



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 10, No. 6

June, 1976

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(No. 5 was mailed May 24)

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# DOT Blocks Corridor Purchase

If Secretary of Transportation Coleman has his way, Amtrak will fail to gain full title to the Washington-Boston Corridor, despite the fact that a Congressionally mandated agreement has already been negotiated between ConRail and Amtrak, whereby Amtrak would purchase the Corridor for the USRA-determined price of \$87 million (plus interest). In a related dispute, initiation of major track work on the Corridor has been delayed, though the first summer work season of the five year improvement program is upon us. Meanwhile, Amtrak will run out of operating funds before the end of June, unless DOT changes its mind and gives its approval to the terms of the ConRail/Amtrak agreement.

Amtrak is due to pay for the Corridor in installments spread out over an eight year period. Amtrak's payments to ConRail are to be offset by ConRail's payments to Amtrak for the operation of freight trains over corridor tracks, although portions of the first installments are to be paid in cash.

To date, Secretary Coleman's response to the Amtrak-ConRail

agreement has been to use his position as distributor of Congressionally allocated funds to see to it that Amtrak does not receive the money required to carry out the purchase. Amtrak's requests for loan approvals for the first installments have been denied; in the face of Amtrak's plan to trade off its purchase payments with ConRail's "user fees," the Secretary has said that he will withhold from Amtrak's regularly allocated operating funds the amount that Amtrak would be receiving from ConRail if there were no such trade-off purchase agreement in effect.

In its Final System Plan of July 1975 the USRA recommended that Amtrak "should own or lease and provide the management for (the) Northeast Corridor properties. . ." DOT voiced opposition to the idea of an Amtrak purchase of the properties in question. Nonetheless, in the "4R" Act of 1976, Public Law 94-210, Congress and the President reaffirmed that the two parties, ConRail and Amtrak, "should negotiate an appropriate sale or

(continued on page 2)

## NARP Seeks Action on Amtrak Board

Amtrak's board of directors, already depleted by a death and a resignation, was reduced further on June 15 by the death of a public member, Washington attorney Gerald D. Morgan.

Unless the White House moves more expeditiously making appointments to all the present and potential vacancies, the Amtrak board may be hard-pressed for a quorum on certain matters. Board members representing the railroads which own

**In a letter to President Ford, NARP urged the appointment of Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup to the Amtrak Board.**

**NARP also urged consideration of the following NARP members for nomination to the two other vacant seats on the Board: Charles A. Dunn III, Raymond E. Hannon, Henry Luce III, M.D. Monaghan, Charles Montooth, Ronald C. Sheck, Thomas C. Southerland, James M.S. Ullman, and Robert M. Wickens.**

**Finally, reappointment was requested for two public members, Joseph MacDonald, a consumer representative, and Charles Luna. Their terms expire July 19, although they could continue to serve until reappointed or replaced.**

died. (May News)

Loss of "Jerry" Morgan will be particularly felt. He had wide experience in how the government works. He served in the House of Representatives in what is now known as the Legislative Counsel's office, and served five years in the White House under President Eisenhower, handling congressional liaison and legal matters. He held the position of deputy assistant to the President for the last two years of that Administration.

Then, after years of law practice and community and state activities (he lived in Maryland), Mr. Morgan became a vice president of Amtrak when it was organized.

He was a dedicated supporter of rail passenger service whose knowledge of the law and the procedures of government made him particularly effective. He also was a kindly man who will be missed by all.

### TROUBLED TRAINS

**Southern Railway wants to discontinue its daylight Washington-Charlotte "Piedmont" July 23. The ICC must decide by July 13 whether to investigate. Protests should be sent to Robert L. Oswald, Secretary, Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, D.C. 20423, and should be received there by about July 10. Ask the Commission to hold public hearings.**

**Operation of the daylight New York-Albany-Montreal "Adirondack" is assured through September 8. Mail from New Yorkers urging long-term continuation should be sent to Governor Hugh Carey in Albany.**

stock in Amtrak (three members) cannot vote on matters affecting their companies.

More than half a year has passed without action by the Administration to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Roger Lewis, former board chairman. In April, Prof. Edward L. Ullman, one of three "consumer representatives" on the board,



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## DOT Blocks Corridor Purchase *(continued from page 1)*

lease agreement" for the Corridor. As far as the terms of the negotiated agreement are concerned, Congress wished "to give the parties (ConRail and Amtrak) the maximum possible freedom in negotiating the sale or lease agreement..." (Senate Report 93-601). The recent Supplemental Appropriations Conference Report (94-941) reaffirms: "The issue of lease or purchase of the Northeast Corridor is to be resolved by the (two) parties involved."

By withholding Amtrak's allocated funds, Secretary Coleman has in effect stepped in as a third party and is attempting, after the fact, to dictate the terms of the agreement to suit Administration designs. In response to the Secretary's decision to deny loan requests for the Corridor purchase, the Senate Commerce Committee version of the Amtrak authorization stipulates that the Secretary must approve loan requests approved by the Amtrak board if such requests are needed for purchase of the Corridor properties.

Before the present agreement was reached, Secretary Coleman attempted, unsuccessfully, to persuade his fellow ConRail board members to add a provision whereby, if Amtrak failed to meet any one of its payments, control of the Corridor would pass to DOT! The Secretary's proposal would have made it possible for him to act, on his own, to withhold funds from Amtrak, in effect depositing the entire Northeast Corridor within the jurisdiction of his own department! Neither the USRA recommendations, nor any of the laws passed by Congress and signed by the President, included any provision for DOT ownership or control of the Northeast Corridor.

Related problems have arisen over the issue of track work in the Corridor. The "4R" Act has authorized \$1.6 billion for a five-year

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**NARP has criticized Missouri Pacific for restricting Amtrak trains below allowable safe speeds (April News). At least four hours padding is included in the current St. Louis-Laredo schedule.**

**Now, the Federal Railroad Administration is seeking an injunction against MoPac because of the railroad's refusal to cooperate with federal safety inspectors who wish to examine Missouri Pacific tracks. MoPac has insisted that the FRA can use its track geometry inspection car only if FRA (1) assumes all liability, even for possible accidents in which the railroad might be at fault, (2) provides its own operating crews (FRA doesn't have any such crews), and (3) pays MoPac at regular tariff rates!**

**The case is pending before the U.S. District Court, East District of Missouri.**

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Corridor track improvement program, but DOT has so far refused to make any of these funds available to Amtrak. According to one report, the delay has arisen because of a disagreement between Amtrak and DOT over who is to have control over work on station facilities. The true issue underlying the dispute, however, seems

to be DOT's argument that it should have not just over-sight, but full executive jurisdiction over all phases of the Corridor improvement program.

Secretary Coleman has offered a variety of reasons justifying his obstructions to Amtrak control of the Northeast Corridor. These range from questioning the constitutionality of the USRA plan for reorganization, to concern for the (short-term) budgetary effect of an Amtrak purchase, to concern that railroad membership on the Amtrak board constitutes private ownership of a Government-financed operation, to insistence that fees collected from ConRail would be "operating" funds, not to be used by

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**NARP Region XII (So. Cal., So. Nev., Arizona, and New Mexico) will have a meeting Saturday, July 17, at 1:45 PM in the Georgian Room of the U.S. Grant Hotel, 326 Broadway, in San Diego. All interested persons are welcome.**

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Amtrak for a "capital" acquisition.

The underlying motivation for all this seems to be a basic conviction on the part of the Secretary that government money should only be spent under strict government control, i.e. by the Administration. Such a belief ties in closely with the Secretary's stated conviction that the existence of Amtrak is a "mistake," and that Amtrak "would die tomorrow" if he had his way. Actual Amtrak ownership of the Northeast Corridor would indicate that Amtrak is to be more than a temporary fixture in the nation's transportation system.

Congress, it should be noted, also believes in Government control over Government money: This "control" currently takes the form of Congressional oversight of Amtrak's budget, operations, and financial planning. Congress has asserted and reaffirmed that Amtrak is to spend its own allocated money, that it is to do so not as a Government agency, but as if it were an ordinary for-profit private corporation.

Presumably, if Amtrak were to fold, responsibility for operating whatever trains might survive would fall with DOT. It should be remembered in this context that Coleman has indicated that, as far as he is concerned, operating long-distance trains is anachronistic and foolish.

Secretary Coleman is entitled to his own convictions as to the significance of rail transportation. However, the business of government is not a "one-man-show." The Secretary may feel that the country has no true need for an intercity passenger train system, but the law states otherwise. Congress has repeatedly

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**The House of Representatives, on a voice vote, approved an authorization bill containing \$430 million for Amtrak operating costs in Fiscal 1977, or 93% of Amtrak's request. No action is expected in the Senate before July 20.**

**The full House Appropriations Committee approved \$414.7 million for the same purpose, and action was expected on the floor June 24.**

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reaffirmed, over the past five years, that the country does have a need for intercity rail passenger service. The Secretary of Transportation has a responsibility to see to it that the laws are complied with.

It seems to NARP that DOT's interference with Amtrak acquisition of the Northeast corridor is an abuse of power which flies directly in the face of Congressionally mandated policies and laws. Similarly, we see Secretary Coleman's stated attitude toward Amtrak, with his treatment of it as if it were only a temporary whim of a few vocal legislators and Subcommittees, as a direct affront to the Congress of the United States.

Mr. Coleman is a responsible citizen who brings to his job considerable transportation expertise. Amtrak and the Congress deserve to benefit from his comments and criticisms. But the Secretary and his staff must come to recognize that such comments and criticisms must be offered *within* the over-all policy framework dictated by the Congress, and that, until the Department demonstrates its acceptance of that framework, each of its arguments and objections will remain unfortunately suspect.



## FARES AND SERVICES

**INTERCITY:** Amtrak's Board of Directors plans to operate an Amfleet day train Washington-Cumberland-Parkersburg-Cincinnati starting possibly as early as October, after necessary improvements at intermediate stations and in Cincinnati are completed. This is what remains of former Secretary of Transportation Claude Brinegar's designation of Washington-Denver as an experimental route, a designation tacitly reversed by Secretary Coleman (March News).

On June 15, the combined Washington-Chicago "James Whitcomb Riley" and Norfolk-Chicago "Mountaineer" began an experimental stop at South Portsmouth, Ky., following the

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**Rochester, N.Y., moved an important step closer to getting a long overdue new station when the Amtrak Board on June 23 approved funds to design such a facility. Construction is expected to begin within the next 15 months. The city purchased the present station site and has agreed to make a substantial portion of the land available to Amtrak. New York State and Amtrak have agreed to share construction costs.**

**The Amtrak Board also approved approximately \$300,000 for major improvements to the Detroit station, with additional funding to come from the State of Michigan, since four of the ten daily Amtrak trains serving Detroit are state-supported.**

**Finally, the Board has approved about \$1.1 million for station and clearance improvements on the Cincinnati-Cumberland portion of the proposed new route described above, including expansion of the Cincinnati waiting room by about 1200 square feet.**

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completion of platform and shelter work performed by Chessie under contract to Amtrak.

Amtrak is checking the feasibility of rescheduling the "Riley/Mountaineer", which runs combined between Chicago and Tri-State Station near Ashland, Ky. Under the plan, these trains would be rescheduled overnight Chicago-Cincinnati and daylight Cincinnati-East providing a Chicago connection for the new Amfleet train discussed above. This would also restore, for the first time since Amtrak began, a late evening departure from Chicago to the East Coast (and early morning arrival westbound), permitting connections with all Western trains.

The St. Louis-Laredo "Inter-American" now stops in Taylor, Texas, the result of efforts by Mr. Kenneth Mann and the Taylor Transportation Committee, and community-supported work on improving station platforms.

Amtrak restored service to Aberdeen, Maryland, on the Northeast Corridor between Baltimore and Wilmington, on June 15. The Boston-Washington "Statesman" stops in both directions. The Corridor, including its Springfield and Harrisburg legs, also saw many minor schedule adjustments.

Amtrak's \$40 round-trip and \$25 one-way Boston-Washington "Colonial Corridor" tickets will not be sold after July 31. The special 30-day round-trip Corridor tickets (25% discount, not good for travel starting between noon and six p.m. on Fridays and Sundays) will continue.

**COMMUTER:** ConRail is operating the traditional weekend summer service between Ocean City/Cape May, N.J., and the Lindenwold terminal of the rapid transit line to Philadelphia and Camden. Service began June 21 and will continue through September 6: 10 AM from Lindenwold and 6 PM from Cape May on Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays, plus an extra eastbound trip Fridays, 4:50 PM from Lindenwold, and extra westbound Mondays, 7:07 AM from Cape May.

Cleveland-Youngstown local may continue at least until next April 1. 100% Federal funding under the "4R" Act is available for the period starting this October 1, and there is apparently no legal obstacle preventing Ohio from serving as a conduit for the funds, which would come from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration and go to ConRail. Ohioans should write to Governor James Rhodes in Columbus urging him to take necessary steps to get the funds.

## Passenger Trains and the Election

by Orren Beaty

Advocates of better rail passenger service and an expanded nationwide network for Amtrak in this election year are going to have to make their wishes known to the candidates who seek to represent them in the United States Senate and House of Representatives.

That is the impression — a very strong impression — we get at NARP's Washington office after observing the presidential primaries, submitting proposed energy and transportation planks to the platform committees of both major political parties, and polling Presidential candidates for their views on rail passenger service.

It is, as your daily newspaper and television commentators have told you, a year in which issues have proved not to be the important thing. The candidates in the Democratic Party who have done the best have not gotten too specific on issues. We have an important one, in that more and more of the nation's fuel is coming from overseas sources not notable for reliability in a crunch, and rail passenger service can move people in large numbers if another energy crisis occurs. But this is not an issue the national political parties and presidential candidates are likely to talk about.

So, as it has in the past, the burden of keeping rail passenger service alive and improving will fall to Congress. If you care about

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**Rep. Edward Madigan (R-Ill.) reports that 80.8 per cent of 30,000 voters replying to a survey in his district, which includes Bloomington and Champaign-Urbana, said they would "prefer train to air transportation on trips of five hours or less if good trains were available."**

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this issue, don't let a candidate for Congress get your vote without finding out how he or she stands.

The former Presidential candidates who have shown the most interest in rail passenger service — Rep. Morris Udall, Sen. Frank Church, Fred Harris, Sen. Birch Bayh and Sen. Lloyd Bentsen — have been left behind by former Governor Jimmy Carter, who seems to have sewed up the Democratic nomination.

Carter was among those who responded to NARP's questionnaire about transportation and energy issues. His campaign staff indicates that he could support an increase in funds for the "commerce and transportation function" but he has not taken a position specifically on Amtrak.

President Ford's campaign committee did not answer our inquiry, but with the negative record his Administration has compiled in this field, NARP members should have no difficulty in determining where he stands. NARP members in California, who observed former Gov. Ronald Reagan in action when he headed state government there, put no more faith in him on this issue, so NARP members have little choice between the two contestants for the nomination as convention time nears.

Turning to party platforms, many political observers doubt their importance. But, as long as they exist, it is important to advocates of a special issue that the wrong thing not be said in what the political party puts forward as its national policy.

NARP has submitted material to both parties, including a formal statement to the Democratic Platform Committee, and one of its directors, Dr. Alfred Runte, testified before the Republican Platform Committee's regional hearing in Los Angeles.

There is time yet for NARP members to contact the chairmen of their state's delegation to each national convention, or the state party's representative on the platform committee, and stress the need for a strong plank supporting rail passenger service. Democrats meet in New York City during the second week of July (so hurry), while Republicans convene in Kansas City, Mo. in August. This is your chance to add weight to what NARP has started.



# Amtrak's New Trains: Hope and Concern

## EDITORIAL

Amtrak's new daylight trains, the New York-Newport News "Colonial" and the New York-Savannah "Palmetto", which began operation June 15, are causes for both hope and concern.

Hope because they show Amtrak's willingness to experiment. When NARP defends the concept of intercity rail passenger service before the Congress or in other forums, we cite improvement of Amtrak's route structure as an important prerequisite for the "fair test". NARP has long been on record in favor of establishing direct Washington-Norfolk area service.

"The Colonial" is apparently the first-ever through coach service between New York and the Norfolk area, illustrating the advantage of having an organization like Amtrak which transcends company boundaries. Even in the heyday of the passenger train, the fact that four railroads were involved seems to have prevented institution of such service.

Our concern arises from the reasons why these trains may not be successful. Since the enemies of rail passenger service will

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**Ohio's state rail issue was defeated at the polls again June 8, though by a narrower margin than previously. NARP supporters there are urged to write their state legislators asking them to vote in favor of placing the issue on the November ballot, and to campaign in support of it.**

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pounce on any apparent failure as a vindication of their position, we want to get our misgivings on the record early to explain why our faith in the potential of rail passenger service will survive, regardless of the fate of these two trains.

A fair test of the Newport News run would demand auto-competitive running times and trainside connecting motor coaches for Norfolk and Virginia Beach. Amtrak, at least initially, will provide neither. "The Colonial" operates late in the day — arriving Newport News at 9:10 PM southbound and New York at midnight northbound — probably too late for most people except Fridays and Sundays. (Southbound passengers can arrive Norfolk at 6:10 PM by taking the "Palmetto" and changing at Petersburg to the "Mountaineer".)

Amtrak plans to improve the track layout at Richmond, eliminating a time-consuming backup move, if the "Colonial" does well enough — but we fear better schedules, faster running times, and establishment of bus connections may be prerequisites for doing "well enough".

"Palmetto" is in a timeslot with no historical basis. Amtrak plans to withdraw it soon after Labor Day, so it does not have much time in which to build up ridership and prove itself. These factors make advertising all the more important — particularly in the smaller communities, which are likely to "make or break" the train. Amtrak's limited promotion has been focused on the big cities. It

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Local merchants in Meriden, Conn. recently sponsored a special outing to Hartford, the state capitol, to promote rail passenger travel. One hundred and twenty Meriden residents, including the mayor, traveled the 26 miles by Amtrak to see a New England Whalers ice hockey game. They were met at the Hartford station by Governor Ella Grasso. Amtrak provided a special fare for the occasion. NARP Director James M. S. Ullman, who conceived and organized the project, said that this was the largest crowd to board a single train in Meriden since World War Two days, and that the outing proved that reduced fares will attract riders.

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is possible that a "Palmetto" success would require the restoration of more than two of the thirty-seven stations between Washington and Savannah which lost service the day Amtrak began.

The average speed, 52 mph, is too slow for this route. A conservative analysis of the inaugural run suggests the Washington-Savannah schedule could be shortened by 50

minutes southbound and over an hour northbound, and the resulting Savannah times of about 10:55 PM and 8 AM would be much more marketable than the present 11:50 PM and 6:50 AM. We also question the necessity of a 30-minute layover in Washington.

We hope it is not too late for Amtrak to respond to some of these suggestions this summer. And, of course, it is just possible that our skepticism will prove unwarranted as passengers are attracted by the new cars. The problems discussed above would make victories that much more impressive. But what if "Palmetto" fails?

History proves nothing but does offer valuable clues. "The Palmetto" serves a route whose most heavily traveled schedule, on a year-round basis, died when Amtrak began: it left and arrived New York around 9:30 PM and 6:30 AM (south- and northbound, respectively), carrying people who could not, or preferred not to, use the working hours for travel.

Since the market for this schedule was overwhelmingly coach, NARP would support an Amtrak petition for exemption from the ICC's sleeping car requirement, should Amtrak decide to revive this schedule in addition to its established Florida services. We would also urge adding more local stops, with the nine stations served by the "Gulf Coast Special" April 30, 1971, being logical candidates. Five of those had two trains per day in each direction in 1971!

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The Oregon Association of Railroad Passengers (OreARP) should be added to the list of state associations in March *News*. Besides fighting to save existing service, the new group's interests include restoration of a direct Portland-Spokane link and of the Portland-Boise-east service for which Senator Church has been working hard, as well as improved service in the Willamette Valley.

Contact persons for OreARP are: John Perrin, 1145 S.E. Spokane St., Portland 97202 and Ken McFarling, 7417 S.E. 20th Ave., Portland 97202.

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**Recent legislation signed by the President calls for the establishment of a congressional "National Transportation Policy Study Commission." The commission is to carry out a full investigation of the transportation needs of the country through the year 2000, and to study "the resources, requirements and policies of the United States to meet such expected needs." The commission is to include 12 members from specified committees in the House and Senate, and seven public members to be appointed by the President.**

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## More Mail on Trains

The Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, at its sixtieth spring conference in Williamsburg, Va., approved a resolution calling for an increased handling of bulk mail by rail carriers, particularly Amtrak. The SEARUC urged adoption of this and other of its resolutions by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, which will hold its 88th annual convention in Honolulu November 15-18.

The Commissioners feel that Amtrak's facilities "... may be effectively used for the transportation of bulk mail. . . at a much reduced cost to the U.S. Postal Service." The resolution also states: "It appears that the additional revenue generated by transportation of bulk mail to Amtrak would greatly reduce the tax dollars now required for its continued operation."

Amtrak's mail revenues have increased steadily, from \$1 million in 1971 to \$2.5 in '72, \$4 in '73, \$6.2 in '74, and \$7.3 million in '75, and Amtrak expects a significant increase in 1976.

An additional mail car has been added to the Chicago-Denver segment of the "San Francisco Zephyr" and to the Kansas City-Los Angeles segment of the "Southwest Limited." Also, fully containerized mail service has recently been introduced on Amfleet trains in the Northeast Corridor.