

Green Pennant Special

NOVEMBER 1991 OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

RUN 102

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.

*** OCTOBER MEETING ***

The October meeting of The Omnibus Society of America was held on October 4, 1991, at the Welles Park Field House located at 2333 W. Sunnyside in Chicago. The meeting began at 7:00 pm.

Our program for the evening was a slide presentation by Dave Wilson on transit properties in the Pennsylvania/Ohio area of the United States.

*** NOVEMBER MEETING ***

The November meeting of The Omnibus Society of America will be held on November 1, 1991, at the Welles Park Field House located at 2333 W. Sunnyside in Chicago. The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a slide presentation by Bruce Moffat on his visit to East Berlin this past July on an ERA trip.

With the fall of the Wall, there have been many changes in East Berlin, and more to follow. So come with us as we visit a former communist country and visit one of the major cities of former East Germany.

*** PACE HAPPENINGS ***

THE VILLAGE OF WORTH has voted to continue that suburbs dial-a-ride service for the elderly and handicapped through December 31, 1991. It has been averaging only two passengers per day.

*** METRA NEWS ***

A PROPOSED SETTLEMENT with disabled activists was approved by the Metra board on September 12th.

The accord calls for some improvements that go beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed by Congress last year.

Under terms of the agreement:

* Seventy-two of Metra's 220 stations, considered "key" under the new law will be made fully accessible. Under the principle agreed upon by Metra and the plaintiffs, there will be at least one such station in each fare zone of every Metra line.

* An additional 99 stations throughout the system will be made "functionally" accessible. This means that disabled riders will be able to enter and get to trains, though certain facilities, such as washrooms, will not be altered.

* At least one car on every train will be made accessible. Metra plans to place an order soon for enough cars equipped with wheelchair lifts to make this possible.

* A dial-a-ride program will be provided, allowing disabled people living near unaccessible stations to get to accessible stations.

*** CTA CORNER ***

ON PAGE 4, OUR READERS will find a list of the proposed cuts in bus and elevated service that the CTA has said is necessary to make up their \$57 million budget shortfall in 1992

GREEN PENNANT SPECIAL STAFF

Melvin Bernero - Editor
William Shapotkin - Assistant Editor
John LeBeau - Circulation Manager
Andris Kristopans - Staff
William Shapotkin - Reporters

Please send any news articles to:

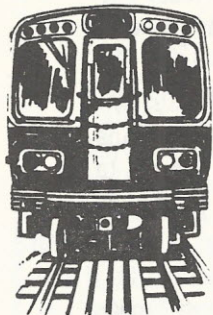
Melvin Bernero
3440 W. Evergreen Avenue
Chicago, IL 60651-2309

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.

CTA Terminal underway

After seven years of planning by the Chicago Transit Authority, construction started in June, 1991, on the \$14-million project to upgrade and improve the CTA terminal facilities for rapid transit trains at Linden Avenue and Fourth Street in Wilmette. Construction is expected to take about two years.

During the planning process, the CTA worked closely with the Village's CTA Special Study Committee made up of elected officials and nearby residents. The committee's recommendations resulted in the planning taking into account the effect of the facility on the surrounding residential neighborhood.



Construction schedule. The construction will start with the erection of an acoustical fence, which will minimize the noise in the surrounding residential areas, and the replacement of the east parking lot along Linden Ave. A new, attractive station will be built about 150 ft. east of the present station. The new station, which will be accessible to the handicapped, will be completed during the first year of construction. The old station will be maintained because it is on the national register of historic places.

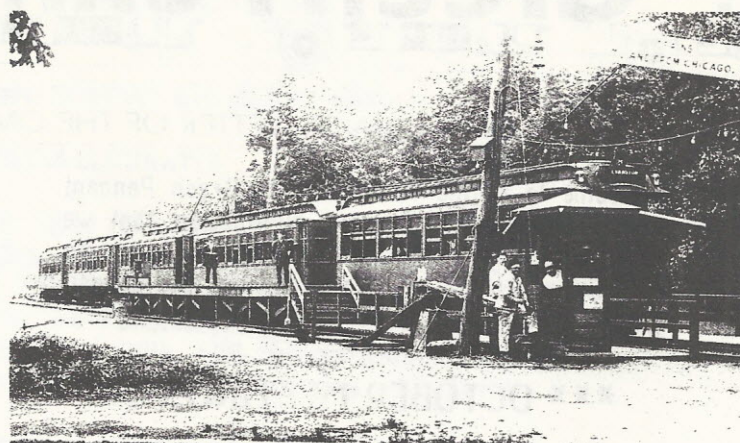
During the second year of construction, the turnaround track in an acoustical tunnel will be completed and all of the trackage in the rail storage yard will be replaced and realigned for a more efficient operation. Parts of the west lot along Fourth Street will be closed during this year as it is rebuilt. Beautification and landscaping will be completed as soon thereafter as possible.

Parking. During the first phase of construction, parking for CTA patrons will be limited as the east lot will be closed. During the second year of construction, parking will be even tighter as parts of the west lot have to be closed for reconstruction.

Off-site parking. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is cooperating with the Village by providing an alternate parking lot during weekdays in their lot on south side of Lake Avenue just west of Locust Road. This lot is located along Wilbus Route 422 and the parking is free. For \$1.50, CTA patrons can board any Wilbus and get a transfer good on the CTA. Coming back, just buy a transfer from the CTA agent and board the bus free. Wilbus operates as early at 6:30 a.m. and as late as 10 p.m. on weekdays. If you have a CTA monthly pass it is good on the buses.

Alternatives. Rather than get in the hassle of trying to find a parking space, patrons are urged to seek other methods to get to the station.

(1) *If you are close enough to the terminal, walk or ride your bicycle. Or, if possible, have someone*



ORIGINAL LINDEN AVE. TERMINAL

The CTA tracks to Wilmette were originally built by the Milwaukee Railroad in 1885 to provide commuter service to Chicago. In 1899, the North Shore Interurban started using these tracks to Evanston. In 1908, the tracks were electrified and the "L" took over the service to Central St. Evanston. In 1912, the "L" moved into Wilmette and built a temporary terminal at Linden Ave. shown above. (Photo courtesy of Wilmette Historical Museum)

drop you off at the terminal.

- (2) *If you live near any Wilbus routes, use the bus. With the transfer privileges between the bus and the CTA, riding the bus will be cheaper than trying to park at the terminal.*
- (3) *For riders living near Green Bay Road, Pace Bus Route 213/214 operates to the Davis St. Evanston "L" station where you can board the CTA.*
- (4) *Persons living in the southern part of the Village could board the "L" at the Central Street station in Evanston or even take the CTA Central St. Bus Route 201 to the station. Motorists can park in the Dyche Stadium parking lot along Central Street, Evanston, by purchasing a pass from the City of Evanston for \$22 per month. Call 328-2300 for further information.*
- (5) *Patrons should consider driving to CTA stations other than Linden Avenue which have parking facilities. The Skokie Swift Dempster St. station is an alternative for residents in the west part of the Village.*

Completion. When completed, the new facilities will be more convenient for the patrons, more efficient to operate, and will lessen the impact of the facility on the surrounding neighborhoods. During the construction period, both the CTA and the Village will be working to keep any inconvenience to a minimum.

BACKGROUND

The present facility was hastily built about 1912 when the "L" secretly moved into Wilmette over a weekend against the wishes of the village fathers. No major renovation has been done since then. Practically all of the track ballast, which reduces the vibration and noise, is gone and the existing tracks are virtually laid in mud. The existing station and yard are inadequate for present-day operations. Many of the railroad cars used in the Evanston Express ser-

vice must be stored at Howard St. and Ravenswood because the Wilmette Yard is so poorly laid out. To store cars in the present yard and to make up the 6-car trains, switching has to start early in the morning and an excessive number of movements are required, all creating noise.

The entire facility is approaching the end of its useful life. Unless it is replaced, the train service to Wilmette would ultimately have to be terminated or drastically reduced. The loss of this vital transportation service could be detrimental to the entire community.

Since virtually the entire facility needs to be rebuilt, the CTA devised a plan which would vastly increase the efficiency, reduce operating costs and improve the service for the riders. Although not required so to do, the CTA staff contacted the Village to obtain its input in the planning process so that the changes would have minimal impact on the neighborhood.

Agreement. Early in the planning process, the Village and the CTA signed a legal agreement which requires that the new facility will not effect the neighborhood any more (and preferably less) than the present facility. In response to this 1985 agreement, the Village hired independent consultants who made measurements of the existing levels of noise, vibration, and electromagnetic fields so that comparisons can be made after the project is completed. If any of these levels is greater, the CTA will have to reduce them to preexisting levels in order to meet the legal requirements of the agreement. The recommendations of the Village's consultants have been incorporated into the planning.

Committee. The CTA Special Study Committee, chaired by former Village Trustee Mimi Ryan, has worked with the CTA engineers and planners, as well as the neighbors, in developing the proposed facility. Many suggestions from neighbors and the committee have been incorporated into the design and the result is a better design both for the neighborhood and the CTA.

At the request of the committee, a traffic and parking study was made which was used in the design of the new facilities. The CTA's plans have been carefully checked by the Village's acoustical and vibration consultant and the CTA's own acoustical consultant, and various noise and vibration abatement measures have been included in the plans at the suggestion of the consultants.

Land-swap. As a result of the neighbors' input, a "land-swap" was made between the CTA, Wilmette Park District and the Village which will result in a better layout for the CTA facilities and yet will enlarge the size of Maple Park to allow for future improvements.

Turnaround curve. One of the most discussed features of the new plan is a turnaround curve at the north end of the yard. The CTA states that it will not be used by trains car-

rying passengers but only to move trains in and out of the storage yards. While the entire new facility will have welded rail with good ballast which should reduce the noise, curves of this type are known to emit noise when a train goes around them.

The Village's and the CTA's consultants have both agreed that this noise will be contained by a concrete tunnel lined with noise-absorbing material that is being placed over the curve.

Plan reviews. The Village Board of Trustees, based upon the Zoning Board of Appeal's recommendations, granted the CTA's request for a special use and variations to modernize and reconstruct the facility. The enabling ordinances impose several conditions on the CTA relating to the amount of parking, electromagnetic fields and measures to limit noise.

In addition, the CTA met with the Appearance Review Commission three times and made numerous changes at their request. These changes will enhance the appearance of the station and the parking lots.

Meetings. Both the CTA and the Village Board have asked the CTA Special Study Committee to continue to function through the construction to provide communication between the neighbors, the Village, the contractor and the CTA.

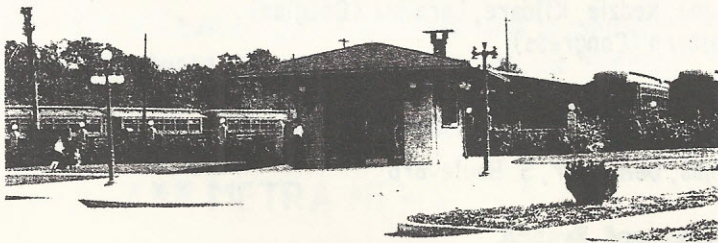
The Committee plans to meet as often as necessary to help coordinate the construction with the residents and businesses in the surrounding area. Interested persons are encouraged to attend the meetings of the CTA Special Study Committee where they can find out what is happening, register suggestions and complaints, and talk to the representatives of the CTA and the construction contractor.

Notices of committee meetings are posted and are mailed to the neighbors. If you are not receiving notices and would like to be on the mailing list, please telephone the Management Services Office in the Village Hall (Tel: [708] 251-2700).

FEATURES OF NEW FACILITY

The existing station will remain but will be put to some other use. The new station will be about 150 ft. east of the present station. The new platform will be enclosed on the east side to reduce noise and provide privacy. It will have access for handicapped persons. The number of parking spaces in the east lot will be reduced to about 71 spaces designated for handicap or permit parking. A "Kiss 'n Ride" facility will be provided in this lot. The new Fourth St. lot will accommodate about 280 spaces. Both lots will be paved with asphalt with adequate drainage. Facilities for retaining storm water on the property will be provided.

An acoustical fence varying in height from 8 to 16 ft. high will surround the entire yard and reduce noises to the surrounding neighborhood. The yard will be lighted with several 40-ft. standards but the light will be directed downward and will not spill off the property. 30-ft. standards will light the parking lots. A turnaround track in a tunnel will be at the north end and have adequate noise abatement features. A canopy will be on the outside of the tunnel to provide protection for patrons walking from the west parking lot to the station. Both parking lots will be extensively landscaped. The bus stop will be located just west of the station entrance, close to where they presently stop. A maintenance pit will be located west of the station platform which will provide facilities for inspection of the cars and for making minor repairs. No heavy maintenance will be done at this facility.



After considerable controversy because the Village had not granted them permission, the "L" built the present yard and station (shown above). They essentially have remained the same since construction in 1914 except that wings were added to the station in the early 1920s. (Photo courtesy Wilmette Historical Museum)

SURFACE SYSTEM CHANGES

BUS ROUTE ELIMINATIONS

1- Indiana/Hyde Park - Sunday service
11- Lincoln - All service
17- Westchester - Weekend
18- 16th/18th - All service
24- Wentworth - Weekend
25- West Cermak - Weekends
31- 31st - All service
33- Mag Mile Express - All service
41- Elston/Clybourn - All service
43- 43rd - Sunday
44- Wallace/Racine - Sunday
50- Damen - Sunday
54A- N. Cicero/Skokie Blvd. - Saturday
56A- N. Milwaukee - All service
59- 59th/61st - Sunday
65- Grand - All service
85A- N. Central - Sunday
89- N. Kedzie - All service
90N- N. Harlem - Weekends
93- N. California - Weekends
97- Skokie - Weekends
99M- Midway Park "N" Ride - All service
110- Marquette - All service
126- Jackson - Sunday
131- Washington - All service
147- Outer Drive Exp. - Saturday
157- Streeterville - Saturday
Culture Bus
201-202 (Evanston Service
203-204 Saturday)

BUS ROUTE CHANGES

6- Jeffrey - Eliminate midday service weekdays
21- Cermak - Eliminate service west of Pulaski after 6:30 pm (all days)
30- S. Chicago - Eliminate service north of 91st Street (all days)
39- Pershing - Eliminate service after 10:00 pm (weekends)
54B- S. Cicero - Eliminate service south of Ford City (all days)
73- Armitage - Eliminate service after 9:00 pm (sundays)
68- Northwest Highway - Eliminate service after 10:00 pm (all days)
84- Peterson - Eliminate service after 10:00 pm (all days)
147- Outer Drive Exp. - Eliminate midday service.

OWL SERVICE CHANGES - BUS

ROUTES ELIMINATED

18-16th/18th; 22-Clark; 27-S. Deering; 43-43rd; 52-Kedzie/California; 55-Garfield; 56A-N. Milwaukee; 60-Blue Island; 67-67th/69th/71st; 74-Fullerton; 80-Irving Park; 88-Higgins; 95E-93rd/95th; 108-Halsted/95th; 111-111th/115th/Pullman; 112-Vincennes; 155-Devon.

ROUTE CHANGES

3- King Drive - Add owl service
20- Madison - Extend to Harlem Avenue
28- Stony Island - Extend to Dan Ryan "L"

ELEVATED SYSTEM CUTBACKS

RAIL ROUTE ELIMINATION

Englewood/Jackson Pk. - All weekend and owl service
Lake Street - All weekend and owl service
Skokie Swift - Saturday service
Evanston - All sunday and owl service
Douglas - All sunday and owl service
Ravenswood Shuttle - All sunday service and service after 8:00 pm saturday - 10:00 pm Weekdays.

STATION CLOSINGS

EDWARD/ENGLEWOOD/JACKSON PARK

Jarvis, Thorndale, Lawrence
North/Clybourn
Harrison, Indiana, 58th, Wentworth, Harvard.

O'HARE/CONGRESS/DOUGLAS

Grand (O'Hare)
Hoyne, Kedzie, Kildare, Laramie (Douglas)
Western (Congress)

Evanston Branch

Noyes, Dempster, S. Boulevard

Ravenswood Branch

Rockwell, Paulina, Wellington