

# Green Pennant Special

RUN 108

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

MAY 1992





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 April 3, 1992, at the Welles Park Fieldhouse, located at 2333 W. Sunnyside in Chicago. The meeting began at 7:00 pm.

The meeting was a slide presentation by OSA member Albert Reinschmidt who presented a short history on transit in the twin cities of Champaign-Urbana from National City Lines through the current mass transit district. We also were taken on a trip to other properties in Illinois and the U.S.

It was a very enjoyable meeting.

### \*\*\* MAY MEETING \*\*\*

The May meeting of The Omnibus Society of America will be held on May 1, 1992, at the Welles Park Field House located at 2333 W. Sunnyside. The meeting will begin at 7:00pm.

Our program for the evening will be trolley bus movies by Don Idarius. Don has shown his movies at other OSA meetings and this will be a continuation of those movies.

### \*\*\* PACE PATTERN \*\*\*

THE SALE OF A 5.3-ACRE parcel at the intersection of Martingale Road and Kimberly Drive, Schaumburg, to Pace, was arranged by CB Commercial Real Estate Group.

PACE plans to develop a \$3 million transportation center that will accommodate up to 10 buses at a time and provide parking for 100 cars. Expected to be open by late 1993, the transit center also will include a passenger waiting area. Sale price for the vacant site, surrounded by Woodfield Mall and One Schaumburg Place shopping centers, was \$2.3 million.

WITH THE RELOCATION OF the Sears, Roebuck and Co. Merchandise Group from the city to Hoffman Estates only a few months away, northwest suburban business leaders are more than a little concerned about how the additional 5,000 workers

will affect traffic.

But officials at Sears and PACE have outlined their plans to minimize the impact on an already serious gridlock problem through van pools, flexible work hours and work-at-home programs.

PACE has agreed to add service from the 54th Avenue rapid transit line in Cicero, the Des Plaines Avenue station on the Congress line and the River Road station on the O'Hare line, as well as from Metra stations in Barrington and Bartlett.

PACE also intends to start a subscription bus service featuring coaches equipped with high-backed seats, restrooms and luggage racks, that would provide service from Chicago's North, West and Southwest Sides and Aurora, Orland Park, St. Charles and other areas.

"It's kind of a nice way to travel", said Tim Grzesiakowski, division manager of marketing and development at PACE. But he would not disclose the fare for the subscription service or the total cost of the PACE transportation package.

And PACE, he added, plans to provide vans using volunteer drivers that would accommodate up to 14 people each.

Bill Rule, Sears' manager of traffic and transportation, said that even with the van pools and bus service, 37 percent of the workers indicated that they intend to drive their own cars to Hoffman Estates.

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### \*\*\* CTA CORNER \*\*\*

MONDAY, APRIL 13, 1992, will long be remembered in the City of Chicago. It was on this day that damage done to the old freight tunnels that run under the Loop and connect with many of the buildings in the area, caused them to flood.

From news reports, it appears that when new bridge pylings were being placed at Taylor street and the north branch of the river (behind the Merchandise Mart) in February, one or more struck the old tunnel, shattering the wall, which finely gave way releasing an estimated 200 million gallons of water into the tunnels and Loop buildings.

This flooding had a major negative impact on the CTA. The Dearborn and State Street Subways both pass under and abutt the tunnels in numerous locations. A major leak occurred just north of Lake Transfer on the O'Hare subway line, forcing the CTA to close both subways to traffic.

The State Street Subway was rerouted over the elevated structure that the Ravenswood and Dan Ryan trains use, while the O'Hare/Congress/Douglas service terminated at Division/Milwaukee on the O'Hare line and Paulina on the Congress line.

To close the gap in the O'Hare/Congress/Milwaukee service, the CTA placed in service shuttle buses between the two points.

There is talk at the CTA that the two subways may not open for another two weeks to a month. CTA president Robert Belcaster has also stated that it may cost the CTA \$20 million to replace the signaling and electric power cables due to damage caused by the water.

THE CLARK-LAKE "L" station is now reachable from the State of Illinois Center or the 203 N. La Salle building, making it the first stop on the Loop "L" fully accessible to people with disabilities.

FACING AN APRIL 1 DEADLINE, nearly 13 percent of the CTA bus drivers had failed to obtain a new commercial driver's license one week before this requirement was to take affect.

Any worker unable to obtain this license was being told that they could be fired. Drivers were given notice that those who don't have a CDL by April 1st will not be allowed to work and will be subject to discharge.

THE CTA WILL OFFER early retirement to 362

salaried employees to help the agency save money.

The offer, attrition and other streamlining will reduce the CTA's administrative staff of 1500 by about 400 as of June, CTA president Robert Belcaster said.

He said raises given some management employees during the past three years were being reviewed, and some would be rolled back.

Belcaster said the early retirement plan would save up to \$6 million a year and would cost the CTA as much as \$600,000 a year for every 100 employees who accept the offer.

### \*\*\* STRAP HANGER \*\*\*

DIESEL BUSES THAT RUN on a so-called ecological fuel made from soybean oil will be tested in Sioux Falls, SD., according to Novamont, a subsidiary of Ferruzzi-Montedison Group. The project was launched March 28. The field tests, scheduled to begin in April, involve two buses that will use what the company calls Diesel-Bi fuel. It will be made by Central Soya Co., another Ferruzzi-Montedison subsidiary, based in Ft. Wayne, IN.

APRIL 3 SAW THE OPENING of limited service on Baltimore's light rail line. Cars 5013 and 5015 had those honors when at 12:02pm they pulled out of the Timonium station on their way to downtown Baltimore and Camden Station for an Oriole baseball game.

Baltimore has been without streetcar service since November 3, 1963, when the last two lines were abandoned.

An estimated 4,400 people - about one in seven ticket holders at the Oriole-Mets exhibition game - rode the new \$446.3 million Central Light Rail Line to the game.

There was standing room only much of the time, and the only parking spaces not filled an hour before game time were at Timonium fairgrounds. Some of the trains were so full by the time they reached stops like Mount Washington or North Avenue, there was no room for more riders. On those occasions, customers had to wait at least 15 minutes for the next train.

Until the official opening of the light rail line on May 17th, service will only be provided on game days and only inbound before the game and outbound



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**STRAP HANGER**

after the game.

THE LIGHT RAIL LINE was not the only form of public of transportation that operated to the game. MARC (Maryland Rail Commuter) operated special trains from Washington, DC, and Brunswick, MD. While the train from Washington carried about 750 passengers, the one from Brunswick only had 18 passengers on board.

A run down on the number of passengers carried by the Baltimore MTA showed that the Metro handled 5,200 passengers, light rail carried 4,400 and park-and-ride buses carried 2,160. There were about 7,000 automobiles driven to the game.

### \*\*\* METRA NEWS \*\*\*

Metra is restricting its policy of accepting CTA weekly and monthly passes while the downtown subways are closed.

Starting May 1, CTA passes will only be accepted from commuters boarding within Metra's A and B zones. Most of Chicago's Metra stops are in these zones.

This policy will prevent riders from the outlying stations from taking advantage of the emergency by using cheaper CTA passes.

The Milwaukee north line and the Chicago & North Western north and northwest lines are carrying about 5,400 more passengers than usual.

The stations where the CTA passes can be used are:

**BN** - Halsted, Western, Cicero, Clyde, LaVerge, Berwyn, Harlem.

**MIL/NORTH** - Western, Healy, Grayland, mayfair.

**MIL/WEST** - Western, Hermosa, Cragin, Hanson Pk, Galewood, Mars, Mont Clare.

**METRA ELEC** - Roosevelt and 18th through 79th, Main Line; all stops, South Chicago branch.

**ROCK ISLAND** - Gresham.

**CNW/NORTH** - Clybourn, Ravenswood, Rogers Pk.

**CNW/NW** - Clybourn, Irving Pk, Jefferson Pk, Gladstone Pk.

**CNW/WEST** - Kedzie, Oak Park, River Forest.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**MAY 2 - OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA** fan trip using an MCTS Gillig bus. Departs Milwaukee Union Station 10:00am, returning 3:00pm (meeting scheduled Amtrak trains from/to Chicago). Will tour new and historic transit facilities around Milwaukee. Trip will feature numerous photo stops and a mid-trip meal stop (individual settlement). Fare \$20 adult (spouse, children under 12, free).

**MAY 15 - RAILROAD CLUB OF CHICAGO** meeting. 7:30pm Bismarck Hotel (171 W. Randolph). Admission \$2.50. Program - "Railways of the Pacific Northwest", a slide presentation by club members on railroading past and present in Alberta, British Columbia, northern California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

**MAY 16 - RAILROAD CLUB OF CHICAGO** dinner trip to "Spaghetti Station", located in former CNS&M depot in Kenosha, WI. Trip departs Chicago's CNW station 5:35pm, returning 11:55pm., making various north side and suburban stops on board a regularly scheduled commuter train. Taxis will transport us to and from the restaurant. Fare \$30 Adult (\$17.50 children under 12). Includes round trip rail and taxi transportation, tax and gratuity. Write: Railroad Club of Chicago, P.O. Box 8292, Chicago, IL. 60680. Phone 708-251-2262.

**MAY 22 - CENTRAL ELECTRIC RAILFANS' ASSOCIATION** meeting. 7:30pm O'Hare Plaza Hotel (5615 N. Cumberland) Admission \$5.00. Program - "Far East Transit", a slide presentation by Raymond DeGroote, Jr. on rail transit in Japan.