



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 12, No. 4 April, 1978

417 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003
202-546-1550

Orren Beaty, President
Ross Capon, Executive Director
Thomas G. Crikelair, Assistant Director
Kim Tieger, Circulation Manager

Membership dues start at \$15/year (\$7.50 for those under 21 and over 65) and include a subscription to NEWS, published monthly except in November. Any material herein may be reproduced without permission. Credit to the source is requested.

(No. 3 was mailed April 10)

RETURN REQUESTED

New Attack on AMTRAK

Rail passenger service suffered a major blow April 11 during the Amtrak authorization markup by the full Senate Commerce Committee. At the insistence of Subcommittee Chairman Russell Long (D-LA), the funding in his own bill was cut from \$633 million to \$510 million for operations, and from \$200 million to \$120 million for capital improvements.

Amtrak says \$613 million in operating funds is required to maintain present service levels through FY 1979, and Senator Long himself had previously argued that "we will need sufficient authorizations to operate the existing system until such time as we

GOOD NEWS! The Pullman-Standard strike has been settled, so work can resume on Amtrak's new bilevel cars for Western long-distance trains. The first cars are not expected to enter revenue service until October, at the earliest.

can make the change to a new system." Even the Administration seems to have accepted the logic of keeping the present system running until the end of the route study process (see March News, p. 3).

A \$120 million capital budget would leave no room for badly needed new cars for Eastern long-distance trains and Northeast Corridor electric locomotives (see March News, p. 3).

Prospects for a floor fight in the Senate are uncertain, since Senator Long, as chairman of the Finance Committee, is one of the most powerful figures in Washington. Nevertheless, NARP urges its members to write their own Senators asking them to see that full Amtrak funding is restored when S. 2478 is considered on the floor sometime after May 15. NARP's letter to all Senators is reproduced on page two.

Even more vital is firm action by the House to hold its Amtrak funding levels as close as possible to those set in the Staggers bill (HR 11493): \$633 million for operations and \$341 million for capital. Favorable House action preserves chances for a good final outcome in the House/Senate conference.

Senator Long's comments suggested that he has been heavily influenced by the arguments of Arthur Lewis, President of the American Bus Association (formerly known as National Association of Motor Bus Owners).

Bus executives have been quite active in Washington, condemning Amtrak's subsidy and seeking subsidies for themselves. Last year, they lost by one vote in the Senate a proposal to give the intercity bus industry a \$200 million refundable tax credit provision—\$100 million each for reduced bus fares and capital expenditures.

In reviewing that proposal, the Congressional Budget Office said "... it is premature to conclude that the intercity bus industry is experiencing any severe short-run financial difficulty.... Another complication arises because Greyhound and Continental Trailways are wholly owned by subsidiaries of large

Anyone who wants a copy of the DOT's May 1 report on the Amtrak route structure should send a self-addressed mailing label to Amtrak Route Study (ROA-30), Federal Railroad Administration, Washington, DC 20590.

Do this as soon as possible to be sure of getting a copy before public hearings begin. Indications are that the initial press run will be much too small, so you may have to wait for a second press run if you don't act promptly. Copies will be available for examination at all Federal depository libraries, of which there is at least one in every Congressional district.

conglomerate corporations. . . . Thus, it is difficult to obtain meaningful measures... of the financial viability of the bus industry's major carriers. Furthermore, it would also be difficult to ensure that the bus companies, and not the holding companies, benefit" from the tax credit.

Remaining in the energy package now being debated is a provision that would remove excise taxes on intercity buses and bus parts, "a total tax break of approximately \$17 million" according to the Budget Office.

This year, without public hearings, the bus companies have succeeded in getting substantial subsidies entered into "The Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978", a bill proposed by Rep. James J. Howard (D-NJ), Chairman of the surface transportation subcommittee of the Public Works and Transportation Committee. (This committee has jurisdiction over highways and mass transit but not Amtrak.) One half of the \$150 million rural assistance category is earmarked for private intercity bus operating subsidies, for service between urbanized areas, not local service. This has angered the National Association of Counties, which is lobbying against it. In addition, the bill provides \$50 million for development of intercity bus terminals.

NARP recognizes that subsidies for intercity buses may become necessary. But, since only a small overlap exists between the rail and bus markets and most Amtrak passengers would use private automobiles if Amtrak disappeared, NARP does not believe that public policy should be swayed by the allegations of bus companies that Amtrak is seriously competing with them.

In the latest round in a fight over the establishment of a second daily round-trip on the Sacramento-Oakland and Oakland-LA line, Southern Pacific has insisted on a study to determine what capital improvements to its lines would be required for this service. Amtrak, with the support of the state, plans to take the SP to arbitration. The proposed train would run through between Sacramento and San Diego, running overnight on the Oakland-LA segment.

ICC "Southern Crescent" hearings set for 9:30 AM on these May dates (write ICC, Washington, DC 20423, to confirm this schedule; *means place where Southern has asked that hearing be cancelled): 12, 15-6 in Washington; 19 Charlottesville; 20 Lynchburg*; 22 Danville*; 23 Greensboro*; 24 Salisbury*; 25 Charlotte; 26 Spartanburg*; 27 Greenville; 30 Clemson*; 31 Toccoa*; June dates: 1 Gainesville*; 2 Atlanta; 5 Anniston*; 6 Birmingham; 7 Livingston*; 8 Meridan; 9 Laurel*; 12 Hattiesburg*; 12 Poplarville*; 14 New Orleans.

April 18, 1978

The Honorable _____
U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator _____:

The National Association of Railroad Passengers is deeply concerned about the level of funding proposed for Amtrak in S.2478, the FY 1979 Amtrak Authorization bill.

The bill, as originally introduced, included \$633 million for operating grants and \$200 million for capital grants. During full committee markup on April 11, at the insistence of Senator Long, these amounts were reduced to \$510 million for operations and \$120 million for capital.

S.2478 as it now stands is a self-contradictory piece of legislation.

On the one hand, the bill calls for a complete reexamination of Amtrak's route structure -- in order to provide the Congress with a basis for making a decision regarding the future of Amtrak's route structure.

The \$510 million operating figure, however, indicates that the decision has in effect already been made -- because it will necessitate drastic train discontinuances several months prior to the time that the reexamination process called for in the bill is scheduled to be completed.

According to S.2478, the DOT is to evaluate the public's need for passenger train service and submit a preliminary recommendation to the Congress by May 1. Public hearings are to be held across the country, giving the people the opportunity to have their views taken into consideration as the decision-making process moves forward. DOT is to submit a final recommendation by Dec. 31, 1978. The Congress is then to decide -- sometime early in calendar 1979 -- whether or not to institute any such changes as may be recommended by the Administration.

Senator, as we understand it, the decision regarding the future of Amtrak is supposed to be made by the Congress as a whole -- after the route study process has been completed.


The \$510 million now included in S.2478 would require that trains be taken off before the Congress has even seen a copy of the Secretary's final recommendation.

In our view the Congress must authorize sufficient funds to continue today's trains until such time as we know what tomorrow's system will look like. To do otherwise would make a mockery of the route study process and, indeed, of the democratic process itself. We submit that the Government should not be asking the public for its views regarding the future of given train services -- if the decision has already been made to take those trains away.

We hope when S.2478 reaches the Senate floor that you will vote to restore the \$633 million and \$200 million operating and capital funding for Amtrak -- so that existing train services can continue at least until such time as the Congress has had an opportunity to act on the Administration's Dec. 31 recommendation.

Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,


Orren Beaty, President
National Association of
Railroad Passengers

Timetable Subscriptions

The old cliché is that people stay away from public transit in droves because they require the freedom to go where they want when they want, and only the automobile gives them this. Your editor, however, feels quite certain that a substantial number of people would use public transit if the carriers did an effective job of getting out the word about *when* their trains and buses ran.

A friend who normally travels by automobile recently suggested that he would be willing to pay for a subscription to Amtrak's "Empire Service" timetables, so that he could always be sure of having an up-to-date one on hand. He made this suggestion after a Rochester-to-New York turboliner ride which had been preceded by countless unsuccessful attempts to reach Amtrak's telephone information service. This prompts the thought that an effective timetable subscription service would reduce demands on that telephone service, especially on routes where reservations aren't required.

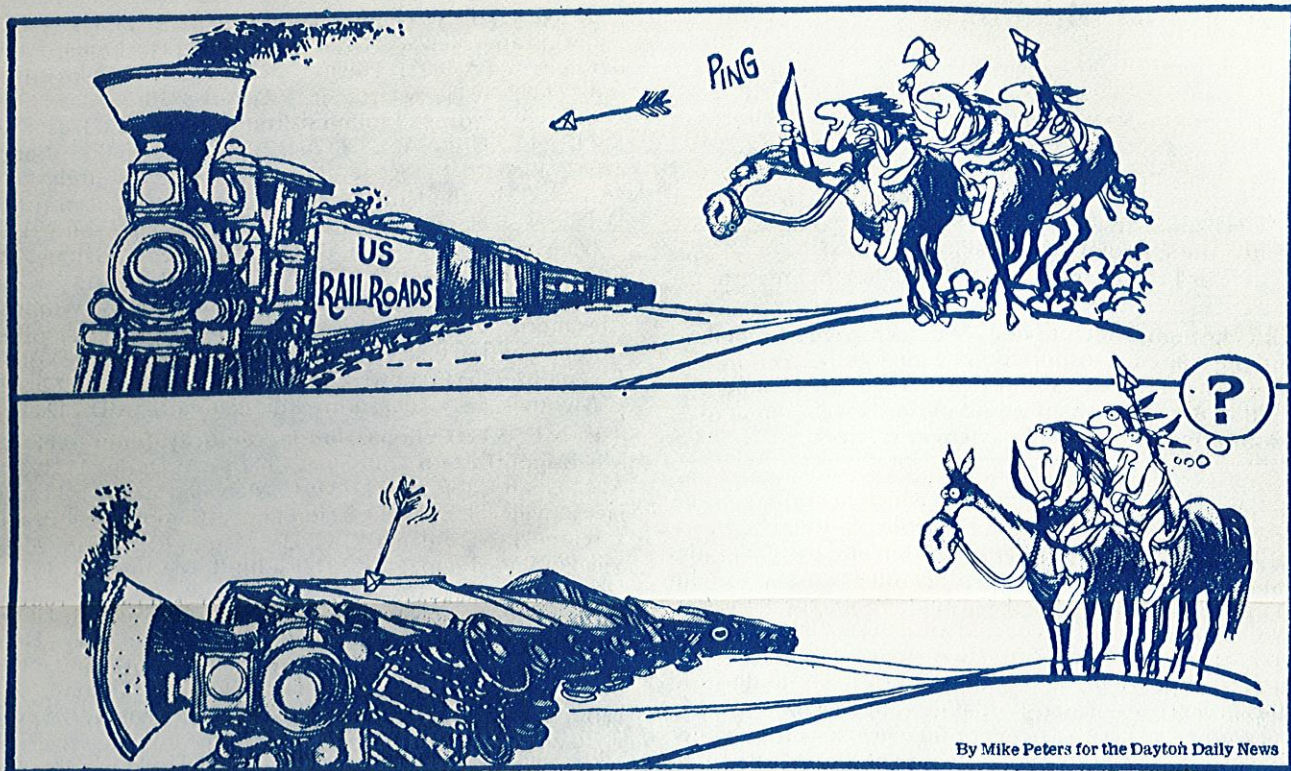
We picked up the current United Airlines system timetable, which they dub "Our Friendly Times", and found a form on the inside of the front cover headed "Add My Name to The Timetable Mailing List". United will take care of you for free. So should Amtrak, intercity bus lines, and urban transit authorities. But, if they are not willing, we think they should experiment with providing the subscriptions for a reasonable price.

Urban transit operators may have the most to gain from adopting this practice. There is nothing so forbidding, especially in winter, as a lonely city bus-stop sign, seen through the eyes of someone who doesn't even know that printed bus schedules are available for public distribution—or who doesn't normally pass a timetable rack. Even regular users of rush-hour service are reluctant to venture onto the system at off-peak hours because information is hard to get.

We'd welcome comments from readers who know of situations where carriers have promoted timetable subscriptions to the general public, and what the results were or who have other suggestions about solving the information problem.

"Unquestionably, extreme winter and summer weather conditions affected temperature control systems; but Commission investigators have also identified a problem that is within Amtrak's control—breakdowns in procedures for reporting maintenance of air conditioning equipment. The Commission believes this breakdown is a major factor in the high incidence of temperature control problems reported by passengers. Each Amtrak card is supposed to carry a repair card on which defects are noted and from which repairs are to be made, either on-board, at intermediate points, or at designated maintenance points. Inspections revealed that many defective cars carried no repair card; further, the cards in many of those that did bore no notation that repairs were needed. Some repair cards indicated that cars had been dispatched from the designated maintenance point (a train's primary repair facility) in defective condition.

"It is evident that failure to control temperature is related not only to the age of equipment but also to the maintenance effort. . . . Amtrak needs to give much closer attention to breakdowns in reporting procedure and repair operations at designated maintenance points if this chronic problem is to be solved."—ICC Mar. 15, 1978, Report on the "Effectiveness of the (Amtrak) Act"



By Mike Peters for the Dayton Daily News

The Railroads Need Help!

The U.S. railroad system is in bad shape and getting worse. This problem is crucial to rail passenger advocates, since the track conditions needed for good passenger service outside the Northeast Corridor depend on keeping the railroads in good health.

Solutions to the problem are massive increases in public aid to the railroads, or drastic action to recover full costs from the railroads' competitors, primarily barges and big trucks, or some combination of these two approaches.

Increasing aid to the railroads seems somewhat more likely than reducing aid to the competitor, because it is usually easier in Washington to give to the needy than to take from the strong. Massive aid to the railroads, however, flies not only in the face of the President's balanced budget dreams, but also the concern with enriching private companies with public aid.

Public ownership of the rail rights-of-way might be the answer to this concern. Secy. Adams certainly implied this when he said, "if the railroads had . . . contributed their rights of way to the government and (had) the government maintain them—the railroads would now be in the same position as the other modes." (Jan. News). But when Tennessee Governor Blanton called for nationalization of rail rights-of-way following recent disastrous freight wrecks in his state, Secy. Adams was quick to oppose the concept, emphasizing the alleged strong opposition of both railroads and rail labor.

One reason drastic action to help the railroads is not in sight is the failure of the railroads to make either the general public or President Carter aware of the seriousness of the situation. This is partly because some profitable and powerful railroads want to maintain their standing among private investors, as well as to minimize "government interference" in their affairs. But the rail network is only as strong as its weakest link, and some powerful railroads are beginning to change their tune.

Consider the following:

—"Net railway operating income for the nation's railroads dropped to \$347 million in 1977, lowest since the Depression years of the 1930s." This was the opening sentence in an AAR March 29 news release, which also stated: "For the fourth quarter of 1977, net railway operating income dropped to \$98.5 million . . . making it the lowest fourth quarter NROI since 1945, when unusual amortization charges were written off. The fourth quarter decline

occurred despite massive coal movements in the East and South, as utilities stockpiled coal in anticipation of the miners' strike." AAR's purpose here was to put pressure on the ICC to grant a rate increase, but that doesn't lessen the importance of what is said.

—At a recent AAR Board Meeting, a plan to seek \$2 billion in government grants for track rehabilitation was supported by none other than Southern Pacific and Union Pacific. But the Board, led by Burlington Northern and Chessie, rejected the plan and decided instead to come up with a tax credit program.

—Chessie System, Inc., posted a \$67 million loss for the first quarter of 1978, compared with a \$7.4 million loss for the same quarter in 1977. The coal strike and severe weather were the main culprits, but grim projections for the U.S. economy this year left Chairman Hays Watkins openly speculating that Chessie might not be able to turn things around this year.

—Conrail now says it needs \$1.283 billion in U.S. funds over and above the \$2.1 billion already committed. And the Five-Year Business Plan, submitted by Conrail on Feb. 15 to the U.S. Railway Association, put some important footnotes next to that figure. It assumes Conrail will "achieve substantial labor-related savings"; "will not be required to absorb increased costs associated with apparent shortfalls in the Railroad Retirement Fund"; and "will be able to continue the process of plant rationalization when it is apparent that a facility or line cannot make a satisfactory financial contribution under any reasonable circumstance". Secretary Adams initially reacted by saying that Congressional action was not required on Conrail's request this year, but on April 13 Adams supported Conrail's request, adding that a reevaluation of Conrail would be undertaken if any aid beyond the latest request was found necessary.

Some industry observers have believed all along that it is only a matter of time before the government will have to admit that Conrail will never make it into the private sector, and is in fact a nationalized railroad.

The railroads—each and every one—must stop being bashful about selling their advantages—fuel efficiency; reducing highway maintenance; making highways safer—to the public and telling the public what is needed to get the railroads out of the mud and into the black. They must accept what *Business Week* (Mar. 27) called "the likelihood that they will not gain equity by having their competitors taxed" and work on the theory that "Congress may be willing to provide an offsetting subsidy to (them) . . . A railroad subsidy would not raise anyone's freight bill."

NARP Regional Meetings

In the latest round of NARP regional meetings, NARP members have reiterated their desire for *more and better* service—and, since there are more NARP members, have elected 66 directors, up from 50 last year.

Rep. Ronald A. Sarasin (R-CT), running for Governor, rode the train to the Region I meeting. Tom Dougherty, aide to Sen. John Glenn (D-OH), spoke to the Region VI gathering, and Region XII members heard Rich Tolmach of California's DOT.

Region III heard an extensive report from Director Jim Farny on

NARP, through Director James M.S. Ullman of Meriden, CT, and the United Transportation Union jointly sponsored a notice distributed in Connecticut in support of Raised Committee Bill 5714, which would permit development of state-supported intercity rail passenger services.

the work of the NARP energy committee which he formed, while Directors Roy Poulsen and Eugene Skoropowski discussed with Region I their paper, "Energy, Transportation and the Railroads: A Paradigm for New England", which they were to present to the Atlantic Economic Conference in Washington in late April.

Among the many resolutions passed were the following asking:

—Amtrak to establish more attractive family fares (IV);

—Amtrak to improve marketing of Western trains, and to add direct Chicago-Spokane-Pasco-Portland service (XIII);

—city governments with speed ordinances to allow higher speeds to passenger trains since they "are not subject to frequent derailments, explosive potentials, and hazardous . . . due to their lighter weight, shorter length, and superior mechanical construction." (IX);

—Amtrak to "make every effort to improve attitudes of onboard, station and reservation personnel, both Amtrak

When we published our map in the Jan. News, we inadvertently dropped the Kansas City-Omaha proposed route, and the existing Chicago-Dubuque line, and we included Atlanta-Augusta which is not part of our proposal. Also, the Chicago-Kalamazoo segment was printed very faintly; it should be a heavy line.

Also, the Jan. list of Amtrak officials should include Robert E. Gall, Director, Marketing Research as the person to write to about schedule changes, and should have listed fares policy as one of the responsibilities of the Marketing Department.

employees and employees of contracting railroads" and to "renegotiate labor agreements . . . to provide that personnel who consistently demonstrate poor attitudes toward customers either be re-assigned to positions not involving public contact or terminated". (IX);

—Amtrak to use its legal authority to secure the early rerouting through Atlanta of the "Floridian", and with DOT to consider restoring Atlanta-Washington service via Athens, Raleigh and Richmond; Georgia RR to upgrade Atlanta-Augusta service (V);

The new NARP Board of Directors consists of:

I. New England. William Ensign, III, 324 Little River Rd., Westfield, MA 01085; Henry Ferne, II, Daybreak, Box 346, Wiscasset, ME 04578; Thomas A. Kenefick, III, Egan, Flanagan, & Egan, 31 Elm St., Springfield, MA 01103; C.N. Monaghan, 86 N. Main St., St. Albans, VT 05478; Eugene K. Skoropowski, 24 Pine St., Melrose, MA 02176; Samuel E. Stokes, Jr., Alstead, NH 03602; James M.S. Ullman, 95 E. Main St., Meriden, CT 06450.

II. New York. Lettie Gay Carson, Carson Rd., Millerton, NY 12546; G.J. Gerard, 257 Kingsborough Ave., Gloversville 12078; Stephen Linde, 33 Washington Square West, Apt. 11J, New York 10011; George Lovi, 100 Middleton Rd., #6, Bohemia 11716; Charles R. Treuholt, 200 E. 66th St., New York 10021; Philip Weinberg, 34-44 82nd St., Jackson Heights 11372; Rogers E.M. Whitaker, The New Yorker, 25 W. 43rd St., New York 10036.

III. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware. James F. Farny, 12 Squirrel Lane, Newark, DE 19711; William H. Hubbard, II, RD #5, Bethlehem, PA 18015; Edwin C. Hutter, 54 Van Dyke Rd., Princeton, NY 08540; Harry Hyde, Jr., P.O. Box 47, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010; Lawrence T. Joyce, Mounted Route, Enola, PA 17025; Michael Kaplan, La Maison Apts., A-204, 219 Sugartown Rd., Strafford, PA 19087; Richard M. Scaife, P.O. Box 1138, Pittsburgh, PA 15230; Thomas C. Southerland, Jr., 282 Western Way, Princeton, NJ 08540; William L. Staiger, 4229A King George Dr., Harrisburg, PA 17109.

IV. Maryland, Virginia, D.C. Lawrence B. Battley, 2780 N. Quincy St., Arlington, VA 22207; Peter B. Bell, 1913 23rd St., NW, Washington, DC 20008; John D. Heffner, 604 W. Windsor Ave., Alexandria, VA 22302; Joseph F. Horning, Jr. (Treasurer), 1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 714, Washington, DC 20036; Lorena F. Lemons, 14653 Tynewick Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20906; Glen E. Mendels, 5733 Rockspring Rd., Baltimore, MD 21209.

V. N.C., S.C., Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Eastern Louisiana. Charles A. Dunn, 1131 Catalonia Ave., Coral Gables, FL 33134; C. Melville Hazen, 474 Laurina St., Jacksonville, FL 32216; O.F. Hernandez-Campos, 2500 Peachwood Circle (#2), NE, Atlanta, GA 30345; James R. Herron, 2016 North Village Ave., Tampa, FL 33612; John R. Martin, 4183 Paran Pines Dr., NW, Atlanta, GA 30327.

VI. Ohio, Michigan. John DeLora, 709 Ashland, Detroit, MI 48215; Dean E. Denlinger, 2000 Courthouse Plaza, NE, 10 W. Second St., Dayton, OH 45402; William H. Snorteland, 2122 Overbrook Ave., Lakewood, OH 44107; John D. Thomas, 122 Nesbit Lane, Rochester, MI 48063; Robert G. Wickens, 637 N. Abbe Rd., Elyria, OH 44035.

VII. Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Edward H. Bennett, Jr., 332 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago 60604; Ronald Peck Boardman, Jr., 338 Board of Trade, Chicago 60604; James Clark, RR #2, Galena, IL 61036; George E. McCallum, Dept. of Economics, St. Norbert College, West DePere, WI 54178; J. Michael Morrison, 1815 West Touhy Ave., Chicago, IL 60626; Scott Rogers, RR #3, Freeport, IL 61032; William J. Sunderman, Courthouse, Charleston, IL 61920; David A. Schwengel, 615 Decorah Rd., West Bend, WI 53095.

VIII. Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Dakotas. Dan Lovegren, 1445 W. Shryer Ave., Roseville, MN 55113; Stephen Wylder, 449 N. Riverside Dr., #406, Iowa City, IA 52240.

IX. Texas (less El Paso), Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Western Louisiana. James R. Gough, 3025 Glen Haven Blvd., Houston, TX 77205; Patrick L. Mehlich, 13 Gandy Drive, Creve Coeur, MO 63141; John A. Mills, 2825 Burnett Rd., Topeka, KS 66614; M.D. (Dan) Monaghan, P.O. Box 40609, Garland, TX 75040; R.E. (Doc) Waters, Box 845, Wichita Falls, TX 76307.

X. Colorado, Wyoming, Utah. G. Alvin Williams, Jr., 3065 S. Flamingo Way, Denver, CO 80222.

XI. Arizona, New Mexico, El Paso, TX. Charles Montooth, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, AZ 85258.

XII. California, Nevada, Hawaii. Robert W. Glover, 832 Elizabeth St., San Francisco, CA 94114; John H. Kirkwood, 1665 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123; Arthur Lloyd, 20 Arapaho Ct., Portola Valley, CA 94025; Helen R. Nelson, 125 Stonecrest Dr., San Francisco, CA 94132; Philip K. Reiner-Deutsch, 161 South St., Andrews Place #302, Los Angeles, CA 90004; Alfred Runte, 109 Dearborn Pl. #74, Goleta, CA 93017; Fred A. Stindt, 978 Emerald Hill Rd., Redwood City, CA 94061; E.J. (Ed) Von Nordeck, P.O. Box 2768, Riverside, CA 92516.

XIII. Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska. Kenneth McFarling; 7417 S.E. 20th Ave., Portland, OR 97202; Paul Phillips, West 444 21st, Spokane, WA 99203.

At Large. J. Ford Bell, 10,000 Highway 55 West, Suite 450, Minneapolis, MN 55441; F. Travers Burgess, 317 N. 11th St., St. Louis, MO 63101; Richard L. Day, 415 Residence St., Moscow, ID 83843; Dorothy Eweson, Larger Cross Roads, Far Hills, NJ 07931; George Falcon, 9648 Odessa Ave., Sepulveda, CA 91343; Raymond E. Hannon, P.O. Box 6228, Dallas, TX 75222; Oliver Jensen, P.O. Box 620, Fenwick, Old Saybrook, CT 06475; Henry Luce, III, Time & Life Building, New York, NY 10020; Lee E. McIlvaine, 900 Brookwood Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32207; Roy G. Poulsen, 1286 Kingston Rd., Kingston, RI 02881; Robert W. Rynerson, 10716-107 St. #103, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5H 2Z1; George Tyson (Secretary), 1825 N. Forest Park Ave., Baltimore, MD 21207.