

Green Pennant Special

MAY 1991

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.



PROGRAM : TRACKLESS TROLLEYS OF NORTH AMERICA BY RUSSELL SCHULTZ

DATE: MAY 3, 1991 **TIME:** 7:00PM

LOCATION: WELLES PARK FIELD HOUSE
2333 W. SUNNYSIDE AVE.

Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special. It is through this publication that we endeavour to keep the membership informed on happenings in the organization and the transit industry.

*** APRIL MEETING ***

The April meeting of The Omnibus Society of America was held on April 5, 1991, at the Welles Park Field House located at 2333 W. Sunnyside. The meeting began at 7pm.

OSA member Mike Charnota presented a slide presentation on the Chicago Motor Coach Company. Mike has been collecting both color and black and white slides on CMC for a number of years and has amassed a large selection over that time.

The members present traveled back in time to another era to recall the days of "Polite Transportation" on Chicago's Boulevard System.

*** MAY MEETING ***

The May meeting of The Omnibus Society of America will be held on May 3, 1991, at the Welles Park Field House at 2333 W. Sunnyside. The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm.

Our program will be given by Russell Schultz and will be a slide presentation of trackless trolley buses of North America.

Russell is also the author of a book on the trackless trolley coaches of Milwaukee, published by Interurbans Press.

*** UPCOMING TRIP ***

On May 19th, we will travel via the South Shore to Miller's Home Cafe in New Carlisle, Indiana. At Miller's we will partake of a leisurely lunch and then walk around the town or watch the railroad action on the Con Rail main line.

The fare for this excursion will be \$30.00 and will leave from Randolph Street station at 10 am and return at 5 pm. This trip has proven to be very popular so come along and enjoy a day of fun with your fellow members.

*** CTA CORNER ***

IN A FEW WEEKS, CTA passengers who use the

Authority's "Owl Service" (routes operating between midnight and 5 a.m.) may be able to board and get off this service at any corner on the bus route instead of at designated stops.

The revamped operating procedure, aimed at enhancing convenience and security, would waive the current requirement that drivers pull up only at designated bus stops, said CTA Executive Director Alfred Savage.

Savage noted that many people who ride at night take the CTA because they have no other means of transportation and that the policy would allow them a new measure of convenience and safety.

The Chicago City Council, which must give its approval before the proposal can be implemented, is expected to consider it at a meeting on Friday, April 12. If the alderman approve, the policy could be put into effect within a week.

SINCE THE START OF lift-equipped bus service about 7 weeks ago on selected CTA routes out of the 77th street garage, riding by disabled passengers has averaged 2.5 rides a day.

Since February 10, when lift-equipped buses made their Chicago debut on six heavily used routes, 123 rides have been provided to disabled passengers.

There were just six rides the first week, climbing to 21 rides during the second week, then plunging to seven rides during the third week.

The fourth week saw a rebound to 17 rides, and usage has hovered at around that level for the next two weeks. During the seventh week usage climbed to 33 rides, the most so far for the new service.

The CTA says that the average loading time has been

(cont. on page 3).

GREEN PENNANT SPECIAL STAFF

Melvin Bernero - Editor

William Shapotkin - Assistant editor

John LeBeau - Circulation Manager

Andris Kristopans - Staff

William Shapotkin - Reporters

Green Pennant Special is distributed to the members of The Omnibus Society of America at no additional charge and is published in lieu of the regular meeting notice. There is no set frequency of issue.

(cont. from page 2)

CTA CORNER

"two to three minutes" and no higher than seven minutes. Only one lift breakdown has been reported and the CTA has received only a handful of complaints.

CTA officials said they plan to launch a more aggressive marketing campaign once more lift-equipped buses are delivered later this year.

ALL DID NOT GO smoothly the third weekend of the State Street Subway rail and tie rehabilitation - the Monday morning reopening was delayed 4 hours with subway service not resuming until 8:30 am.

The CTA blamed the private contractor it hired for the job for "overestimating" the work that could be completed over the weekend when the subway was closed.

But Monterrey vice president Harold Taulbee said that was not the case. It was agreed we would do more than 400 feet if all went well. The first 400 feet went fine, so we did more. But we could not predict that the new equipment would malfunction on the extra work.

Work on the \$20 million subway project, which began March 30, is supposed to be conducted only from about 1:00 am Saturday to 4:30 am Mondays.

WORK WILL BEGIN THIS spring on reconstruction of CTA's terminal at 4th Street and Linden Avenue, in Wilmette. The \$14.7 million project includes a new, more efficient passenger station that is scheduled to be in operation in the spring of 1992.

The new station will be built about 150 feet east of the present structure, which was completed in 1912. Walls opposite the platform and a canopy overhead will protect riders from the weather and nearby residents from noise and light. Fare collection equipment will include electronic pass readers for CTA's QuikPass and Pace Quik-Tic monthly riding passes.

There will also be an agent-controlled gate for handicapped riders, and ramp access to both station and platform areas.

The new station will have overhead infrared heaters, fluorescent lighting both inside the station and out on the passenger platform and large areas of glass to brighten the station and add to security.

The platform will have windbreaks with safety glass panels and overhead infrared heaters, benches and skylights in the protective canopy.

Outside the station there will be a canopy over the bus waiting area on Linden, with a nearby signal to alert Wilbus drivers to the arrival of incoming trains.

WITH THE REHABILITATION of the ties and rail in the State Street Subway and its closure on weekends, the CTA has issued a new fare form for use during this period

This form is for use in transferring between the Loop elevated station at Clark and Lake and the Congress-Douglas-O'Hare subway station at Lake Transfer.

The form is about the size of the Evanston Express express surcharge ticket and is black printing on light blue paper. An example is reproduced below.

MAR 30	Valid today only	Issued as transfer for 'L' to Subway or Subway to 'L'	Must be surrendered upon request	Penalty for fraudulent use \$200 for each offense	Chicago Transit Authority
			012 066		

*** PACE NEWS ***

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP MAY get a dial-a-ride bus program but the local communities must show a willingness to help pay for it.

Special bus service now is available only to township residents who are in a wheel-chair, legally blind as well as deaf, or to people physically unable to climb three standard bus steps.

This special service serves only people with severe mobility problems, but there is nothing for those who are not seriously handicapped.

There are different financial scenarios for establishing such a Pace program.

(cont. on page 4)

(cont. from page 3)

PACE NEWS

Under one plan, the township or municipality would pay 30 percent of the expense, the participants would pay a fee and Pace would pay the difference. Under another scenario, Pace would pay \$2.25 per ride and the community would pay the rest.

However, such a local dial-a-ride program would not let passengers ride to neighboring communities or townships.

***** KEOKUK, IOWA ? *****

"TROLLEY CARS ARE COMING to Keokuk, Iowa", John Warfield, President of the Keokuk Junction Railway, Keokuk, Iowa, announced April 9. "The first of four cars, purchased from Philadelphia's SEPTA (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority), departed today and is expected to arrive in the Mississippi River city on Thursday, April 11."

"Daily Express, Inc., of Carlisle, Pa., is hauling the car on their 8 axle, 110-foot long trolley hauling rig. Due to its size, the highway trip will be via Roanoke, Va., Knoxville and Nashville, Tn., across western Kentucky through Paducah, and then across Illinois via Springfield, Bloomington, Peoria, and the Quad Cities. This will be the first time in over fifty years that any of these cities have seen a trolley car," quipped Warfield.

Warfield added: "The first car number 161, was built by the famous Philadelphia trolley car builder, J.G. Brill, in 1927 and operated for 63 years on the Philadelphia & Western Division of SEPTA. While working on the P&W the car ran over 1.8 million miles on the 13.5 mile long electric railroad.

"These trolley cars are being brought to Iowa to provide a tourist trolley ride across the Mississippi River. Initially, the ride will be across the half-mile long Keokuk Municipal Railroad Bridge. Later, a second crossing will be offered atop the 4800 foot long hydro-electric dam owned by Union Electric Company. This dam is the largest hydro-electric dam on the Mississippi. The Keokuk trolley terminal will be one block from the docking location of the new \$10 million "Emerald Lady" gambling boat. The "Emerald Lady", one of Iowa's new gambling riverboats, is scheduled to begin service in Early May between Burlington, Fort Madison and Keokuk, Iowa.

"The trans-Mississippi River trolley trip at

Keokuk will be the first time riders can cross the famous river since 1958 when St. Louis abandoned service. Riders in Keokuk will experience a grand view of the Mississippi, and, during winter months, be able to observe the 300 American Bald Eagles as they fish in the Mississippi River."

***** RTA NEWS *****

THE SIX FINALISTS IN the personal rapid transit (PRT) system study will receive a visit from the RTA policy committee before design work begins.

The committee got a rundown the middle of March on the proposals submitted by Addison, Deerfield, Lisle, Naperville, Rosemont and Schaumburg (see the April 1991 issue of GPS for a description of the proposed routes), as well as on the progress of the proposed Central Area Circulator for downtown Chicago. RTA Executive Director Laura Jibben said "a lot of attention" is being paid to ridership and developing a criteria for measuring ridership potential. The difficulty is that nothing like it exists in the United States from which a model could be developed to estimate ridership (Morgantown, W. Va. ?)

Board member Donald Totten asked whether any of the proposals submitted by the six communities would do anything to relieve congestion. The proposed routes, most of which connect hotels and shopping centers, seemed more designed to serve people visiting from outside the area, Totten said.

Because building the PRT system will be expensive, board member Kay Parker asked whether the communities interested in the test project should fund it, possibly with help from business. Jibben said details have yet to be worked out, but local funding is being considered.

The committee will visit each of the six communities to decide whether any will be dropped. That decision will be made in June; another year will be required for the consultants to complete the design.

As for Chicago's downtown circulator, the city is studying several options for the circulator to move people more efficiently. Options range from a bus system to a trolley to a combination of the two, and costs range from \$97 million for the buses to \$590 million for the trolley line.

A decision on the preferred alternative will be made later this year and planning will begin with the help of \$24 million in federal and state funds.