

THE 6:53



issue #5 MARCH 1975
TOM PULSIFER - - - editor
OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Post Office Box 653 • Xenia, Ohio 45385



AMTRAK's NATIONAL LIMITED, the east-west train linking Dayton and Columbus with East Coast cities, is shown here winding through the scenic mountains of central Pennsylvania on the PC route between Altoona and Harrisburg. Powered by two SDP40F-type diesels, the train features a through sleeper between New York and Los Angeles via a Southwest Limited Kansas City connection.

Photo courtesy of NARP

OARP's ANNUAL MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 15
IN OHIO'S NEWEST AMTRAK CITY -- ELYRIA
Best turnout yet for an OARP meeting
Amtrak's Prouty is featured speaker

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Nearly one hundred OARP members and guests in attendance at OARP's annual Winter Meeting (at the Holiday Inn in Elyria, Ohio) heard L. Fletcher Prouty of Amtrak tell them that drastic track improvements will be needed on many Amtrak routes before truly modern, high-speed passenger train operation can safely take place. Prouty, who is Director of Plans & Projects / Public Relations, cited poor track as a main reason that progress is stifled.

Prouty stated that "even the fine new equipment that Amtrak has on order will give a rough ride if the tracks underneath it are in bad shape." "The widely publicized Thompstown(PA) derailment of the Broadway in late December unfortunately emphasizes the fragile and brittle condition of some tracks over which our trains must run each day," said Prouty.

Prouty illustrated his comments with a slide show.

(continued...)

(...continued from page one)

OARP President Dave Marshall urged a call to action for all OARP members to "get involved right where you are in local rail service improvement projects." "This is where you can do the most good," he said. "OARP as a statewide organization can help tie things together," Marshall stated, "but our most effective work is done when our people dig in at local concerns."

Commending his successful work at helping to bring Amtrak to Elyria as an inspiration to others, Marshall introduced Rev. Robert G. Wickens, who hosted the meeting. Wickens spoke briefly on the work at Elyria (see full story elsewhere in this issue) stating that the one important thing is to get local government and civic officials behind any projects.

OARP OFFICERS RE-ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY

Dave Marshall, Rodg Sillars, Dean Denlinger and Tom Pulsifer were unanimously re-elected to their posts as President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, of OARP at the Annual Winter Meeting in Elyria, February 15th, 1975. A complete OARP Directory of elected and appointed officials appears elsewhere in this issue.

INFORMATION
YOU CAN
USE

a
handy
address



SHORT LINES ----- Unless Amtrak has a last-minute change of heart, the Bay State, the only Boston-New Haven train on the Inland Route, will be discontinued between Boston and Springfield on Feb. 28th. The Bay State falls under the 403-b provision.

OARP's Record of Achievement - July 1973 to January 1975 was mailed to all members in mid-January. If you did not get a copy, send us a 10¢ stamp with your request.

CANTON -- Amtrak still plans to build and staff a new station, but probably won't get going until the weather improves. Have patience!

Read the March 1975 Consumer Reports article on TROUBLE IN MASS TRANSIT; Why Can't The People Who Put A Man On The Moon Get You Downtown? Enlightening!

The USRA Final Report on the Reorganization of Railroads in the Northeast and Midwest came out February 26th. OARP intends to submit testimony relative to the feasibility of the 3-C passenger route without alternative routings for freight traffic. The ODOT must come up with a comprehensive rail plan in order to benefit from federal USRA monies to rehabilitate and retain marginal rail lines in the state.

OARP member Rick Priest of Toledo is already hard at work on preliminary details for OARP's map/tip folder for Toledo.

The McIntosh cartoon (Dayton Journal-Herald, July 24, 1974 and reprinted in the Fall edition of "the 6:53") came true! Demonstrating a willingness to forsake the family car and give support to the need for better mass transit, some thirty members of OARP chartered a bus from Miami Valley Lines on Saturday, February 15th, to go to the annual OARP meeting up in Elyria. Members were picked up at stops in Dayton, Springfield, Columbus and Delaware. Those who rode the bus wished they could have taken a train, but termed the venture "very successful".

SPECIAL NEWS!

We are already planning for a SPECIAL EDITION of "the 6:53" to come out in April or early May featuring updated coverage of Ohio's Rail Corridor Plans and other late-breaking news.

ELYRIA TO BE STOP ON AMTRAK "LAKESHORE" ROUTE ----- City Hails GREAT NEWS!
Decision is Victory for Rail Passengers!



When the first train on Amtrak's "Lakeshore" route rolls through Ohio in September, its stops will be Cleveland, Elyria, and Toledo. The announcement of the Elyria stop came December 20th and was met with jubilant headlines and editorials in the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram and the Lorain Journal among other area newspapers.

Initial credit for the push to bring Amtrak to Elyria goes to OARP member Rev. Robert G. Wickens, pastor of Community United Methodist Church in Elyria. Wickens called Amtrak's decision "great news; and I know the people of Lorain County are going to support this." "I

VIEWING the Penn Central Freight station on East Bridge Street, in the Malcomb Manor Urban Renewal Area as a possible site for an Amtrak station are (left to right) Elyria Community Development Director Norm Failing, Amtrak

Cost Analyst Greg Kennedy, Penn Central Track Supervisor Al Kaminski, Elyria Area Chamber of Commerce executive Richard Elliott and Amtrak Assistant Engineer John Cunningham. (C-T photo)

have no doubt that we can beat Canton's record of 6,000 passengers a year," he declared. "We showed that Amtrak service was justified; even lining up many businesses in favor of Amtrak's Package Express Service here," Wickens added.

Another OARP member, Elyria Community Development Director, Norm H. Failing also figured very prominently in the drive for Amtrak, along with Mayor Leonard P. Reichlin and Richard Elliott, manager of the Chamber of Commerce.

Amtrak officials visited several station sites in Elyria on December 10th and chose as the proposed site for the new station the Malcolm Manor Urban Renewal tract at Cleveland St. and Gulf Road. The City is making available the Malcolm Manor site to Amtrak and it remains to be seen what type of station building Amtrak will construct. Amtrak has indicated reluctance to staff the Elyria facility until ridership figures establish a need for a manned station.

OARP believes the Elyria station should be manned right from the start. We are convinced that the stop will be a success due to its ideal suburban location, close to good connecting highways, an Ohio Turnpike interchange, and situated in one of Ohio's most rapidly developing urban areas. OARP feels that more people will use the train at Elyria if proper facilities are provided and the job is done right.

OARP thanks Rev. Wickens and several other OARP members in the Lorain/Elyria area for keeping us posted with copies of the multitude of news stories relative to the Elyria Amtrak service. We expect to report further details from Elyria in our Summer (June) issue of "the 6:53".

BULLETIN! Rep. Wilkowski has invited interested OARP members to testify before his committee hearings on H.B. 64 (State Rail Transit Authority/3-C). Call his Sec'y, Betty Black (614-466-8030). Tell us if you testify.

The 1975 I.C.C. investigation into ADEQUACY OF INTERCITY RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE (Ex Parte No. 277, Sub No. 3) has been assigned for hearing on March 4-7 at 9:30a in Courtroom 4, U.S. Customs Court, 1 Federal Plaza, New York, NY; and March 11-14 at 9:30a in Room 705, 610 S. Canal Street, Chicago, IL, before Administrative Law Judge Robert M. Glennon. Subsequent hearings will be held at later times and places to be set by the ICC with the concluding hearing to be held in Washington, DC. OARP's President and Secretary plan to testify on behalf of the organization if adequate arrangements can be made to do so.

Thanks to L. Fletcher Prouty of Amtrak's Public Relations Department, OARP can now make available a fine set of 8x10 color and b&w publicity photos for local meetings, etc. This set has already been displayed at several gatherings. Members may borrow it by arrangement with OARP's Secretary.

DEAR MEMBERS: OARP needs your help to stay on top of things. Keep those cards and letters and clippings coming in! Due to our ever increasing volume of mail, we can't personally answer all letters, but all are read. We thank you!

A POSSIBLE PROJECT ?

Highway signs directing the passenger to the station. Michigan is ahead of Ohio on this. How can we best go about getting something done? Need expert advice at this time.

A T L A S T ! ---- OHIO MOVES OFF DEAD CENTER ON RAIL TRANSIT PLAN

Apparently tiring of playing with its new toy (the state lottery) and with a new Governor plus new blood in the legislature, rapid rail transit is once again a live topic in the Capital City and elsewhere in the state, especially along the 3-C Corridor. Yes, the great Buckeye State has finally awakened to the fact that several neighboring states (Illinois, Michigan, and New York) are way ahead of Ohio as far as plans and funding for additional Amtrak service and rapid rail transit are concerned.

Gov. Rhodes called February 10th for a \$1.64 billion bond issue to finance a masterplan for transportation. \$55 million would be provided for capital improvements necessary to establish regular passenger train service for both the Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati and the Cleveland-Youngstown-Pittsburgh corridors.

After more than a year of study, the special legislative committee headed by Sen. Anthony Calabrese has recommended the state go ahead on the 3-C project. Total cost of starting up this service could reach \$30.5 million. For specifics, the Calabrese committee recommends four trains a day each way, stops at Dayton and Springfield, a minimum 60 mph operation, fares to be set no more than 10% over those charged by intercity bus lines, use of relatively modern or new equipment, and sandwich and light meal service on all trains. It is recommended that Amtrak be contracted to provide the service under the 403-b provision. Ohio would then pay two-thirds of any deficit incurred.

Rep. Arthur Wilkowski of Toledo has introduced a bill (H.B. 64) to create a seven-member State Transit Authority charged with setting up rail passenger service for the 3-C and later on other corridors in Ohio. Hearings on H.B. 64 are expected to last through March and possibly into April.

OARP URGES YOU TO KEEP ABREAST OF DEVELOPMENTS AND TO VOICE YOUR SUPPORT TO YOUR ELECTED LEGISLATORS. GET YOUR FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, AND ASSOCIATES TO SPEAK UP ALSO. DO IT NOW! SUPPORT IS NEEDED! PLEASE DO NOT PUT IT OFF!

IF IN FACT THE TRANSPORTATION BOND ISSUE COMES TO A VOTE IN JUNE IN A STATE-WIDE ELECTION, EACH AND EVERY OARP MEMBER WILL BE EXPECTED TO WORK AS HARD AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE PASSES.

AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME WE CANNOT AFFORD TO SIT IDLE AND INVITE FAILURE!

NEWS

WASHINGTON, DC ----- Amtrak's Board of Directors has elected Paul Reistrup, Senior Vice President for Traffic of the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad, to be the Corporation's new President and Chief Executive Officer. Reistrup assumed Amtrak's top position March 1, 1975. He succeeds Roger Lewis, who will continue to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of Amtrak.

After the Board action, Reistrup issued the following statement: "I am very pleased that the Board of Directors has given me this vote of confidence and an opportunity to lead Amtrak as the corporation continues to revitalize rail passenger service for America in a time when the demands of energy, economy, ecology and convenience demand such progress. I look forward to working with the men and women of Amtrak and with the Administration, the Congress, the railroad industry, and the labor organizations. I believe in teamwork, and it will be my purpose at Amtrak to run a teamwork railroad from top to bottom with the indispensable goal of providing Americans the best passenger train service attainable."

Reistrup, 42, is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and began his railroad career with the B&O where he rose through the ranks to become Director of Passenger Service. In this post he made a considerable reputation because of his innovative moves to improve passenger service. These innovations included experimenting with discount fares, overhauling the food service program, instituting movies on board the trains, an extensive refurbishing program, and an auto-ferry service between Washington and Chicago.

In 1967 he went to the Illinois Central as Vice President of Passenger Service, later attaining his current position plus membership on ICG's Board of Directors.

WASHINGTON, DC ----- Amtrak has announced a reduction from \$30 to \$20 of the minimum basic coach fare needed to qualify travelers for family plan discounts. The effect is to bring many more medium distance journeys into the range eligible for lower family fares. Amtrak officials said the more liberal formula is an attempt to stimulate more off-peak and leisure travel.

The new tariffs that went into effect February 1 will result in substantial savings for many travelers. The new discounts apply between all cities where the single adult one-way coach fare is now \$20 or more. Family fares do not apply to trips beginning on Fridays or Sundays. In many cases, however, family plan fares are lower than any other public transportation available. Family plan discounts apply to coach and first class travel.

Both AMTRAK NEWS (Jan. 1, 1975, pg. 6) and NARP NEWS (Dec. 1974, pg. 3) made prominent note of OARP's lauding Amtrak for upgrading the operation of the James Whitcomb Riley through Cincinnati last fall.

".... if the past three decades of sprawl have taught anything, it is that new highways do not relieve congestion. They invite more of it -- along with the kind of development that destroys the integrity of the land."

NEW YORK TIMES; December 4, 1974

FROM THE OARP MAILBAG:

.... We took the train from Canton to Minneapolis. Good equipment and food. In St. Paul the engine went off the tracks minutes after it left the Milwaukee Road and started on the BN towards the Minneapolis station. They say this was the third recent derailment in this section of track. The ICC ought to jump on the Burlington Northern! The Canton station and platforms didn't have one light working! All were out. Total darkness.

R.W., Elyria

.... People must have rail transportation to rely upon, as other forms of transportation are not very good at best. Airlines are consistently trying to do away with smaller airports and smaller planes. Trucks pound the freeways to death; many of them have had the right lanes replaced within a very few years at a cost. Railroad rights of way should be financed by the U.S. Government. In this fashion, tracks would probably be maintained to some degree better than they are now.

K.A., Columbus

.... Now with the shortage of gasoline and higher fuel costs, it behooves us to have available a more fuel-efficient means of travel. Our great country is the only one that has allowed its railroads to go to pot. Now we need them.

A.R.W., Cincinnati

.... Ironically, in spite of apathy, disbelief and ignorance, public transportation has got to come. There is no other way out. What with the ever increasing oil shortage much time has already been lost in preparing for this onrushing crisis.

E.H.C., Summerfield

.... With the energy crisis, a revitalized passenger train service is an absolute necessity. Mass transit is the most economical, efficient, non-polluting mode of transport.

D.F., St. Paris

Comments and Opinions selected and edited from the many letters that we receive at OARP headquarters.

.... At the present time, Ohio is falling behind most other states in the field of good rail passenger train service.

J.H.S., Parma

.... We spent 14 hours making the normally 4 hour drive from Dayton to Cleveland on Sunday, Dec. 1st. 12 hours was used up on I-71 from Columbus to Cleveland. At one point we moved 8 miles in 90 minutes. Several times we did not move at all for an hour. And we were a lot better off than many. We did not have to abandon our car, nor were we completely unable to move, except for a period of about an hour (2 to 3am) when we were stuck and waiting for assistance. The snow was not the problem at all; it was the traffic! Those thousands of cars, most with only one or two occupants, created the problems. If one car can't proceed, several thousand behind it can't either. This situation points up the imperative need for passenger train service between Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati. I'm aware you are working on this, and I thank you; but I hope this will encourage you to work harder.

N.B., Cleveland

.... This is an Amish community and most of our traveling is done by bus and train. Amtrak goes through Mansfield but does not stop there. If it would stop we would be very grateful. It does stop at Crestline but the taxi service from here to Crestline is very expensive.

S.G.B., Ashland

.... Sandusky certainly needs Amtrak service. As a senior citizen it would be wonderful to have the service. As it is, older people are "stuck" in the city.

R.W., Sandusky

.... Railroads can provide a passenger mile of personal transportation with one-fourth the fuel used by private automobiles and one-seventh

ATTENTION! CHARTER MEMBERS OF OARP: An invitation to renew your membership will soon be arriving. Please respond promptly. Thank you!

Thank you
in your mail. Please respond promptly.

the fuel used by airplanes. I have many years of experience traveling for both business and pleasure by automobile, plane, train and bus. With good quality rolling stock, operated over a well-maintained roadbed at speeds that are completely practical with modern equipment, the train can provide the best travel accommodations. It is possible to rest and relax or to work while traveling on a train in a way that is not possible with any other mode.

S.T.I., Cincinnati

.... I am still trying to get Washington to roll back the 80,000 lb. truck weights to some sensible limit. Loads of that size belong on the rails, not on the highways!

P.E.H., Cincinnati

.... Ohio has been badly in need of decent rail passenger service since the advent of Amtrak. The Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati Corridor is not by any means all that is needed, but it is the most needed.

P.E.F., Lancaster

.... The long range need includes the repairing and rebuilding of the tracks of many railroads. The government should buy the tracks now and start working on them. This would give lots of employment which would immediately help the economy. It would give the nation a chance to have safe and good rail transportation for its freight, which is so obviously needed; but also better tracks would make passenger service more safe and comfortable. This would encourage people to ride the passenger trains.

E.F.H., Dayton

Ed. Note: We hope to make the OARP Mailbag a regular feature of "the 6:53" from now on.

NEW AMTRAK TRAIN IN MICHIGAN

January 20th was the start-up day of the "Michigan Executive", Amtrak's new commuter run weekdays between Jackson, Chelsea, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Detroit. Our good friends of M.A.R.P. refurbished the old M.C. depot at Chelsea for this service.

SHORT LINES - - - - -

Amid all the rumors and administrative upheaval surrounding the FREEDOM TRAIN comes word that a product of Ohio's own Lima Locomotive Works will be refurbished to power a portion of the train's two-year trek through the U.S. The Lima loco is Southern Pacific 4-8-4 #4449, one of the famous streamlined GS-4 "Daylight" steam locomotives.

Amtrak's James Whitcomb Riley has at last received new SDP40F diesels. Operating practice on the JWR puts one of the new units per six cars.

Due to declining patronage, Auto-Train has revealed that it will cut back its Louisville-Sanford runs to one a week, effective sometime in March. Equipment thus released will go to the heavily used Lorton(VA)-Florida Auto-Train runs.

Regarding the rumor that the Riley would soon return to the PC line between Cincinnati and Chicago; our Amtrak Sales Mgr. in Cinti., J. E. Pollard said there's no official basis to that at all right now. The JWR is safe on Chessie for awhile.

CHANGING TIMES readers noted an excellent article on rail travel in the U.S. (Oct.) and a follow-up letter to the editor from OARP's Secretary (Jan.).

AVOID STRAIN, TAKE A TRAIN bumper-sticker in attractive red & white, featuring the head end of the UA TurboTrain; available from Mr. B. E. Ransom, 2102 Burns Lane, Camden, SC 29020. Write him for price info.

INFORMATION YOU CAN USE:

Ohio State Legislative Information Service has a TOLL-FREE NUMBER:

800 - 282 - 0253

Mailing Address for the State Senate and Ohio House of Representatives:

State House

Columbus, OH 43215

NEW CARS ARE COMING!

The first of 292 new stainless steel non-powered Metroliner-type cars will be delivered to Amtrak this Spring.

Not only will the new coaches ease the current equipment shortage, but will also allow the retirement of many derelict cars now rattling around on some Amtrak Northeast Corridor runs.

(Photo courtesy Amtrak)



An artist's sketch of Amtrak's new Metroliner-type coaches being built by the Budd Co.

NORTHEAST TRANSPORTATION COALITION SETS GOALS

Bulletin #5 of NETC (Box 666, Meriden, CT 06450) reports that NETC is vitally interested in a number of constructive pieces of legislation which would favorably affect rail freight and passenger service in the nation. They are urging congressional support of the following matters:

- 1) MAKE RAIL ROADBEDS FEDERALLY SUBSIDIZED AS ARE HIGHWAYS -- Since railroads are just another form of highway, Senators Weicker, Ribicoff, Hathaway and Hartke submitted legislation that would federalize and up-grade rights of way.
- 2) REDUCE STATE PARTICIPATION TO ONE-THIRD -- At present, states wishing to have passenger service on a special route must guarantee Amtrak two-thirds of the operating deficit. Since a state has to contribute only 10% to a Highway, legislation should be enacted to correct this inequity.
- 3) PUT THE MAIL BACK ON THE TRAINS -- The demise of the American passenger train came with the loss of "head-end business". Amtrak is carrying mail on a few runs, but legislation is needed to require the U.S. Postal Service to utilize the trains more.
- 4) REVIVE DETERIORATED RAILROAD STATIONS -- Since there is not an area in the nation without railroad stations that are badly in need of repair, NETC believes that just as the Federal Government supports airports, so it can appropriate money to fix and revitalize railroad stations, especially ones that are of unusual architecture and preserve our heritage.

On Feb. 10th Amtrak officials ordered the Floridian to be rerouted indefinitely over the L&N-C&E due to too many slow orders on the PC in Indiana. Advertised stops at Evansville, Terre Haute, and Danville are being considered for the Floridian.



UNION TERMINAL SAVED !!

OARP has learned that Federal authorities have given verbal assurance that a \$10.2 million grant will be forthcoming to convert the lower two levels of Cincinnati Union Terminal for city bus maintenance and storage. This paves the way for use of the Terminal as a Transportation Center. The City has mentioned Amtrak as a possible tenant in the future of historic C.U.T.

PASSENGER TRAINS SOUTH - A PROPOSAL

A special research and study committee under the direction of OARP Sec. Tom Pulsifer, working on input from many people, has prepared a proposal for revised Amtrak service linking the Mid-West & Great Lakes area with the South and Southeastern States.

While other groups and individuals, including some of our own OARP members, have prepared very worthwhile and extensive reports for similar service, it was felt that OARP should be represented by a written plan.

The OARP plan calls for three inter-connecting trains on three long-haul routes: Chicago-St. Petersburg via Louisville, Atlanta, and Albany; Detroit-New Orleans via Cincinnati, Louisville, Birmingham, and Mobile; and St. Louis-Miami via Memphis, Birmingham, Columbus, and Albany. Interconnect points, the only places where any switching of cars between trains would be involved, are at Louisville, Birmingham, and Albany, GA. OARP selected routes on the basis of serving the greatest population with the simplest schedule. Tracks of the PC, Chessie, SLSF, L&N, CofGA, and SCL are utilized.

Single copies of the OARP report may be obtained by sending 30¢ in postage to the OARP Secretary. We do not have too many copies of this 15 page document; and ask only those with a definite interest to request copies for study purposes.

OARP UNDERSTANDS THAT... the Bring Back the Trains to Atlanta Campaign (c/o Bob vanWormer, 902 12th Ave, Jacksonville, AL 35265) has done a detailed study of proposed north-south train service through Georgia. The group asks 20¢ in stamps to defray costs of mailing their report.

ALSO THAT... Railroad Magazine (Mar.) ran OARP's Riley Improvements press release which they took from NARP NEWS. AND... a writer mentioned that she saw mention of OARP's Muncie Map in the Milwaukee Journal! The word does get around!

MOVING?

Please notify us at least six weeks in advance of your new address.

Help us keep our records current. A postal card will do, or use POD form 3573, available from your Postmaster and send it to OARP headquarters.

OARP CALENDAR for 1975 is AVAILABLE

All dues paying OARP members are receiving a handy 8½x11" card stock calendar featuring the OARP logo in this issue of "the 6.53". These calendars were distributed to all who attended the annual OARP meeting in Elyria. An OARP member paid for their printing.

Others wishing a calendar should send 20¢ in postage to the OARP Secretary. They will be available on a first come-first served basis. Only 500 were printed and we have about 150 calendars remaining in stock.

RUNNING LOW, but STILL AVAILABLE...

OARP's "Take It Easy; Take the Train" blue ball point pens. They've been popular as hand-outs at meetings! We do not know if a re-order will be made. The same member who paid for printing the 1975 OARP Calendar paid to have these pens printed up for us. Still just a 25¢ donation for each pen. Send requests to the OARP headquarters.

By the way, the donations for items like these go into the OARP "office" postage stamp fund.

IS YOUR ADDRESS (& NAME) CORRECT?

When you grow from a 300 name mailing list to a total of 1500 names in a little over a year's time, things are bound to happen. OARP anticipates a complete revamping of the present poor-man's economy address label system this coming Summer. Let us know NOW if your label needs changes. This will help us a great deal when we finally sit down to re-type (!) all 1500+ names and addresses. And for this we thank you!

Our Jan. 15th copy of Amtrak NEWS told us that Amtrak has announced tentative plans to discontinue the National Limited stop at Wilkinsburg (a suburban stop 7 miles east of Pittsburgh, PA) unless ridership improves. It appears that the minimum ridership criterion for a flagstop is a total of 180 passengers getting on or off the train each month. For the nine month period of Jan.-Sept. 1974 ridership at Wilkinsburg averaged 34 passengers per month. In September ridership had fallen to 17. The news item concluded by saying that if ridership does not show improvement by February 1975, train service to Wilkinsburg will be discontinued in April.

What's wrong at Wilkinsburg? Why won't people use what should be a convenient suburban park 'n ride facility close to a large industrial city?

We believe we know exactly what's wrong---the schedule of the National Limited. According to the printed timetable, train times at Wilkinsburg provide an excellent "commute" schedule to and from all points in central and eastern Pennsylvania. So far---ideal! BUT, with the abominable on-time record of the National, especially eastbound, any local passenger business is effectively discouraged!

This writer was once on the eastbound National when it was five hours late out of Pittsburgh. Now, what person in his right mind is going to wait around five hours for his "local" train?

Finally, we recall the answer that several Amtrak officials gave OARP when asked why train times at Dayton and Columbus had to be in the middle of the night, destroying the once good overnight schedule to and from the east coast. They replied that the schedule was set "so as to provide convenient daytime local service across the state of Pennsylvania."

(continued, next column...)

This writer holds the strong conviction that if you can't run your long-haul trains on time; then the long-haul trains should handle the long-haul passengers and short, manageable local trains should handle the local riders. I am not convinced that the two can easily mix.

Now, at Wilkinsburg, we clearly see the operating practice discouraging patronage; so then Amtrak can say that no one wants the service so that they can then cut it off.

Isn't this the same old story we all heard and experienced so often during the sixties?

NARP BOARD OF DIRECTORS - Region VI western PA, OH, MI - 472 members

- Robert J. Casey Pittsburgh, PA
Public Relations Counsel
- Dean E. Denlinger Dayton, OH
Attorney at Law
Treasurer of OARP
- Robert H. Horwitz Gambier, OH
Professor of Political Science
at Kenyon College
Member of OARP
- James B. Stevenson .. Titusville, PA
Publisher of Titusville Herald
Father of OARP member J. H.
Stevenson of Parma, OH
one director yet to be named

OARP extends its congratulations to our members who have been chosen to serve on the NARP Board. We pledge our complete cooperation with NARP as it moves into its new plan of action in 1975.

BEATY NEW NARP HEAD



OARP extends best wishes to ORREN BEATY, 1973-74 Director of Congressional Relations for Amtrak, as the new President and Executive Director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers. He assumed the lead post with NARP on January 1st. Tony Haswell has returned to his law practice in Illinois, but remains a member of NARP's Board of Directors.

OARP DIRECTORY:

(as of March 1, 1975)

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COLUMBUS/CEN. Dave Lebold, 343 Lynwood Lane, Lancaster 43130

CINCINNATI/S.W. Ron Garner, 4823 Klatte Road, Cincinnati 45244

ACTION AT ASHTABULA -- a direct report from OARP member Bill Hutchison:

"We circulated petitions for an Amtrak stop at Ashtabula and obtained close to 4000 signatures. At the OARP meeting on the 15th of February I presented these petitions to L. Fletcher Prouty of Amtrak. I also presented him with a resolution passed by the City in favor of the stop.

"There have been three newspaper articles so far, along with ads on radio and cable-TV for February 8th which was proclaimed "Amtrak Day" here. On that day I was at Carlisle's Department Store with a display and petitions. On February 5th I was guest speaker on WRSO's Talk-Back radio program and on the 9th our campaign was featured in a news article. At this time I am trying to gain cooperation from county officials for Amtrak service.

"I'm really very happy with the amount of cooperation and encouragement that I have received from the people around town. They really want the service here; in fact, one of the most common statements I've heard is that we are isolated. Presently there is no train nor air service and what bus service there is is being cut back."

OARP commends Bill Hutchison for his efforts and encourages him to keep it up! OARP believes there is a strong case for a stop in the northeastern corner of Ohio. Ashtabula has a geographical advantage with easy access from nearby Conneaut and Painesville and from the Youngstown-Warren area less than an hour's drive to the south.

"LAKESHORE" ROUTE STATIONS - based on the latest information we have:

CLEVELAND - small new lakefront station to be built next to City Hall near 9th St. on PC's freight line.

ELYRIA - new facility to be built on Cleveland St. at Gulf Rd. just east of downtown and on U.S. Route 20.

TOLEDO - the relatively modern Toledo Union Station will be used.

OARP MAP/TIP folders for these cities will be available as soon as all the service details are finalized.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS who have asked us to send them information on NARP:

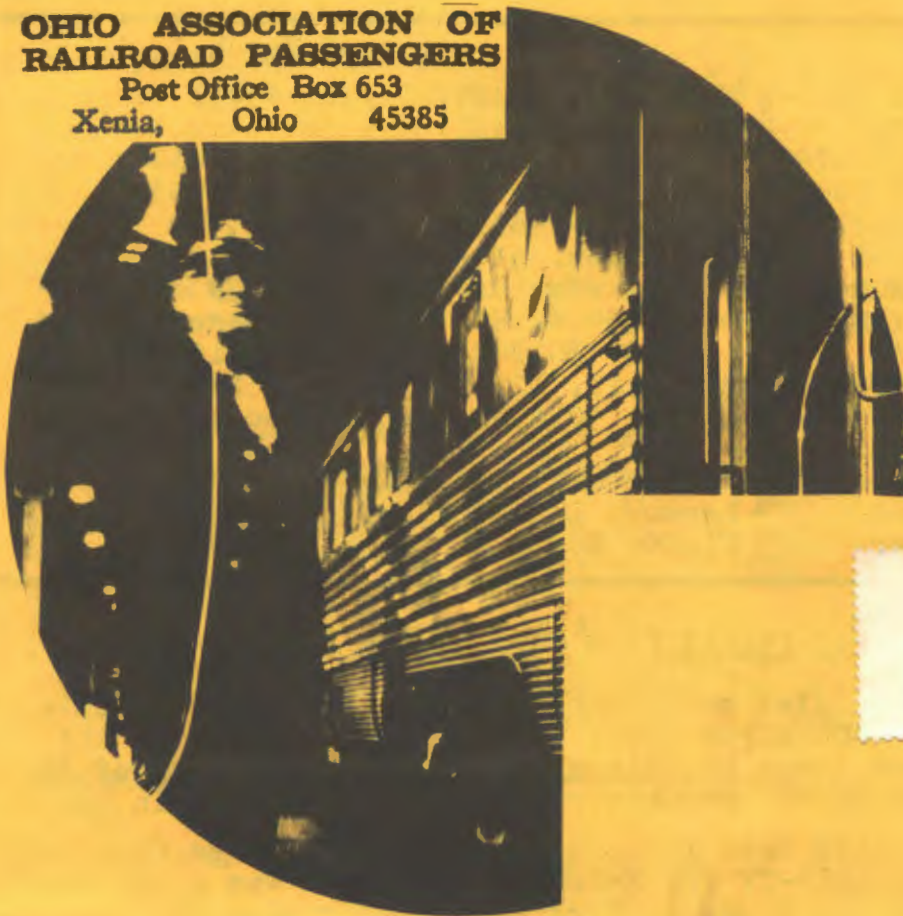
We have determined that you will get fastest service by **WRITING NARP DIRECTLY** for a copy of their **BRAND NEW BROCHURE** and membership blank. OARP did receive a small supply of the brochures, but most were distributed at the Elyria meeting. OARP urges you to also join and support NARP!

SEND TO: 417 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
 Washington, DC 20003

or call: (202) 546-1550

**OHIO ASSOCIATION OF
RAILROAD PASSENGERS**

Post Office Box 653
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FIRST CLASS

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5851 S RIDGE WEST
ASHTABULA, OH 44004



MARCH 25th IS DEBUT DATE FOR AMTRAK'S NEW NORFOLK-CINCINNATI TRAIN! -----

Starting March 25th, Ohioans will be able to travel directly to Bluefield, Roanoke, Lynchburg, Petersburg, and Norfolk by train. Running over the scenic N&W main line through Virginia and West Virginia, the train will also make stops at Williamson, Welch, Narrows-Pearisburg, Christiansburg, Bedford, Farmville, Crewe, and Suffolk. The train will connect with other Amtrak trains at Petersburg (Florida Service) and with the Southern Railway at Lynchburg.

The Norfolk-Cincinnati train will actually operate as a separate train only between Norfolk and Ashland (KY) where it will be combined with the James Whitcomb Riley to provide through service to Cincinnati and Chicago. The new train will be #54 eastbound and #55 westbound.

At press time, Amtrak had not released the definite schedule nor revealed the name of the new service. Announcement of this is expected within a few weeks so readers should watch their local papers for this information.

Amtrak has erected a new passenger station, known as the Tri-State Station, to serve the cities of Ashland (KY), Ironton (OH), and Kenova (WV). We have reported on this in previous issues of "the 6.53". Amtrak has also constructed new passenger facilities in Bluefield (WV) and at Roanoke (VA).

Amtrak will have printed schedules available shortly before the new train begins operation. Amtrak has indicated that the present schedule for the connecting James Whitcomb Riley is expected to remain the same.