteen.

The 1970s were a period of turmoil within the rail industry. Earnings were moving into negative figures and federal and state regulations dictated what railroads could and could not do. At the same time, positive changes were taking place in the rail industry; high cube boxcars, jumbo hoppers, and autoracks were appearing in train service. Freight trains were growing longer, freight cars now rode on roller bearings, and hotbox and dragging equipment detectors became common trackside. Thus, the need for a caboose at the rear of the train was decreasing. Manual setting of brakes had long ago ceased, while two-way radio communication and block dispatching negated the need of a brakeman to leave the train and walk down the track to protect it if the train became disabled. In addition, as freight trains grew longer, the cabooses and its occupants were being subjected to greater and greater slack action. Incidents of personal injury to those riding in the caboose were on the rise.

SCL, hampered by laws requiring a five-man train crew, decided to put the train’s crew in the locomotive. Thus, was born the BQ23-7, a modified B23-7. The “Q” in the B23-7 designation stood for Crew Quarters. In 1978, SCL ordered ten BQ23-7 locomotives from GE. These locomotives numbered SCL 5130-5139 were the only BQ23-7 locomotives ordered. No other attempt was made by any United States railroad to put its five-man train crew in the locomotive. In 1993, 6 years after arrival at CSXT, they were converted to unmanned “B” units.

The BQ23-7 only differed from the B23-7 by having a redesigned cab that could hold a 5-man crew. The re-designed cab had four permanent seats and one jump seat for the crew to sit in. The new cab was situated at the front of the locomotive, unlike other locomotive cabs that sat 10-feet or so back from the front of the locomotive, protected by a high short hood. In addition, many railroads ran their locomotives long hood forward, moving the cab back 40-feet from the front of the locomotive. The BQ23-7, to a certain extent, was a big brother to the typical diesel yard locomotive, which had its cab placed at the front of the locomotive. However, a big difference between the two was that the yard diesel operated at lower speeds and its crew had great all-around sight distance. The BQ23-7 was designed to work not only in the yard but within a switching district and on branch lines at a greater speed. Its crew also lacked all around sight viewing, particularly within an arch of 20-feet directly around the immediate front of the locomotive.

In 1987, with the merger of Seaboard Coast Line into CSXT, the BQ23-7s were renumbered CSXT 3000-3009. Only CSXT 3003, CSXT 3008, and CSXT 3009 received CSXT paint. The
other seven units soldiered on in Seaboard paint; only their reporting marks showed they belonged to CSXT. Needless to say, the BQ23-7, even when sent to the far corners of CSXT territory, found no one who embraced their homely looks. The truth was that the BQ23-7 was disliked by all, and hated by some, who had to serve as part of her crew. There was universal rejoicing among CSXT operating crews when in 1993 they were converted to unmanned “B” and no tears were shed when the last one was scrapped in 1998.

### CSXT BQ23-7 TIME LINE

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The cab of SCL 5131 as delivered in December 1994. The small triangle windows on the side of the locomotive at the cab’s window line and the small windows on the front of the locomotive next to the door were plated over shortly after these locomotives went into service. (Warren Calloway photo)

In this view of the cab of SCL 5135, the small windows on her cab front have been plated over but the small triangle windows at the cab’s window line are still in place. (Warren Calloway photo)
SCL diagram of the BQ23-7

CSXT 3003 was the only BQ23 to receive CSXT’s Bright Future paint. (John Jones photo)
THE BQ23-7
A LOCOMOTIVE NOT EVEN A MOTHER COULD LOVE
Doug Riddell

When the folks at General Electric in the 1970s opted to impress the movers and shakers of the American railroad industry with a hybrid locomotive-caboose, they came up with the BQ23-7. In theory, the BQ23 is the precursor of today’s full-width locomotive cabs and should have been a huge success, but only ten were built for Seaboard Coast Line, SCL 5130-5139. What went wrong? Well, as an engineer who operated them, the only good thing I can say about the BQ23-7 is, thank goodness they are gone! They were horrible locomotives! They had no redeeming qualities – none whatever!

The BQ23, when it entered train service, was met with universal objections by the men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the United Transportation Union. Both organizations argued that the BQ23 was unsafe for a myriad of reasons. Al Bieber told me, “I know the Brotherhoods had a concern that the BQ23 was not as safe as other locomotives in service at that time. I was at a meeting with the Federal Railroad Administration on this subject during which GE presented a finite element analysis of the BQ23 design to show what forces the cab could resist. Actually, its resistance was pretty good and since the engineer sat high up, he/she was fairly well protected in a grade crossing collision. The cab, in fact, sat almost directly above the coupler. Later in the meeting, a union official, during a counter response to the GE presentation, told the FRA that being at the throttle of a BQ23 was like driving a bus.” The BQ23 thereafter was known by all SCL employees as the “Bus.”

My first experience with the BQ23 was at Bellwood Yard, part of the SCL Richmond Terminal, operating the Bellwood Switcher. Operating the Bellwood Switcher was a 12-hour a day job building cuts of cars to be shipped out or finding boxcars loaded with tobacco and gondolas and covered hoppers filled with raw materials that we would spot at scores of local factories and plants that poured big bucks into SCL coffers. Bellwood Yard was located on the top of a hill, and switching heavy cuts of coal and chemical tank cars was a nightmare during daylight in good weather. It was downright treacherous at night, especially in rain, sleet, or snow. There were special SCL instructions relative to the number of cars that could be left standing without their hand brakes being set because, in their absence, runaways within the yard were not uncommon. As a result, Bellwood had been, since the end of steam, the domain of sturdy EMD GP7s. These Geeps, with their two-stroke engines, would quickly respond to a throttle change. Unlike the BQ23, with their two-cycle, four stroke prime movers, which often just sat there after the throttle was moved, leaving the engineer wondering if the locomotive was going to do anything at all. Let me tell you, when you’re sitting on the side of a hill with the train’s brakes released, the BQ23 always provided its crews with moments of anxiety by drifting backwards, as the weight of the cut of cars overcame the momentary lack of life in the puny BQ23 engine.

The crew of five sitting high in the cab of a BQ23 were presented with a number of operational problems. I’m not a tall person, but I still have bruises on my head resulting from hitting my head on the ceiling of the cab. Worst of all, while you could see back down the long hood of the unit, looking at anything but the track far ahead through the windshield of the bus was tantamount to operating your train blindfolded. One literally had to stick one’s head out of the
side window in order to look down and see the brakeman riding the front step of the BQ23 if one wanted to follow his hand signals. There was also the problem of who sat where in the poorly situated seats.

Gradually the BQ23s found their way out of the yards and onto the road. However, within a short period of time, due to protests from their operating crews concerning forward visibility and concerns about crash worthiness, the BQ23s were generally placed in the train’s power consist as a trailing unit. In fact, CSXT, in 1993, due to crew safety concerns, converted its nine surviving BQ23s to “B-units.” They did this by removing from the BQ23s their control stands and covering their windows with steel plates.

No doubt the knowledge GE gleamed from the problems concerning the BQ23 came in handy when the modern day full-width cab locomotives were designed. Thankfully, the powers to be, in designing these full-width cab locomotives, moved the crew cab back far enough to allow some degree of confidence in the structural integrity of the locomotive cab by its occupants. Even today I can clearly remember operating a BQ23, and I can tell you from first hand experience, it was a royal pain in the --- head.

One of the BQ23 locomotives I operated was SCL 5138, later CSXT 3008. Below are two photos I took of this locomotive cab.

I took this photo of SCL 5138 FRA inspection card to remind me how much I “enjoyed” operating BQ32 locomotives. (Doug Riddell photo)
From SCL 5138 engineer’s seat, I could see everything in front of me except that which I wanted to see. (Doug Riddell photo)

SCL 5138 is where it should be, at the rear of the power lash up, as the train heads down the branch line. Unfortunately, unfortunately when the train returns to the mainline, SCL 5138 will be the leading locomotive. (Warren Conway photo)
Head on view of SCL 5135 showing the engineer’s lack of immediate downward visibility. The location of the plated-over small windows next to the door cannot be seen. (Warren Calloway photo)
Above and below: It is 1982, Seaboard Coast Line and Atlantic Coast Line have merged to form Seaboard Coast Line. SCL 5132 has been repainted into SBD reporting marks by stenciling SBD over the still visible SCL markings. (CSXTHS photos)
Above and below: It is 1993 and CSXT 3000 has been converted into a “B” unit. Her control stand has been removed and the windows plated over. Note there is no “CSXT” stenciled on the cab by the reporting marks and the cab number board did not have a “B” added to it. (CSXTHS photo)

A talkback speaker is seen in the lower right of the above photo. (CSXTHS photo)
The left side of CSXT 3001B is seen in 1994. CSXT is stenciled under her reporting number and the “B” is not behind the number but below. (CSXTHS photos)

A view of the right side of CSXT 3001B. Here the CSXT ownership lettering is above the cab number. The two grills were to have supported an air conditioning unit that was never installed. (CSXTHS Photo)
Above and below: CSXT 3002B has CSXT ownership markings stenciled above the 3002 painted on her cab. (CSXTHS photos)
CSXT 3003 was one of three BQ23-7 locomotives that received CSXT paint. (CSXTHS photo)

CSXT 3003B seen in 1994 has her “B” designation painted directly in back of her number. The BQ23-7 locomotive looked much more attractive in CSXT paint than Family Line paint. (CSXTHS photo)
Above and below: These two photos of CSXT 3004 pose a mystery. While both show CSXT 3004 in Family Line paint, the photo below seems to indicate that she was repainted in Family Line paint after coming under CSXT control. Note in the above photo, “SBD” is still visible beneath “3004,” however, in the photo below, nothing is visible under the “3004.” (CSXTHS photos)
Above and below: Right-and left-hand side views of CSXT 3004B. There appears to be a difference in color. Note the “B” is in line with the reporting number 3004, and on the right side CSXT is stenciled above the road number. (CSXTHS photos)
CSXT 3005 is seen in 1989. The lettering “SBD” can still be seen below her cab window and her road number, instead of being directly under the window, is just above her frame. There is nothing on her cab to show that she is owned by CSXT. (CSXTHS photo)

It is December 1994 and CSXT 3005B has been stripped of her diesel and is on the way to the scrap yard. Note that her “B” designation is painted in front of her number 3005. (CSXTHS photo)
Above and below: CSXT 3006 is seen in 1990 as a trailing unit in a locomotive consist.
(CSXTHS photos)
Above and below: It is 1993 and CSXT 3006 has been converted to a “B” unit. Note on the right-hand side the reporting marks are at the frame level and on the left at the cab level. Also, the “B” is smaller than the numbers. (CSXTHS photos)
CSXT 3007 in a 1992 photo. Her plated-over cab level triangle window is visible in this photo. There is no lettering to show she is owned by CSXT. (CSXTHS photo)

CSXT 3007B in a 1994 photo. She still carries no lettering that she is owned by CSXT. Is CSXT ashamed to admit that they own BQ23-7 locomotives? (CSXTHS photo)
CSXT 3008 is seen leading a train through the streets of Lafayette, Indiana. “CSXT” is stenciled below her reporting number 3008. (CSXTHS photo)

CSXT 3008 in CSXT paint. She was one of three BQ23-7s that CSXT repainted. Note the CSXT lettering beneath her reporting number. (CSXTHS photo)
Above and below: Two views of CSXT 3008 in train service. Different film processing and film causes the paint scheme shown in the two photos to appear to be different shades of blue and gray. (CSXTHS photos)
Above and below: CSXT 3008 is now CSXT 3008B. She will survive another two years before being sold for cutting up on September 22, 1995. (CSXTHS photos)
CSXT 3009 in 1987. Once again, there is no consistency in applying her CSXT reporting marks. “CSXT” in small lettering has been placed below her cab window and the number “3009” just above her frame. (CSXTHS photo)

CSXT 3009 in stealth paint. Her reporting numbers are now below the cab window and the CSXT ownership lettering below and to the left. CSXT 3009 was not converted to a B unit. She was removed from CSXT’s locomotive roster on April 15, 1991. (John Jones photo)
### CSXT Locomotive Roster July 1, 2012

#### CSXT Locomotive Ownership by Number Series and Class

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#### Hump Engines

- 2411-2442
- 2443, 2445
- 2450-2454
- 2457-2463

#### CSXT Markings Not in Ownership

- 0547-0556
- CW44AH (10 Units)

#### Equipped for SWMT

- 2504-2519
- GP38-2 (16 Units)
- 4282-4289
- GP39 (6 Units)

#### Equipped for RDSLUG

- 2500-2503
- GP38-2 (4 Units)
- 6400-6499
- GP40-2 (99 Units)
- 6900-6987
- GP40-2 (79 Units)

#### Remote Control

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#### Fleet Summary

- GE
- EMD
- NRE/GenSet

#### 4-AXLE

- GE
- 2953
- Total

#### 6-AXLE

- GE
- 2886
- Total

Prepared by: Locomotive Fleet Planning, Jax, FL
These former B&O signals no longer guard CSXT track in the Dayton, Ohio, area having been replaced by the modern Darth Vader signals. All photos by G.A. McKay in 2004.

The signal is showing Approach Limited. “Proceed, approaching next signal not exceeding Limited Speed.” Limited Speed is a speed not exceeding 45 MPH.
CSXT DISPATCHER MESSAGE FOR EK SUBDIVISION

DISPATCHER'S BULLETIN  CSX TRANSPORTATION  DISPATCHER'S BULLETIN
NO. XXXX  FEBRUARY 16 2020

STATION HUNTINGTON WV

TO C&E TRAIN ID
SCOTT THACKER

LATEST CSX TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BULLETIN ISSUED:  NO. 024
SYSTEM INFORMATIONAL MESSAGE:

2020 1ST QUARTER SCHEDULED PTC OUTAGES
BELOW ARE THE SCHEDULED TIMES AND DATES FOR THE 2020 1ST QUARTER OUTAGES.
REFERENCE PTC SYSTEM BULLETIN FOR OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS DURING AN OUTAGE.

JAN 27, COMPLETED  FEB 18, 1100-1130  MAR 2, 0800-0830
FEB 24, 0800-0830  MAR 16, 0800-0830
MAR 23, 0800-0830  MAR 30, 0800-0830

YOU MUST CARRY QUALIFIERS #(S)

SUBDIVISION - EK
LATEST DIVISION BULLETIN ISSUED:  EK SUBDIVISION NO. 101

001 - DISPATCHER MESSAGE NUMBER 16502
ACTIVATION FAILURE ACCOUNT AUTOMATIC GRADE CROSSING WARNING DEVICE
MALFUNCTION AT MILLERS CREEK ROAD CROSSING AT MP 0VB 147.1 ON NO 2 TRK(S)
FLAGGER NO.
  ( 04 LINE(S) )

002 - DISPATCHER MESSAGE NUMBER 12555
CONTROL POINT SIGNAL AT GRIMES THE SOUTHWARD ABSOLUTE SIGNAL AT
MP 0VB 230.1 ON NO 1 TRK(S)
IS TEMPORARILY REMOVED FROM SERVICE. ALL TRAINS MUST STOP AT THIS
LOCATION REGARDLESS OF SIGNAL INDICATION UNTIL PERMISSION IS RECEIVED
FROM THE TRAIN DISPATCHER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPERATING RULES
  ( 05 LINE(S) )

003 - DISPATCHER MESSAGE NUMBER 38130
RUSTY RAIL CONDITIONS ARE IN EFFECT FROM 0WI 209.0 TO 0WI 232.5;
APPROACH ALL CROSSINGS THAT ARE EQUIPPED WITH AUTOMATIC WARNING
DEVICES PREPARED TO STOP UNTIL IT IS ASCERTAINED THAT THE EQUIPMENT IS
WORKING PROPERLY. IF NOT THE CREW WILL NEED TO PROVIDE PROPER
PROTECTION AT THESE CROSSINGS.
  ( 05 LINE(S) )

004 - DISPATCHER MESSAGE NUMBER 38136
RUSTY RAIL CONDITIONS ARE IN EFFECT FROM 0VB 142.5 TO 0VB 234.0;
APPROACH ALL CROSSINGS THAT ARE EQUIPPED WITH AUTOMATIC WARNING
DEVICES PREPARED TO STOP UNTIL IT IS ASCERTAINED THAT THE EQUIPMENT IS
WORKING PROPERLY. IF NOT THE CREW WILL NEED TO PROVIDE PROPER
PROTECTION AT THESE CROSSINGS.
  ( 05 LINE(S) )
CSXT HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020 CONVENTION
TOUR OF CSXT EVANSVILLE SUBDIVISION
JUNE 5, 6, 7, 2020 – EVANSVILLE, INDIANA
DRURY INN
100 CROSS POINTE BLVD, EVANSVILLE, INDIANA
812-471-5400
CSXTHS DID NOT RESERVE A BLOCK OF ROOMS
MAKE YOUR OWN DEAL WITH THEM
FRIDAY JUNE 5, 2020
TOUR CSXT LINE HENDERSON, KENTUCKY, TO CLOVERPORT, KENTUCKY
OWENSBORO RIVER PORT; CSXT GREEN RIVER SWING BRIDGE;
OWENSBORO YARD; SKILLMAN YARD
SATURDAY JUNE 6, 2020
TOUR CSXT LINE EVANSVILLE TO GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
HENDERSON DEPOT; MADISONVILLE YARD; FORT CAMPBELL;
GUTHRIE DIAMOND
SUNDAY JUNE 7, 2020
VISIT HOWELL YARD; CSXT OHIO RIVER BRIDGE; CSXT MT. VERNON, INDIANA
LINE
REGISTRATION FORM
NAME ____________________________
ADDRESS ____________________________
CELL PHONE ____________________________
EMAIL ____________________________
REGISTRATION FEE $30
MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO CSXT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SEND TO CSXTHS 2019 CONVENTION, 201 PIN OAK PL, FRANKFORT, KY 40601
VISIT US AT HTTP://WWW.CSXTHSOCIETY.ORG