



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 9, No. 9 November, 1975

NARP Membership Drive Offers Two Gift Plans

Two special, one-time-only NARP membership plans are available as Christmas gifts. They are offered as part of NARP's campaign for increased membership.

You can give a one-year's Contributing Membership in the National Association of Railroad Passengers for \$5 if you are a NARP member in good standing. If the person receiving your gift renews a year later, the minimum fee (\$10) will be required.

The second big offer includes a copy of American Heritage's big new "History of American Railroads," a 320-page, beautifully illustrated book, written and edited by one of NARP's directors, Oliver Jensen.

The book has recently been offered for sale by the publisher at \$19.95. Anyone on your Christmas list who is interested in trains will love this outstanding publication.

NARP, through a special arrangement with American Heritage, will give a copy of the book with each new Participating Membership (\$25 a year).

Rush your orders now, using form on page 3, so that we can have the books and membership cards delivered by Christmas.

Regional NARP Meetings Scheduled for January

Membership meetings in each of the 12 NARP regions will be held in January, the first such under new by-laws adopted by the old board of directors last year (see December 1974 newsletter).

Full details on the meetings — place, time, date and subject matter — will be printed in the December *NARP News*.

A primary object will be election (or re-election) of directors of the expanded board. It was created by the new by-laws, with each 100 members in a region being entitled to one director. The total is 48, plus the ex-officio positions held by the president, Orren Beaty, and the treasurer, Charles W. Schoeneman.

The Board of Directors, meeting in Chicago last month, voted to permit a variation from the by-laws requirement that all such meetings be held on the second Saturday, January 10 in this case, and while most of the meetings will be on that date, some will be held later in the month. For example, directors in Region V — the Southeast — were all present at Chicago and agreed on a January 17 meeting in Jacksonville, Florida. Other dates and places have not yet been set.

At the request of New England members, the board also voted to shift Fairfield County, Connecticut from Region II to Region I, which now includes all of the New England states.

Proxy voting will be allowed.

However, since several matters relating to NARP policy and financing will be discussed, the directors expressed the hope that as many members as possible will attend and participate in the discussions.

Mrs. Priscilla Williams Young of Wellsboro, Pa.: "We travel all the way to Philadelphia by car (about 225 miles) before we can even board a train, but we love the clickety clack so much and the freedom and sheer enjoyment of being on a train that we do not consider any other mode of travel."

N.E. Corridor, Other Rail Decisions Delayed

Congress returns from a Thanksgiving recess December 1, faced with hard and intensive work to complete major railroad legislation before the end of the year.

Left dangling at recess time were such questions as who will own and operate the Northeast Corridor over which a large volume of Amtrak's service runs; how large a program of upgrading will be undertaken in the Washington-Boston corridor, and how will some threatened commuter services survive?

It is all part of the restructuring of the system of bankrupt railroads in the Northeast, but some details could have long-term effects on passenger service elsewhere.

Best news for passenger service came from the Senate Commerce Committee which favorably reported a bill that includes authorization of \$3 billion for improvement of the N.E. Corridor. The Administration had recommended only a \$1.4 billion program, including new state matching.

NARP opposes matching because the states, burdened with budget crises in general, and new rail subsidy demands (freight branches and commuter) in particular, simply would not come forth with the money.

The House bill (H.R. 9802), which was left unfinished as the Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce recessed, accepted the Administration figure. However, it also approved an amendment by its ranking Republican, Joe Skubitz of Kansas, adding \$200 million for passenger service improvement outside the Northeast. (Other track improvement bills approved by each house earlier, were not acted on in the face of an Administration threat to veto.)

Congress let pass the deadline of November 9 for negative action on ConRail, the new government-supported entity which will replace the bankrupts, so it will take control Feb. 27, 1976. Now the bankrupts, solvent railroads which will take over part of the lines, labor unions, Congress and the Administration are involved in a tug-of-war over implementing details.

One of these has to do with the passenger corridor. Amtrak has been recommended to take over ownership and control — a major step supported by NARP. However, there is some sentiment in the House Subcommittee to delay action on this until next year.

Another detail involves how much Amtrak must pay ConRail for services outside the Corridor. If language in the original House bill (the "working draft") prevailed, the cost to Amtrak would be increased substantially. NARP opposed this, concerned that it might increase Amtrak's costs everywhere. We were assured, however, that this would be removed or modified to protect Amtrak's interests.

NARP staff has closely monitored the whole process, alerting key Congressional staff of passengers' concerns.

NARP efforts to "buy time" for unsubsidized commuter services (See July *NARP News*) appear to have succeeded. The requirement that no passenger services could be discontinued by ConRail during the first 180 days after it begins operation, proposed by Sen. Harrison Williams (D-N.J.), was included in the Senate bill.

The idea won the endorsement of Urban Mass Transportation Administrator Robert E. Patricelli, although he favored use of UMTA funds already authorized, rather than the more appropriate use of new funds for which Senator Williams worked.

If the proposal survives in final legislation, it will be up to the citizens and public agencies along the affected lines to use the extra time to develop the capability to subsidize them if continuation is desired. ConRail cannot provide any subsidy, and after 180 days, state or local subsidy payments must be payable.

NARP Recognizes Fabled

Train Rider "E.M. Frimbo"

Rogers E.M. Whitaker, writer of articles and books about rail passenger travel, has been awarded an honorary lifetime membership in NARP.

Mr. Whitaker was honored during a luncheon at the Chicago meeting of NARP's directors October 25. His *New Yorker* magazine articles about the travels of "E.M. Frimbo, World's Greatest Railroad Buff," have taken readers on almost every kind of passenger train on every continent except Antarctica.

Responding, he warned that rail passenger service in the United States is "threatened by ConRail, the U.S. Railway Association and the present Administration." Work to preserve and improve the service in this country must not lag or falter, he said.

NARP's directors also heard Amtrak's board chairman, Dr. Donald P. Jacobs, discuss plans and policies. Dean of the Northwestern University Graduate School of Management, Dr. Jacobs expressed the board's confidence in Paul H. Reistrup, Amtrak president and chief executive.

Charles Luna, president emeritus of the United Transportation Union and also an Amtrak board member, attended the luncheon. He commended NARP for the part it has played in creation and improvement of Amtrak.

Panelists Support Increased Emphasis On Intermodal Travel

Support for increased emphasis on intermodal travel connections and cooperation between the different modes was voiced by members of a workshop on intercity ground passenger transportation as part of a symposium on the nation's transportation system conducted by the MITRE Corporation in September.

NARP President Orrin Beaty served on the panel, which included Paul H. Reistrup, president of Amtrak; Frederick H. Mueller of the National Association of Motor Bus Owners, and Prof. Edward L. Ullman, an Amtrak director, chairman.

Beaty was critical of material prepared for the panelists in advance of the symposium as being biased in favor of intercity bus service and against rail passenger service.

He said it was his belief that this bias exists in the federal government (executive branch) and that the prepared materials reflected that. He also objected to erroneous or out-of-date statements about Amtrak.

There is a marked tendency to ignore the problems of future fuel supply and the advantages railroads have under these circumstances, Beaty said.

"NARP does not believe it is possible to separate national transportation policy from national energy policy," Beaty said, "...I get the feeling that although lip service is always paid to energy problems, nearly everyone goes right ahead planning as if this year's plentiful supply of gasoline is always going to be available."

Referring to the materials prepared for the symposium, Beaty noted a statement that Amtrak owns nothing but the passenger cars, correcting it by reference to the hundreds of Amtrak-owned locomotives, many of them new, and citing other out-dated information. As for content, he asked:

"Why is electrification of the railroads spoken of so glowingly with regard to the hauling of freight, but no emphasis is given to the advantages potential electrification brings to rail passenger service?"

"Why is Amtrak ridership belittled in a comparison with bus-line ridership by setting passenger totals on Amtrak's limited route system against the far more widespread bus route network on publicly built and maintained highways?"

"What would strict enforcement of the 55-mph speed limit for cars and buses do to the demand for railroad passenger service?"

ICC Proposes Stricter Regulations for Buses

The ICC, responding to its investigations indicating "a clear and present need," has proposed stricter regulations for interstate bus companies and has directed interested persons to submit written statements by Jan. 6.

The proceeding is designated Ex Parte MC-95, Practices of Motor Common Carriers of Passengers (Adequacy of Service, Equipment and Facilities), and the regulations focus on ticket and schedule information, security, terminals, equipment, and special procedures for handicapped, disabled and elderly passengers.

Statements and requests for copies of the proposed rules should be sent to Robert L. Oswald, Secretary, Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, D.C. 20423. Replies to the statements are due February 20.

The President of the National Association of Motor Bus Owners, Charles A. Webb, said that the standards "threaten the financial health of the bus industry, and adoption of the rules in the form proposed would be a disservice to the traveling public."

The Commission said it is not ruling out oral hearings at a later date when the issues have been narrowed. It also noted that written statements seem appropriate initially because many of the individuals who want to participate in the case are elderly or physically handicapped and reside in widely dispersed locations.

CASEY JOINS AMTRAK

Robert J. Casey, editor of NARP NEWS since February, 1973, and executive director of NARP in 1973-74, has joined the public relations staff of Amtrak. His initial assignment is P.R. Manager of the Central Region. Another former NARP executive director, Joseph Vranich, has been with Amtrak since early 1973. Casey will be succeeded as editor of NARP NEWS by Ross Capon, assistant director of NARP.

FARES AND SERVICE

INTERCITY: Amtrak is extending to Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Laredo, its "Week of Wheels", offering its patrons unlimited use of a rental car for a week. This is the first extension of the program beyond Florida.

The plan gives a family or other group traveling between Chicago (or intermediate points) and Texas a week's use of a compact car at the cost of four adult round-trip Chicago-Laredo fares, coach or first-class, with Family Plan discount allowed. Variants of the plan apply to groups smaller than four, and to use of a standard car.

Southern Railway now honors Amtrak's USARAIL Pass.

Effective December 12 (unconfirmed by Amtrak), a new station in Kissimmee, Fla., will replace the present one in Poinciana. Former riders of the 5 AM northbound departure from Washington, discontinued by Amtrak September 14, will have at least a temporary reprieve as the New York-bound "Champion", running a similar schedule, will stop in Washington and Baltimore to receive as well as discharge passengers.

Effective January 1, Amtrak will no longer sell tickets at clergy discount, and the American Railroad Clergy Bureau office will be closed. Tickets sold before then will be honored for the full 6 months limit.

COMMUTER: The ICC will hold public hearings as part of its investigation of Milwaukee Road's petition to discontinue its one weekday round-trip between Walworth, Wisc., and Chicago. Starting times will be 9:30 AM in Chicago on December 9 and 10, and 8 PM in Walworth on December 11. The trains will continue at least until the Commission decides the case, which it must do by the beginning of March.

ACTION BY THE STATES

The Washington Association of Railroad Passengers (WASHARP) is gearing up to support state legislation which could lead to expansion of intrastate service by Amtrak.

State-supported 403(b) service would be authorized by legislation now being drafted for consideration by the state legislature in January.

While critical of some Amtrak service, WASHARP advocates expansion, urging a national policy of no additional discontinuances. It was critical of the ICC for permitting Southern Railway to discontinue some service earlier this year and would remove that power.

WASHARP is suggesting rescheduling and rerouting of the east-west Amtrak trains, "North Coast Hiawatha" to provide service to more populous areas. Ephrata and Wenatchee would lose service under this plan, while Portland, Oregon would be added. Cities losing service would have first call for service under new 403(b) routes if state government approval is obtained.

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In Oregon, meanwhile, plans for state-supported Amtrak service through the Willamette Valley between Eugene and Portland through Woodburn, Salem, and Albany suffered a setback when Governor Bob Straub announced opposition.

Saying subsidization of buses would be cheaper, the governor pulled the project from the agenda of a November state board meeting, delaying any action until January.

The legislature had set aside \$600,000 for an experimental project, and plans called for extending Seattle-Portland trains 796/797 to Eugene. There was opposition, however, and alternative proposals were ordered to be studied. This led to the recent action which was regarded as a virtual death blow to any new state-supported rail service in the state.

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The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has opposed Amtrak's elimination of the North Philadelphia stop of the "Broadway Limited's" New York-Chicago section. In a letter to the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, a department spokesman said that while new riders may be added from the southern part of the Philadelphia area through the stop at the 30th Street Station, "riders from the northern area are needlessly being lost". The state agency urged that the North Philadelphia Station be rehabilitated, with improved access and parking for use by through trains running between New York and Harrisburg and points west.

* * * * *

The New Hampshire Association of Railroad Passengers is

Transportation, Defense Units

Study 'Rail National Defense'

Defense and Transportation Departments are jointly studying feasibility of establishing a "Railroads for National Defense" program, NARP has been told.

According to Maj. Gen. H.R. Del Mar, commander of the Military Traffic Management Command, the conceptual and administrative framework of such a program would be similar to the Highways for National Defense program of the Federal Interstate Highway System.

General Del Mar discussed the program and his ideas during a meeting with NARP representatives in Washington. Mrs. Lettie Gay Carson, a NARP director from New York state, expressed the association's concern over deteriorating condition of tracks and roadbeds and possible abandonment of many light-density branch lines which could have important national security capabilities.

General Del Mar said he and Wilbert E. Canty, of the Federal Railroad Administration, have been designated as representatives of their departments for the proposed program.

Mrs. Carson, accompanied by Orren Beaty, NARP president, also discussed the idea with congressional armed service committee staff members.

supporting action by the N.H. Public Utilities Commission to include a connecting train and bus service for the state in its final system plan. A day train to Montreal with Boston connections has been proposed.

NARP's thanks to NHARP for its efforts on behalf of increased membership in its September newsletter.

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An effort is being made to organize a Minnesota Association of Railroad Passengers. The lead is being taken by Howard J. Davy of 2710 Monterey Ave., S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55416, and by Merlin Marlowe, Rural Route 2, Fairfax, Minn. 55332. Persons interested in developing a state organization should contact one of them. Telephones: Davy, 612/922-6715; Marlowe, 507/426-8179.

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Bad news from Ohio. In spite of extra efforts by the state government and the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, voters early this month turned down State Issue 8, which would have changed the state constitution to remove any doubt about the state's ability to support rail services. Proponents are resuming the fight.

TWO BIG NARP MEMBERSHIP CHRISTMAS GIFT ORDERS

BARGAIN MEMBER

Please send a one-year special gift membership to:

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

I enclose \$5 for each such membership with the understanding that the renewal next year will be at the regular minimum fee of \$10.

RAILROAD BOOK OFFER

I am enclosing \$25 for a one-year participating Membership as a gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

I understand that this offer includes a gift of the new American Heritage book, "History of American Railroads" which will be sent to the new member.

Do not use these forms to renew; wait for your coded renewal form.

'Lake Shore Limited' Well Received; Albany-Boston Schedule Slow

The "Water Level Route" of the famed "20th Century Limited" and the "New England States" returned to Amtrak's map October 31, and Cleveland again has intercity rail passenger service — the "Lake Shore Limited".

Boston-Chicago was designated in 1974 by then Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar as an experimental route, under Section 403(c), and operates also with a New York City section switched in and out at Rensselaer.

For the most part, Amtrak has successfully resolved the station problems, which become particularly difficult when service is allowed to lapse for years. The former stations in Elkhart, Ind., Toledo, Ohio, and Erie, Pa., have been beautifully restored. In South Bend, Ind., Amtrak is sharing the modern South Shore Line station, so that the area is well covered — the South Bend station on the west side of the city and Elkhart to the east.

In Cleveland, a trailer must suffice until completion of a new Lakefront station, for which construction will begin in the spring. An "Inaugural" trip, run October 28-29 to give the route press coverage, was greeted in Cleveland by people carrying placards with messages such as "Don't Judge Us By Our Station". It is tragic that Cleveland Union Terminal, at the hub of the local transit system, including bus routes and two rapid rail routes, could not be used. But it is perhaps unreasonable to expect Amtrak to move against the Mayor (just re-elected), who favored the Lakefront location, and to incur the heavy financial costs associated with use of the Terminal. We hope a return to the Terminal will be made eventually.

Cleveland was also the scene, when the first revenue trips ran, of some bitter demonstrating by bus interests, who feel that Amtrak fares are unfairly low. NARP believes, however, that lower fares are entirely appropriate to help a new service build ridership — especially when that service is handicapped by slow running times and the minimal frequency of one round trip per day. Both intercity and commuter rail experience show that a large percentage of patrons attracted initially by low fares will stick with the service after fares rise to normal levels.

Sadly, however, the running times on the Boston-Albany segment are much too slow, even after taking into consideration the trackwork in progress and the detour forced by the missing 12 miles east from Rensselaer.

In a letter to Amtrak President Paul Reistrup, NARP President Orren Beaty wrote: "We are appalled at the excessive 'slack' in the Boston-Albany segment. . . In the past, New York Central and Penn Central. . . discouraged patronage on the

Boston and Albany route by providing unreliable service (including much of the time when the Amtrak 'Bay State' was operated). Now, the tactic appears to be insistence on such a slow schedule that, while reliability is almost unavoidable, few nonrailfans can be expected to use the service."

Beaty urged "immediate action" to tighten the schedules rather than waiting for the normal spring timetable change, since "the clock is ticking, and the decision at the end of two years will be beyond Amtrak's control, with the Secretary of Transportation given a choice between making the route part of the basic system or terminating service."

The letter also suggested consideration of an alternative route west of Springfield, the Boston and Maine Railroad, which would provide direct east-west service to communities with significant college populations and no comparable bus connections, including Williamstown, Mass., near Bennington, Vt., and Northampton, which has middle-of-the-night "Montrealer" service as the result of an enthusiastic local effort, which included funding of the platform and parking facilities.

Another smaller community, Elyria, Ohio, is one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the "Lake Shore Limited", having turned out a far larger crowd on inaugural day than did Cleveland, and putting about as many passengers on the train so far.

NARP appreciates the hard work which has gone into the restoration of this service, and looks forward eagerly to next summer's trackwork which will permit improved running times. But we cannot overemphasize the need for action *now* on the Boston leg.

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The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers deserves commendation for its efforts to make the new service succeed. Maps and written information on how to find the train stations in Toledo and Lima, Cleveland and Elyria, were prepared and distributed by OARP.

We have already noted in an earlier newsletter the work done by a member of both NARP and OARP, the Rev. Robert G. Wickens, on behalf of the stop at Elyria.

We also want to add our word on the value of citizen action by citing the work of Albert Mladineo of Chagrin Falls, a suburb of Cleveland. His work to get passenger train service restored to Cleveland began years ago and continued unabated through all the discouragements until the "Lake Shore" began service.

NEWS from NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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Vol. 9, No. 9

November, 1975

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The NEWS is sent to all NARP members; minimum membership is \$10 per year.

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