



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.

*** JANUARY MEETING ***

The January meeting of the Omnibus Society of America was held on January 6, 1995, at the Welles Park Field House, 2333 W. Sunnyside in Chicago. The meeting began at 7:00 pm.

Our meeting was a slide presentation on the Archer Corridor given by member Stephen Klabish.

*** FEBRUARY MEETING ***

The February meeting of The Omnibus Society of America will be held on February 3, 1995, at the Welles Park Field House, located at 2333 W. Sunnyside, in Chicago. Our meeting will begin at 6:30 pm. PLEASE NOTE NEW MEETING TIME. Beginning this year the park management changed the time that groups using the facility need to leave the property. This time is now 9:00 pm. With this new departure time in effect, OSA has decided to change our meeting starting time to 6:30 pm to compensate.

Our meeting for February will be presented by William Reynolds and will be a slide program on his travels around the state of Oregon in 1994. Hope to see you there.

*** PACE PATTERN ***

With the CTA's abolishment of monthly and weekly passes the beginning of January, Pace has introduced a new Commuter Club Card. This new monthly pass will be sold for \$39 and will be good for unlimited rides on Pace services (a surcharge will be applied on express and premium routes).

As a result of the CTA's decision to eliminate the joint CTA/Pace monthly and weekly passes it was necessary for Pace also to eliminate the fare mechanism.

These \$78 a month joint CTA/Pace passes will no longer be sold. In addition, in order to continue allowing convenient connections between the two services, Pace has restructured the transfer prices for passengers transferring from Pace to the CTA. These transfer prices are based on the new fares adopted recently by the CTA. A CTA/Pace for use during rush hours was reduced 5 cents, from 65 cents to 60 cents. A transfer good during offpeak hours was increased 20 cents, from 40 cents to 60 cents while a weekend transfer was reduced by 5 cents, from 40 cents to 35 cents.

*** METRA RAILS ***

DESPITE RUMORS OF future federal cutbacks in aid to mass transit, the creation of the Wisconsin Central commuter line is going ahead.

The federal government already has obligated \$25 million to the commuter line, and more is expected in 1995 and 1996.

Commuter service on the Wisconsin Central between antioch and Franklin Park and from there to downtown Chicago is scheduled to start in the Spring of 1996.

The full cost of starting up the commuter service is expected to be \$100 million, of which the federal government has agreed to pay \$50 million. The balance of funding is coming from state and local sources, some federal grants and equipment being transferred to the line by Metra.

STARTUP PROBLEMS and initial production difficulties at a newly refurbished manufacturing plant on the South Side has produced a delay of as much as seven months to the delivery of 173 new rail cars equipped with wheelchair lifts.

Metra awarded the firm of Morrison Knudsen Corp., a \$379 million contract in 1992 to build the new cars and rehabilitate 140 aging Metra coaches.

In addition to delays in the new cars, the
(cont. on page 2)

METRA
(cont. from page 1)

schedule for delivery of the rehabbed cars is running as much as two months behind schedule.

Under its contract with Morrison Knudsen, Metra is entitled to about \$9.5 million in late delivery penalties, but the agency would like to get additional cars in lieu of dollars. Negotiations are underway with the manufacturer that could result in Metra receiving as many as 16 additional coaches instead of a cash penalty payment.

Morrison Knudsen has promised to complete delivery of all the new cars under a revamped schedule no later than July 1996, eight months behind the original date. All rehabbed cars also are to be delivered no later than July 1996, two months later than the contract date.

Officials of the company and the rail agency said the Metra contract has brought significant economic benefits to the Chicago area. Nearly 700 jobs have been created here and local companies are being tapped for \$116 million in parts and other supplies.

***** CTA CORNER *****

JANUARY 1ST SAW the elimination of weekly and monthly passes by the CTA.

Both of these passes were eliminated by CTA budget cuts. The Metra Link-up pass will be eliminated the end of January.

The CTA made the cuts to balance its \$773 million 1995 operating budget and to make up for a \$20 million deficit this year.

With the elimination of these passes, the CTA has the distinction of having the highest average fare for a major U.S. city. While the CTA's base fare of \$1.50 is not the highest, such cities as Philadelphia and Cleveland, who also have base fares of \$1.50 or above, continue to offer discounts on passes and tokens. The average fare is \$1.38 in Chicago, \$1.25 in New York and \$1.12 in Philadelphia.

The above fare statistics were revealed last week at a national meeting attended by

transit chiefs from six major cities including Chicago.

Other fare changes that went into effect on January 1st were:

- * Transfer charge reduced to 25 cents.

- * CTA will offer one pass for people with an RTA disability identification card for \$35 a month.

- * Reduced fare transfer charge reduced to 10 cents.

- * On weekends the regular fare was reduced to \$1.25, with reduced fare being 60 cents.

IN A REPORT BY the U.S. Transportation Department, the CTA has \$89 million worth of excess 'L' cars.

The CTA has far more spares than more efficient big-city mass transit systems, and more than the CTA itself kept on hand a decade ago when its fleet of trains was older and harder to maintain, the department's inspector general office concluded.

Auditors discovered that the CTA has accumulated so many spare cars during a period of declining ridership that the agency has a rail car storage program.

Over the past decade, the CTA on average had twice as many cars as it needed to keep the 'L' on schedule during rush hours.

During the decade when the number of spares at the CTA mounted, the authority replaced old L cars, including some that dated to the street car era, with modern trains.

"We find it difficult to understand why a more modern fleet would break down more often," the report said. The CTA countered that high-tech, air conditioned, computerized cars do indeed require more maintenance than it took to keep the older, simpler cars in operation.

As of last year, there were 284 spare cars in the CTA fleet of 1,168 rail cars. That worked out to what the auditors called a spare ratio of 32 percent.