



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 19, No. 9  September, 1985

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(This has news through Oct. 29. No. 8 was mailed Oct. 22.)

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# NARP BOARD SETS GOALS

## Legislative Update

On Oct. 23, the full Senate tabled two anti-Amtrak appropriations amendments and proceeded to pass a FY 1986 DOT Appropriations bill containing \$606 million for Amtrak. This is an 11.4% cut below the FY 1985 level.

A hostile amendment offered by William Armstrong (R-CO) to terminate Amtrak was tabled 71-25. The 24 who supported Armstrong were: Boschwitz, Dole, Domenici, East, Garn, Goldwater, Gramm, Hecht, Helms, Humphrey, Laxalt, Mattingly, McClure, McConnell, Murkowski, Nickles, Proxmire, Rudman, Simpson, Symms, Thurmond, Tribble, Wallop, and Wilson (all are Republicans except Democrat Proxmire).

Later that day, Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) offered an amendment to take funds from Amtrak, UMTA, Federal Highway Administration, and other transportation accounts, so as to increase funding for the Federal Aviation Administration and Coast Guard. [Although a branch of the military, the Coast Guard receives its funding via the Transportation Dept. rather than the Defense Dept.] This would have cut Amtrak a crippling 15%. It was tabled 59-38.

Both motions to table were made by Mark Andrews (R-ND), Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee. Speaking in support of Andrews' first tabling motion were Specter (R-PA), Warner (R-VA), and Byrd (D-WV); in support of the second were Lautenberg (D-NJ), Weicker (R-CT), Levin (D-MI), D'Amato (R-NY), Riegle (D-MI), and Byrd.

By voice vote, the Senate did agree to shave 1.6% from all programs in the DOT bill, in order to conform it to the budget target, thus reducing Amtrak from the committee-passed \$616 million to \$606 million. The DOT Appropriations bill then was passed 84-13. [HR 3244, the House version, was passed 307-102 on Sep. 12.]

Thus, the appropriations committees will go to conference with the House at \$603.5, and the Senate at \$606 million.

Later that same evening, the Senate began work on S 1730, the Senate Budget Reconciliation bill, passing by voice vote a John Danforth (R-MO) amendment which had the effect of attaching the Senate Amtrak reauthorization to the reconciliation bill. The Danforth amendment contains various provisions, including allowing Amtrak to compete for federal government travel contracts. S 1730 had not been passed as of this writing [Oct. 29].

The next day, Oct. 24, the House passed by voice vote a James Florio (D-NJ) amendment which attached the House Amtrak reauthorization to HR 3500, the House Budget Reconciliation bill. [The House also passed a Vic Fazio (D-CA) transportation amendment, 222-205; details in our next issue.] Later that day, the House passed its reconciliation bill, 228-199. ■

## More Members for NARP; A Transportation Trust Fund

The Board of Directors of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, meeting Oct. 10-12 in Glenwood Springs, CO, approved five goals for the organization:

- Increase membership by 2,000 next year, 3,000 in 1987, and 4,000 in 1988. In partial fulfillment of this goal, every NARP member who is married is encouraged—when you renew—to enroll your spouse by paying only \$5 more than the regular rate (i.e., \$20/year total). [We'll continue to mail a single newsletter; please tell us how you'd like the label changed, i.e., Mr. & Mrs. John Doe or John & Mary Doe or whatever.]

- Begin working toward a comprehensive transportation trust fund.

- Develop closer ties with and provide greater support for those state and regional associations who share NARP's goals and who have worked or are willing to work in concert with NARP. This will strengthen both NARP and the state and regional groups and make all of us more effective.

- Support a disposition of Conrail that will be the most beneficial to the future of rail passenger service. The resulting ownership of Conrail should pledge to the public full cooperation on improving passenger train service, including:

1. faster schedules on the "Broadway/Capitol" and "Lake Shore" routes, recognizing the existing high quality of track;
2. without compromising passenger comfort, a general speed limit increase to 79 mph on the "Broadway/Capitol" route west of Pittsburgh through Fort Wayne to Chicago;
3. 90 mph operation on the Albany-Buffalo mainline, which was upgraded with funds from a state bond issue "sold" to the

(continued on page 3)

### TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

For the traditional fall timetable change (Oct. 27 this year), Amtrak implemented several service improvements—and a few cuts. Notable changes are identified here. Significant cuts which Amtrak will attribute to the funding reduction are being planned, but date of implementation remains uncertain. It is unlikely that the painful cuts—on which we've included some educated guesses here—will come later than Jan. 12 or earlier than 30 days after Amtrak posts notices. Notices could be posted within a few days after the precise level of Amtrak's FY '86 funding becomes clear.

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Contrary to what the Oct. 27 timetable shows, "The First State" (#252, Except Sa./Su./Mo.) continues to operate Wilmington-NY and was not cut back to Phila.-NY. Thus Wilmington residents will still be able to reach New York by 8:20 AM daily except Sunday (#130 provides the service on Mondays and Saturdays).

Effective Oct. 27:

- The NY-Florida "Silver Star" lost its slumbercoach (economy sleeper) until further notice. Amtrak says this is necessary to permit heavy maintenance on its limited slumbercoach fleet (23 cars). ("Silver Meteor" slumbercoach service continues.)

- Warsaw, IN is now a regular stop for the Chicago-NY/Washington "Broadway/Capitol" and Ashland, VA for the NY-Richmond "Virginian."

- The Sunday Grand Rapids-to-Chicago train originates 4 hours earlier, at 9:30 AM.

- Amtrak added service on the Inland Route (NY-Boston via Hartford-Springfield-Worcester). Eastbound trains will leave New York at 2:00 and 5:15 PM instead of 4:23 PM. (Consequently, late-afternoon trains via Providence will depart at 2:00, 3:55, 6:05 [Exc. Sat.], and 7:01 instead of 2:12, 4:23, 4:58 [Exc. Sat.] and 7:10.) As an equipment balancing move, the westbound mail train was rerouted via the Inland Route and leaves Boston at 2:50 AM (3:42 Sa./Su.). [The eastbound mail was combined with the morning "Shoreliner"; thus Amtrak has eliminated one Boston-Providence-NY round-trip, added a Boston-Springfield RT, saved train-miles, and arguably improved overall service.] Finally, the westbound Inland Route "Bay State" leaves Boston at 7:11 AM (12:24 PM on Sundays) instead of 6:09 (12:20 PM Sundays).

- Amtrak is running more NY-Hartford-Springfield through-car services (up from 3½ to 6 weekday roundtrips, not counting the 3:50 AM southbound "Montrealer"), and overseeing fewer New Haven cross-platform transfer operations (down from 5 to 2½)—numbers vary somewhat on weekends. A peak-hour shortcoming: if you miss the 3:55 PM from New York (change in New Haven required), there's nothing until 5:15 PM—a step backwards from the previous timetable, which had through services at 4:23 and 5:15.

- The NY-Washington "Executive" sleeper adds published stops at Aberdeen, Wilmington, and Philadelphia. (The car is handled on "Night Owl," which made those stops anyway.)

- The once-daily 11:59 PM NY-to-Phila. "Clocker" now runs Fri./Sat./Sun. only; similarly, the 7:01 PM Phila.-to-NY now runs Fri./Sun. only.

- Watch out! The 3:00 PM Metroliner from Washington is now 2:55! This runs to New Haven weekdays and the change will allow a stop at Rye.

- NY-New Haven times are completely revamped to facilitate improved dispatching of Amtrak trains by Metro-North Commuter Railroad, which controls Amtrak trains between New Rochelle and New Haven. Amtrak reliability throughout the Northeast has been victimized by Metro-North's apparent indifference. We'll believe things are improving when they do!

- As part of an agreement with New Jersey Transit, many Clockers no longer stop at New Brunswick. All the Clockers are slower—even the ones making fewer stops!

- The usual seasonal change for the NY-Montreal "Adirondack" and various other Empire Service trains.

- Amtrak's "New 'Easy to Read' [timetable] Format" seems *harder* to read. Days of operation, traditionally shown directly above a train's schedule, are now skewed to the left, somewhat above the schedules of other trains!! Low-frequency routes formerly shown with "read down" trains to the left of the station list and opposite-direction

"read up" trains to the right now show all trains to the right. Times for "read up" trains thus are further away from the stations they serve—and next to "read down" trains. Amtrak deals with the resulting confusion by lightly shading "read down" times—but don't confuse this with the darker shading used to indicate connections!

The next following timetable will not be pleasant to read or write about, whether the confusing new format continues or the "classic" format is revived. In a May 13 letter, Amtrak Pres. W. Graham Claytor Jr. told House Energy & Commerce Chairman John D. Dingell (D-MI) that a 10% cut would require the "reduction and rearrangement of frequencies on some routes." On Sep. 23, Claytor wrote to Senate Commerce Chairman John C. Danforth, saying that a 10% cut would force him to "effect limited reductions in Northeast Corridor frequencies and on some long-distance routes. . . . If funding is reduced by 15%, an additional \$34 million, it will require elimination of more frequencies and restructuring virtually all long-distance trains from daily to tri-weekly frequencies, with perhaps several bi-weekly and weekends only service as well."

Bad news is coming even if the funding cut is held at or close to 10%. Amtrak has not announced or confirmed anything and what follows may not be accurate or complete, but it appears that several Harrisburg-Phila. trains will die, weekend operation of the Chicago-St. Louis "State House" cease, and service on the Chicago-Carbonale line is reduced. (Separately, a Chicago-Cincinnati reroute of the tri-weekly "Cardinal" onto B&O's Indianapolis-Cincinnati line may be forced by the likely downgrading of the C&O Muncie route Amtrak now uses. This may happen later than Jan. 12, but—whenever it does happen—Amtrak is likely to discontinue the daily Chicago-Indianapolis "Hoosier State.")

Finally, some notable changes made earlier:

Virginia's two-most-populous cities, Norfolk and Virginia Beach, are now linked to Amtrak via a dedicated bus to/from Newport News Amtrak station. Bus began June 15 and stops at Virginia Beach (Pavillion Towers Hotel), downtown Norfolk (Hotel Madison), and Norfolk Naval Base. One-way bus fare: \$2.50. Bus connects with Boston-NY-Newport News "Colonial."

Twice-daily dedicated bus service began Aug. 12, linking Oxnard with some Los Angeles-San Diego "San Diegans." Buses connect with southbound trains 574, 582, 584, and northbound trains 577, 583. Buses stop at N. Oxnard, Simi Valley, Van Nuys, and Glendale, too.

In mid-Sep., NY-Savannah "Palmetto" resumed handling checked baggage and express, and NY-FL "Silver Meteor" switched to buffet dining a la Auto Train/"Silver Star".

Effective Oct. 8, ticket sales and baggage services ended at the Marceline, MO, and Streator, IL, stations. Caretakers open and close both stations before and after train departures. Ticket sales at the Sanderson, TX, station were discontinued Oct. 25, but the lobby and restroom remain open and the building staffed by Southern Pacific clerical personnel 24 hours daily because this is an SP division point.

LA-Salt Lake City "Desert Wind" now has a diner-lounge. Cars were created by Amtrak by converting ex-Santa Fe Hi-Level diners. 4 are now finished; 2 more are coming.

Harrisburg's 1887 train station was rededicated Oct. 24, as a \$13.5 million restoration project nears completion. Work on the station building is complete; train sheds should be ready by spring. The handsomely-restored depot serves Amtrak, Trailways, transit buses, and taxis. Project funding from: UMTA, Pennsylvania DOT, Amtrak, PA Historical & Museum Commission, and others.

Amtrak has received all 10 F40 diesel locomotives ordered last Oct. from Electro-Motive.



# “Montrealer” Saved

At its Oct. 23 meeting aboard Amtrak #170, the Amtrak Board approved continued operation of the “Montrealer” as an overnight through train between Washington and Montreal for at least a 6-month period while the train’s financial performance is further evaluated. This decision came after Canadian National Railway agreed in principle to cut its charges to Amtrak for handling the train north of the border. The CN Board has yet [as of Oct. 29] to formally execute the agreement.

In response to Amtrak’s proposal to convert “Montrealer” into a day train and—on the St. Albans-Montreal segment—replace the train with a connecting bus (May News), NARP submitted a statement to Amtrak “opposing both changes on the grounds that they will reduce service quality, drive off passengers, and worsen rather than improve the train’s financial performance. It is our view that Amtrak needs to ‘cure the train’s wounds’—not ‘amputate the patient.’ . . .

“The train does not need, and will not benefit from, a ‘flashy’ symbolic change such as the radical schedule inversion which Amtrak proposes. What the train needs . . . are a few relatively minor operating changes, and a major promotional effort. Amtrak has done virtually nothing to promote the train in the major markets it serves, and has done nothing to eliminate a public perception along the train’s route that Amtrak is the most expensive carrier available. . . .

“The All Aboard America Fare is one of the few American travel bargains available to Canadians, yet it is virtually unknown north of the border. A \$75 fare each way between Montreal and Miami or New Orleans, for example, could go a long way toward filling the ‘Montrealer’—if anyone knew about it. Advertisements for the AAA Fair have been nonexistent in both Canadian cities served by Amtrak, Montreal and Toronto. . . . While Amtrak did advertise its ‘Montrealer’ Peak/Off-Peak Fares in small New England newspapers, no mention was ever made in the New York media, where the [similar] Boston fares had been so successfully advertised.”

The NARP statement also noted that the overnight schedule provided good connections at both ends of the line and that a northbound schedule one hour later “would provide better station times in Vermont’s ski country without doing injury to station times in the major Northeast Corridor cities and Montreal.” NARP suggested a daylight operation would fail because of the train’s slow speed between Springfield, MA, and White River Jct., VT (average under 40 mph).

Finally, NARP supported “Amtrak’s aggressive effort to win a new, lower-cost agreement with Canadian National Railway” and said that “further cost-savings through improved train and engine crew productivity should be pursued, and we understand that this is being done.”

It is our understanding that NARP’s statement played a major role in changing Amtrak’s mind on the scheduling issue. ■

## HOW TO BECOME A NARP DIRECTOR

NARP is governed by a board of directors that includes 70 Regional Directors who are elected by the general membership, with each of 12 regions entitled to a number of directors roughly proportional to its share of NARP’s nationwide membership. The 1986 board meetings will be in Washington, D.C., May 1-3, and Portland, OR, Oct. 10-11.

In accordance with the NARP by-laws, anyone wishing to run for the position of Regional Director must “send his [ed. or her!] name, address, telephone number and a resume of not more than 100 words to be NARP office.” This year, the material must be received on or before Dec. 26. Send it to: NARP, 236 Massachusetts Ave. N.E., #603, Washington, D.C. 20002.

## NARP Board (continued from page 1)

voters largely on the basis that the funds would provide high-speed rail service. (After the fact, Conrail has been happy to benefit from the improved tracks but has blocked every effort to raise passenger train speeds.)



—photo by Lawson Chadwick

**\$17 million gem:** Amtrak began using new Orange County Transportation Center in Santa Ana, CA, Sep. 4. Built with state and local funds, this imposing station also serves Greyhound, Trailways, local buses, and airport limousines. Feb. 18, 1985, *Newsweek* report on proposed Reagan budget said of this building: “Santa Ana recently invested \$17 million on state-of-the-art facilities for Amtrak’s Los Angeles-San Diego route . . . ‘This is not some bloated welfare program,’ says Mayor Dan Griest. ‘This is the heart and substance of the economic recovery that President Reagan says is such a high priority.’ ” NARP Member Michael Gross, star of NBC-TV’s *Family Ties*, spoke at the Sep. 7 dedication ceremony, and NARP Dir. George Falcon gave the city his Golden Spike Award.

- Press for the expansion of dedicated bus connections for Amtrak passengers in those areas where it should reasonably be anticipated that such service would make a positive contribution to the revenue-cost ratio.

To help NARP accomplish the goals and step up its activity in an effort to insure the survival and expansion of intercity rail passenger service, another staff person has been added to NARP’s Washington office.

**By-Laws:** The Board approved relaxing the attendance requirement thusly: “Beginning with the board meeting in April 1985, before seeking reelection a 2nd or subsequent time, a regional director shall show that he/she has attended at least one of the previous four board meetings.” In other words, incumbents who missed both ’85 meetings can run in ’86, and—if they attend at least one of the meetings in ’85-6—they could run in ’87; At the same time, the Board directed the staff to include attendance information for incumbent directors in the ballot mailed to NARP members.

The Board deleted the “alternative” election procedure under which incumbent directors in a region could send out the ballot for that region; all regions will be included in the national ballot mailed by the Washington office, as was the case last year.

Finally, the Board approved a by-laws change permitting a one-time May board meeting to be held, since May 1-3, 1986 will coincide with Amtrak’s 15th birthday. ■

STATEMENT OF COMMERCE MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION	
1. TITLE OF PUBLICATION	AMTRAK NEWS
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4. YEAR BEGUN PUBLISHED	1971
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**REGION 8: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington (3 Directors).** Carl Fowler, 7831 Samurai Dr., SE, #19, Lacey, WA 98503; Robert R. Lowry, 2720 NW Mulkey Ave., Corvallis, OR 97330; Tim Wilson, 778-D Lockhaven Dr. NE, Salem, OR 97303.

**REGION 9: Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas except El Paso (5 Directors).** Mark S. Bucol, 24 Williamsburg Rd., Creve Coeur, MO 63141; Wayne Copple, 3734 Valentine Rd., Kansas City, MO 64111; John A. Mills, 2825 Burnett Rd., Topeka, KS 66614; Bill Pollard, 32 Fair Oaks, Conway, AR 72032; Peter Van Zanten, 6204 Red Bridge Rd., Kansas City, MO 64134.

**REGION 10: Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming (3 Directors).** Catherine Johnson, 242 Ferson Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240; Scott Rogers, 1203 W. 11th St., Cedar Falls, IA 50613; Lowell Williams, 6563 E. Columbia Pl., Denver 80224.

## ST. LOUIS UNION STATION REOPENS

St. Louis' landmark Union Station reopened Aug. 29—as a hotel/retail complex—following a massive redevelopment project by the Rouse Co. The 1894 rail terminal, once the nation's busiest, had been vacant since Amtrak's departure on Halloween 1978. The 2-block-long Romanesque fortress and 12-acre train shed now host a hotel, dozens of shops and restaurants, a park and lake. The project, which took 25 months and \$135 million, is "the largest [adaptive] reuse of a civil engineering landmark to date" says *Civil Engineering* (Sep. 1985).

NARP fought unsuccessfully to have an Amtrak station included within the complex, but we remain hopeful that a new Amtrak facility may one day be built adjacent to the site on the west side.

## THANK AMTRAK'S FRIENDS!

Please thank your representatives who voted against the Richardson amendment Sep. 11, and thank erstwhile Amtrak opponents or fence-sitters who voted for final passage of the authorization bill. These two rollcalls were printed in our last issue (Vol. 19, No. 8), making it one of the most valuable we've published—such rollcalls have been rare in recent years. Anyone who needs a copy of that issue (headline, "Major Steps Forward"), can get it by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to "NARP Vote Newsletter," 236 Mass. Ave., NE, Suite 603, Washington, DC 20002.

**REGION 11: Arizona, New Mexico, El Paso (1 Director).** Rob H. Bohannon, 3612 E. Laurel Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85028.

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