



News from the
**National Association of
 Railroad Passengers**

Vol. 25 No. 6  June, 1991

RETURN REQUESTED

John R. Martin, Pres.; Eugene Skoropowski, Vice Pres.; Robert Glover, Sec.; Joseph Horning, Jr., Treas.; Ross Capon, Exec. Dir.; Scott Leonard, Asst. Dir.; Jane Colgrove, Membership Dir.; Harriet Parcels, Transp. Assoc.

News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers (ISSN 0739-3490), is published monthly except November by NARP, 900 Second Street, NE, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 408-8362. Membership dues are \$20/year (\$10.00 under 21 or over 65) of which \$5 is for a subscription to NARP News. Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC.

Postmaster: send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers, 900 Second Street, NE, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20002.

(This has news through June 27. No. 4 was mailed 1st class May 17 & 20. No. 5 was mailed May 22.)

Second Class Postage Paid
 At Washington, D.C.

Weyrich on Amtrak

MORE SUPPORT FOR BOSTON RAIL LINK

From Amtrak Asst. Vice Pres. Tim Gillespie's June 1 letter accompanying Amtrak's Congressionally mandated report on Boston-Portland, ME service: "A direct rail connection in Boston between North Station and South Station would significantly improve the ridership and revenues generated by service to Maine by linking Maine with Amtrak's national rail passenger system. Amtrak understands, however, that such a connection is not contemplated as part of the Boston Central Artery project, now under planning."

The report itself stated: "The lack of a direct rail connection between North and South Station will greatly limit the number of passengers opting to travel [by train]." (For more on this report, see page 3.)

Consumer Corner

(As the association's name suggests, we spend much time representing our members' concerns about Amtrak service and policies to Amtrak management. Starting with this column, we aim to devote more space in NARP News to this work.)

- NARP Member Chris Wasiutynski of New York City told us that the advent of Empire Service reservations probably cost many passengers their round-trip discounts. Before selling a round-trip ticket, Amtrak agents were requiring passengers to specify their return train; many passengers without a ready answer—and who weren't "smart enough" to ask for an unreserved return—were sold a one-way ticket. Within minutes, we told Amtrak Marketing which promptly sent their agents a computer message telling them to book an unreserved return so the passenger gets the discount; he/she can exchange the return ticket for a reserved ticket if need be.

- A Louisville, CO, woman wrote us in disgust after giving a Denver-to-Glenwood Springs Amtrak trip "as a Valentines gift to my family" only to have dirty sheets remain on her Economy Room beds—which she got "with the intentions of my small children napping"—the entire trip although "I told the Chief of

(continued on page 3)

NARP Board Hears its First "Outsider" Amtrak Director

Nation "Owes Graham Claytor a Debt of Gratitude"

"[Secretary of Transportation] Sam Skinner [has given] Amtrak the very best board of directors that has ever been appointed in the history of the company . . . Extraordinarily able people who are asking all the right questions, who are determined that . . . we are going to seize the opportunities that the nineties present."

—AMTRAK Board Member Paul M. Weyrich

NARP Member Paul M. Weyrich, an Amtrak board member since 1987 (NARP News, Mar. '87), on May 4 became the first Amtrak board member to address the NARP Board who was not also Amtrak's president or Federal Railroad Administrator.

Weyrich publishes *The New Electric Railway Journal* and is a passionate believer in the future and growth potential of both Amtrak and light rail. Weyrich is a prominent conservative who founded the Heritage Foundation and now is president of The Free Congress and Education Foundation, Inc. He suspects his initial appointment to Amtrak's board stemmed from the Reagan personnel office's assumption that the founder of the Heritage Foundation, which has consistently attacked Amtrak, must himself hate Amtrak.

Race to San Clemente

In 1970, as a young staffer for the late Sen. Gordon Allott (R-CO), Weyrich got a call from a pro-train Federal Railroad Admin. staffer who said that the just-passed Rail Passenger Service Act—creating Amtrak—had been improperly enrolled and that two White House aides were preparing to leave for San Clemente to urge Pres. Nixon to veto the bill.

Weyrich alerted his boss and was able to give a properly

enrolled bill to the FRA man, who raced with it to San Clemente, getting Nixon to sign the bill before the other aides arrived!

Amtrak's Burden: Inherited Attitudes

"People on the outside," said Weyrich, "underestimate the difficulty of overcoming a mindset which has been inherited" from pre-Amtrak and early-Amtrak days when employees rightfully suspected management was not committed to the passenger train's long-term survival. "Many of the newer employees are being trained in an attitude of service; some of them are still being 'infected' by holdovers; but you can see a [positive] change in the overall picture."

Management, for its part, must deal with a larger number of unions than perhaps any other industry.

Self-Sufficiency, Fashion, Luxury Service

Weyrich urged NARP to review our skepticism toward Claytor's goal of eliminating the need for operating subsidies by 2000. Weyrich, like most observers of the federal budget, sees money for discretionary domestic programs declining in the future but believes that—"if we get Amtrak to the point where it is self-sufficient in terms of operating costs"—capital funding for Amtrak "will sell politically" despite federal budget problems.

Weyrich On . . .

Amtrak Pres. Claytor: "We owe Graham Claytor a debt of gratitude . . . Had Claytor not had the political skills, on the one hand to work with some of the people in the Congress who trusted him because he had been a Carter appointee and a prominent Democrat [ed.: Claytor served as Secretary of the Navy and briefly as Acting Secretary of Transportation] while at the same time taking on the notion that Amtrak could at some point be relieved of necessities of subsidies for operating—which gave him entree to more conservative legislators—this company would not have survived . . . Had someone else been in leadership, the company would probably be out of existence by now because it was so delicate dealing with Capitol Hill and the Administration . . . He managed that extraordinarily well and I think this country owes Graham Claytor a debt of gratitude."

NARP: "We would not be where we are today were it not for the constructive role of NARP. . . . With a small board of directors—only nine of us—[your sort of work] is indispensable, because we can't be everywhere . . . You have in many cases been the eyes and ears that I have relied upon to find out what is going on in parts of the country that I can't regularly visit . . . I wouldn't want to serve on this board if there were not a NARP . . . I've seen [NARP] mature, I've seen it progress, I've seen it get the right kind of staff [who] present a thoughtful and reasonable case . . . NARP [acts] on a reasoned, dispassionate basis . . . I can rely on [their] data . . . A good lobby is nothing but the collective representation of ordinary people. . . ."

European trains: "The European experience . . . is really changing the minds of a lot of Americans about what is possible with rail passenger service . . . we will have a demand for that in this country."

Small-market advertising by Amtrak: "Many of these smaller localities we serve also make this service politically viable."



—PHOTO BY JOHN A. ROSS

NARP Pres. Jack Martin (right) presents plate to Paul M. Weyrich (center) as NARP Vice Pres. Gene Skoropowski looks on. The plate bears NARP's initials and an Amtrak locomotive and was donated by NARP Dir. Ned. S. Williams of Dandridge, TN.

"Never underestimate the power of fashion," said Weyrich. "It is now becoming fashionable to ride trains . . . If the elites begin to ride these trains and have very bad experiences, then . . . [Amtrak] will come back to the point where we were 20 years ago . . . If it's fashionable to ride the trains, no one will" try to eliminate them.

Weyrich sees luxury services getting the "elites" back on the trains and helping the move toward self-sufficiency. At his initiative, Amtrak this summer will establish such a service—using private car "J. Pinckney Henderson"—on the scenic New York-Pittsburgh daylight "Pennsylvanian," perhaps twice a week, with "first class international travel-type meal service. . . . I regard this as prototype . . . as something which if it succeeds, we can do elsewhere . . . If this sort of thing works, it will not only bring in revenue that will help the other end of the train; but also, it will change the image of the system to a point where people will begin thinking of Amtrak as something which no community should be without. . . ."

Role of the Amtrak Board

In 1987, "we were not setting policy and I don't blame the management because [they] were trying to enable the company to survive," enemies abounded, and management had every reason to share as little information as possible with outsiders, including board members.

The extension of the New York-Savannah "Palmetto" to Jacksonville was the first major decision enacted by board rather than management initiative. Weyrich called the results "midway between their fears and our expectations . . . As we emerge now from that period of bunker mentality, there will be more willingness to try new things."

Political Melting Pot

In the late 1960s, Weyrich worked closely with NARP Founder Anthony Haswell. Since joining Amtrak's board, Weyrich likewise has counted on support from Charles Luna, President Emeritus of the United Transportation Union and the only person on the board ever since Amtrak's creation, in getting the board to take a more independent stance.

Haswell and Luna are liberal Democrats; Weyrich a conservative Republican.

Indeed, the need for balanced transportation is recognized by people at all points on the traditional "political spectrum." As Weyrich suggested, Claytor can take much credit for the strengthened support Amtrak now enjoys among Republican legislators.

Three New Amtrak Board Members

On Mar. 20, the Senate confirmed Pres. Bush's Oct. 25 nomination of Carl W. Vogt of Potomac, MD, to the Amtrak Board. He replaces Darrell M. Trent as the board's "business community" rep. A Houston native, Vogt, 54, is a graduate of Williams College and the University of Texas Law School. He is partner-in-charge of the Washington office of Fulbright & Jaworski. His practice primarily involves employment, labor and administrative law civil litigation.

Vogt has extensive experience representing colleges and universities. He is past chairman of American Bar Assn.'s Special Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and is

"I have a longstanding belief in an integrated passenger transportation system of which passenger rail is an integral part—not only the NEC but also its rural parts."

—Carl W. Vogt, New Amtrak Board Member, before the Senate Commerce Committee on Feb. 20

a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Customer Affairs Committee and the Greater Washington Board of Trade.

New people also occupy the two two-year "commuter authority" slots on the Amtrak board. Pres. Bush appointed Eugene R. Croisant on Aug. 31, 1990, replacing Frank W. Jenkins, and David F. Girard-diCarlo Nov. 14, replacing Samuel H. Hellenbrand. Jenkins and Hellenbrand both joined the board in Jan., 1982.

Croisant was born and raised in the Chicago area and received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Loyola University. He worked for Continental Bank for 29 years, becoming chief operating officer in 1988. In 1989, he moved to New York to become RJR Nabisco's executive vice president for Human Resources and Administration.

Girard-diCarlo, 47, was selected from a list provided by the commuter authorities. He is a graduate of the Villanova School of Law and managing partner of the Philadelphia-based law firm of Blank, Rome, Comisky & McCauley.

Girard-diCarlo served on the board of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority 1979-82, becoming chairman at age 36. With David Gunn (then SEPTA's general

NARP SERVICE CHARGES

As part of our effort to balance NARP's budget, we are converting our hotline to a 900 number available in the lower 48 states and—hopefully starting later this year—other U.S. territories and Canada. Charges: \$2 for the first minute, \$1 per minute thereafter, instead of the regular long-distance charges non-local callers now pay; no charge if you hang up in the first 10 seconds. (Today, even those who just want to find out if we updated the tape must pay a long-distance charge. We normally change the tape late Friday afternoons; the "free 10 seconds" will enable you to find out whether or not we have done a special update, as we often do during "crises.")

The hotline changeover day—probably sometime in July—and new phone number will be announced on the hotline a few weeks in advance, and in the earliest possible NARP News.

Also, we are charging \$1 per back issue of NARP News and different rates as indicated for other materials available from our office on request.

We regret any hardships these charges create, but hope members can understand our need to charge for our "extra" services.

manager, subsequently president of NYCTA, and now GM at Washington's Metro), Girard-diCarlo initiated innovative graffiti-removal and rail-vehicle-overhaul/replacement programs and laid most of the groundwork for the Conrail-to-SEPTA transfer of commuter rail service. SEPTA subsequently endured a 108-day strike to get more productive railroad work rules which helped permit SEPTA to survive and improve service frequency.

He was American Public Transit Association's chairman in 1982. NARP Vice Pres. Eugene K. Skoropowski, a former SEPTA official who has known Girard-diCarlo a long time, calls him a rail service advocate who understands the business, its capabilities and what is needed to do the job right. ■

AMTRAK'S MAINE REPORT

Amtrak estimates three daily Portland round trips out of Boston's North Station "would annually generate some 223,000 passengers [ed.: a 12-month average of 102 passengers per trip], 13.5 million passenger miles, and passenger revenues of \$2 million. Summer traffic could be quite heavy while off-season passenger loads likely would be considerably less."

Amtrak estimates startup capital costs at \$49 mill. (\$30 mill. in right-of-way and facility improvements, \$19 mill. for passenger cars and locomotives) and put first-year operating subsidy needs at \$3.4 mill.

The 22-page report is available while supplies last from Amtrak Public Affairs, 60 Mass. Ave., NE, Wash., DC 20002.

Consumer Corner (continued from page 1)

On Board Services to fix the situation at the start of the trip." She was insulted by Amtrak's initial offer of credits for future use on Amtrak, since "I will not be riding with Amtrak again."

Amtrak's letter implied you can expect unmade beds in daytime use "in the absence of a special request in the reservation record." The woman ended up with a refund as a result of NARP's (a) giving Amtrak a copy of her follow-up letter (the original she sent to Amtrak apparently never made it) and (b) getting Amtrak to recognize that its bedmaking failure was a serious shortcoming in no way lessened by the woman's failure to indicate when she made the reservation that she planned to use the beds on a daylight trip.

● Amtrak Exec. VP William S. Norman's Feb. 1 and Apr. 23 letters to NARP agreed with only one of our suggestions about improving Metroliner ridership (Jan. News): "We have long felt that a tie-in with an existing airline [frequent flier] program could be productive. . . . The challenge is to effect such a tie-in on [cost-effective] terms. We have had discussions on this subject with several airlines and will continue to do so." Is no airline savvy enough to get a leg up on the competition by offering Amtrak terms that are not "prohibitively expensive"?

Norman rejected corporate fares ("discount to one corporate client, and soon you will discount to all") and lower weekend fares ("the issue here, as elsewhere is what we would lose [by charging lower fares to] people who already travel with us").

Overall, Norman wrote, the Metroliners' air competitors "are locked in a desperate, self-destructive struggle. They are using tactics against each other which we can afford to forego. . . . Metroliner Service continues to experience revenue growth in a declining market. . . ." ■

Senate Approves "Flexibility"

The Senate passed S.1204 (formerly S.965—the Moynihan surface transportation bill—see May '91 News) June 19 by a 91-7 vote. After much debate and many changes, S.1204 includes:

- **Flexibility:** States could use half their federal highway funds on certain non-highway projects. 17.5% of this "flexible money" is earmarked for the "national highway system," but up to 20% of the 17.5% could be transferred to non-highway projects.

Eligible non-highway projects include "capital costs for mass transit, passenger rail (including high speed rail), and operating costs for passenger rail for States without Amtrak service as of the date of enactment of this Act, publicly owned intra- or inter-city bus terminals and facilities, and magnetic levitation systems, including expenditures on rights of way and associated facilities, and expenses for contracted passenger rail or magnetic levitation service provided by public

Flexibility: AAA's Scare Tactics

"Time may be running out on your personal mobility. . . . More women have entered the workforce, two-earner and single-parent families have multiplied, and more people have moved to the suburbs. These busy commuters . . . need the flexibility provided by motor vehicles and value highly the privacy, independence and security they provide. [S. 1204] won't help them—its purpose is to 'manage gridlock' and to force them to use public transportation. . . . If you value the freedom your car gives you [tell your legislators]."

—John Archer, Managing Dir. of Government Affairs, American Automobile Assn., in July/Aug. AAA World

or private carriers; carpool projects and fringe and corridor parking facilities and programs, and bicycle facilities and programs. . . ."

The italicized phrase was part of an amendment by Sen. Don Nickles (R-OK), accepted without vote on the Senate floor June 13, designed to facilitate efforts to get Amtrak trains in Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Maine. The amendment also would allow those states to use their federal rural transit funding for up to 50% of operating losses of an Amtrak train in their state. David L. Boren (D-OK) and William S. Cohen (R-ME) cosponsored the amendment.

Actually, the reference to "contracted" service would appear to allow any state to use "flexible" highway funds for operating costs of state-supported Amtrak trains.

- **Level Playing Field:** The federal share is 80% (two exceptions—90% for interstate maintenance and completion and 75% for projects designed primarily to increase capacity for single-occupant autos).

- **Planning** provisions were modified before committee markup so that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and states must agree on projects (that is, "mutual veto" power replaced Moynihan's original concept giving full power to MPOs). The Senate accepted an amendment by Steven D. Symms (R-ID) which provides that planning provisions apply to metro areas of 250,000 or more people rather than 50,000 or more.

- **Transit:** Authorization would be increased from \$3.8 to \$4.7 billion annually through FY '96—more than wanted by the Administration but still far below actual need. Operating assistance, opposed by the Administration, would be retained.

Secs. 3 (discretionary capital) and 9 (formula) would be changed so part of each comes from both general revenues and the trust fund. Flexible transit money could only go to road projects if all transit alternatives and the Clean Air Act had been satisfied.

- **Maglev:** Not only may a state spend its "flexible" funds on maglev, but a separate "National Magnetic Levitation Design Program" would be established, authorized at \$750 mill. through FY '96 and to be conducted by the DOT and the Army Corps of Engineers. Its goal is construction of a prototype maglev using an interstate highway right-of-way.

- **Truck Size Freeze:** During markup May 22 in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Sens. Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) and John H. Chafee (R-RI) introduced language limiting truck weights to what states allowed effective June 1, 1991. On the Senate floor June 13, Sen. James Exon (D-NE) offered language—which was accepted—freezing truck lengths as well.

- **National Highway System:** The Durenberger amendment appears to give the administration a hollow victory—it gets the much-ballyhooed NHS but only a fraction of the NHS-mandated funding Bush sought.

What You Can Do

Urge your representative to support a House highway/transit authorization with as much flexibility as possible, specifically including intercity rail passenger, and to support inclusion of H.R. 2515, the Boehlert-Borski truck weight freeze bill, H.R. 2619, the Sangmeister passenger rail corridor grade crossing elimination bill, and language conditioning the Boston Central Artery Project on inclusion of a railroad link. H.R. 2619 would empower DOT to designate corridors eligible for significant grade-crossing elimination money. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

June 16 "Zephyr/Wind/Pioneer" changes took place as expected (Apr. Advisory) with a bonus: the bus connection for "Pioneer" passengers to/from points west serves Provo as well as Salt Lake City. Answering NARP's improvement suggestions, Amtrak Pres. Claytor wrote June 14 that, "in light of the service problems we've had on this route," Amtrak started Wyoming service "with as clean and straightforward a routing as possible. As we gain experience . . . we will be in a better position to begin looking at variations for the fall or subsequent schedule changes."

Watch out! Starting June 23, "Silver Meteor" left most Florida points up to 35 minutes earlier (Miami 9:10a instead of 9:45), with Jacksonville-Wildwood-Miami running-times lengthened 20 mins. south, 35 mins. north. (After Apr. 7, "Meteor" suffered many serious delays, with late northbound trains in New York causing southbound trains to leave New York late.) Amtrak says main cause was failure to add time to the Miami section when it was lengthened from 8 to 10 cars due to the Apr. service restructuring. Also, "Gulf Breeze" was speeded up 20 mins., so the southbound train leaves some Alabama points earlier than in the Apr. 7 timetable.

A Sunday-only New York-Albany round trip was added May 5, leaving NY 6:45p north, Albany 8:10p south.

To get Amtrak's revised timetables for the above trains, send NARP a s.a.s.e.; specify which trains.