



Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special, the official publication of The Omnibus Society of America.

Through this publication we hope to keep our readers informed of events happening in the transit industry in Chicago and other cities in the United States.

## • APRIL OSA MEETING

The next regular meetings of the Omnibus Society of America will be on April 2, 2004, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will be start at 7:30 pm.

The hospital is on California near Foster. Winona is one half-block south of Foster. By public transportation, take the 92 Foster to California. From the Ravenswood Brown Line, take the 93 North California from Kimball, get off after it turns onto California from Foster and walk back south. Or, take the 11 Lincoln from Western; get off at Carmen (One block south of Foster) and walk west on Winona.

There is some parking on California and Winona. The parking structure is on the west side of California just south of Foster.

Our program, "Vintage Chicago Transit" will be a slide presentation by noted transportation photographer Mike Charnota providing a look back at vintage motor/trolley bus, streetcar and rapid transit operations in and around Chicago.

## • CTA HAPPENINGS

**Brown Line rush hour service** north of Belmont Avenue was disrupted on February 21st as a result of a Saturday morning fire that destroyed cables at the CTA electrical substation at 4650 N. Lincoln Avenue. It is one of three substations that provide 600 volt current that powers the Brown Line branch. As a result of the damage, the CTA did not have sufficient power to support the heavy demand that is required to run six car trains every three minutes, as occurs during a normal rush hour period.

Instead, during the morning rush hour period, southbound trains departed from the terminal at Kimball every six minutes and made all stops along the line. Because there were fewer trains that filled up faster, additional southbound trains were added at Belmont via the Purple Line.

For the evening rush, northbound Brown Line service operated on normal schedules to Belmont, with trains operating every three minutes during the peak. Once at Belmont, only every other Brown Line train operated all the way to Kimball.

This operation was in effect until Monday morning's rush hour service on March 1st. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com))

**If the fire in a CTA substation** on February 21st did not disrupt service on the Brown Line enough, a fire in a building at 2634 N. Wilton on February 26 delayed both the Red and Brown Lines during the afternoon rush period.

The CTA's investigation revealed that required safe work practices used for welding and cutting were not followed. At the time, a team of six ironworkers, including a foreman and helper, was working along the Red Line between Wrightwood (2600 North) and Diversey (2800 North). The work assigned to them involved preparing to replace steel parts (flange angles) by chiseling off rivet heads with air tools and, occasionally, using an acetylene torch to burn out rivets that could not be removed using the air tools. This is routine maintenance work that is performed regularly on all of the CTA's elevated structure.

A Chicago Fire Department investigation concluded that sparks from a cutting torch ignited combustible material on the rear porch of the building. The fire marshal concluded that the cutting torch was misused. The fire marshal also observed that no protective curtain was visible at the scene to assist in keeping sparks from coming into contact with nearby structures. The CTA requires fire resistant shields or guards to be used when cutting or welding is done near other structures.

The ironworkers were charged with violating CTA rules of conduct and safety procedures. Two were suspended for 10 days. A third was suspended for 15 days; he was one of two ironworkers using the cutting torch just before the fire. And an ironworker helper/fire watcher was suspended for 15 days. He will be prohibited from working as an ironworker helper and fire watcher for two years.

The foreman was discharged for not ensuring that the proper safety procedures were in place. And an ironworker, who was one of two using a cutting torch, was terminated for improper use of a cutting torch and because he tested positive for the presence of a controlled substance (cocaine). ([www.chicagotransit.com](http://www.chicagotransit.com))

(Cont on page 2)

# Oak Park Shuttle – Free Half-Hourly Service Starts March 1

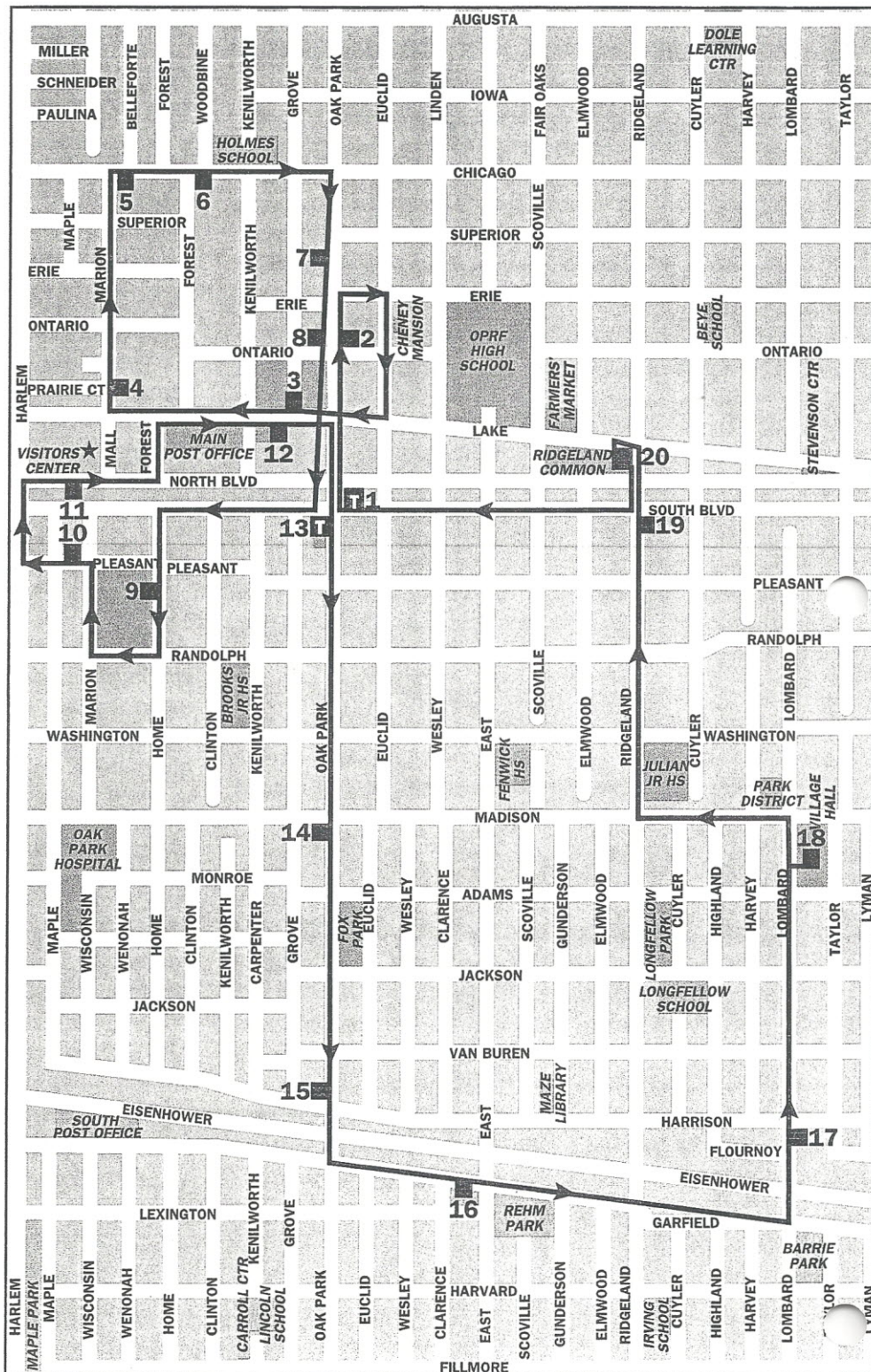
The Oak Park Shuttle is a free transportation service of the Village of Oak Park. Oak Park Shuttle passenger vans operate on an hour-long looped route connecting major points of interest throughout the Village stopping at set locations every half hour. The Oak Park Shuttle Service operates from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm, 7 days per week, except major holidays. Shuttle 1 starts at Stop 1 10:00 am and ends at Stop 1 at 5:00 pm. Shuttle 2 starts at Stop 1 at 10:30 am and ends at Stop 1 at 5:30 pm. To reduce travel times, transfers between Shuttle 1 and 2 occur on every hour and half hour at Oak Park Ave. and South Blvd. (between Stops 1/13). Shuttle times, routes and stops may be adjusted from time to time. Please contact 708.615.1830 for the most up-to-date information, to seek assistance, ask questions or make comments.

## Route & Schedule

Transfer=**T**

Stop		Arrival Times*	
		Shuttle 1	Shuttle 2
1	<b>The Avenue District</b> CTA Green Line El-Oak Park Stop <b>T</b> to PACE 311 & Shuttle Stop 13	:00 & :30	
2	<b>Hemingway Museum</b> Cheney Mansion <b>T</b> to PACE 311 incl. to Wonderworks Children's Museum at North Ave. & Elmwood	:02 & :32	
3	<b>Oak Park Public Library</b> Scoville Park	:04 & :34	
4	<b>Downtown Oak Park (DTOP)</b> Visitors Center	:07 & :37	
5	<b>Chicago/Harlem/Marion Business District</b>	:09 & :39	
6	<b>Frank Lloyd Wright Home &amp; Studio</b>	:11 & :41	
7	<b>Hemingway Birthplace</b>	:13 & :43	
8	<b>Write Inn</b>	:16 & :46	
9	<b>Historic Pleasant Home</b>	:19 & :49	
10	<b>Carleton Hotel</b> S. Marion Business District	:21 & :51	
11	<b>DTOP Intermodal Station</b> <b>T</b> to PACE 305/309E/313E, METRA UP West Line, CTA Green Line El-Harlem Stop	:25 & :55	
12	<b>Unity Temple</b>	:28 & :58	
13	<b>Oak Park Township</b> The Avenue District <b>T</b> to PACE 311 & Shuttle Stop 1	:30 & :00	
14	<b>Madison Business District</b> <b>T</b> to PACE 391/320	:35 & :05	
15	<b>South Oak Park Ave./Ike Business District</b> CTA Blue Line El-Oak Park Stop <b>T</b> to PACE 311	:38 & :08	
16	<b>Conservatory</b> Rehm Park & Pool CTA Blue Line El-East Ave. Entrance (Oak Park)	:42 & :12	
17	<b>Harrison Business District</b> CTA Blue Line El-Lombard Entrance (Austin)	:46 & :16	
18	<b>Village Hall</b> Madison Business District Park District HQ, Gymnastics Center	:49 & :19	
19	<b>CTA Green Line El-Ridgeland Stop</b> <b>T</b> to PACE 315 & CTA 86	:52 & :22	
20	<b>Ridgeland Common</b> Oak Park Health Clinic Farmers' Market (Saturdays, June-October) <b>T</b> to PACE 309/313	:55 & :25	

\* Arrival times are minutes past the hour.  
Actual times may vary slightly.



In Partnership with PACE Municipal Van Pool Incentive Program



(Cont from page 1)

**At the March Chicago Transit Board meeting,** CTA President Frank Kruesi reported the Chicago Transit Authority ridership tracked regional trends and decreased by 2.8 percent in 2003 – the first decrease in six years. Total ridership for the year reached 444 million for bus and rail combined, or 13.2 million fewer rides than in 2002. The CTA's sister agencies, Metra and Pace, have also reported losses of 1.9 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively. Currently nearly one in 10 Metra customers and four in 10 Pace customers make part of their journeys on CTA.

The decrease follows five consecutive years of CTA ridership gains. From 1997 through 2002, CTA ridership increased by 9.1 percent. Job losses due to the struggling economy appear to be strong factors in the 2003 decline: the largest decreases were experienced during the weekend rush hours.

January 2004 ridership also declined as a result of the continuing economic slump, a much colder January compared to 2003 and the first CTA fare increase in 12 years. Ridership for the month decreased by 3.3 percent compared to January 2003. fare models predict ridership loss any time fares increase. The CTA structured its increase to minimize ridership losses and, as anticipated, more customers purchased multi-day passes, whose prices remained the same. Use of both the 7-Day Pass and 30-Day Pass increased compared to the prior month. In January 2004, 7-Day Pass use increased by 11 percent and 30-Day Pass use increased by 7 percent over December 2003. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com))

**Traffic on the southbound Dan Ryan Expressway** was diverted to the right shoulder on Monday, March 22nd, between 84th and 8th Streets to make room for a Chicago Transit Authority rail project requiring the temporary relocation of Red Line train tracks to the left shoulder of the highway.

Crews on Sunday, March 21st, closed the northbound 87th Street on-ramp to the Ryan (Interstate Highway 90/94). The ramp will reopen within 10 weeks, officials said. Northbound lane shifts are scheduled for Wednesday, March 24th. ([www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com) March 22, 2004)

**The Chicago Transit Board** on March 11, 2004, authorized the CTA to execute a term sheet with Mills Corporation for the financing and development of a subway station at Block 37. The final negotiated agreement must also be presented to the Board for its

approval. Project advancement is contingent upon the City of Chicago reaching a formal agreement with Mills for the overall redevelopment of the site.

Ultimately, the new CTA station would serve as the main terminal for a new, premium express rail service to both O'Hare and Midway Airports. Construction of the terminal and an underground track connecting the CTA's Blue and Red Lines would constitute the first phase of the development of the express train service, but CTA would begin operating local rail service to O'Hare and Midway upon opening of the retail portion of the development.

The cost of the transit center is estimated at \$213.3 million of which Mills Corporation would pay \$40.9 million. The remaining \$172.4 million is expected to be funded by the CTA and the City of Chicago. The CTA expects to use capital funds for up to \$130 million and is working with the City to finalize an agreement for the remaining \$42.4 million. The CTA's share represents 4.4 percent of funds in the CTA's five-year capital plan. Over the life of the current capital plan, CTA's total neighborhood-specific investment will be 6.5 times greater than downtown-specific investments.

As a public/private project, the transit terminal is eligible for low-cost, long term financing through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA). The CTA will work with Mills to apply for this financing.

Kruesi added that because it is the only vacant parcel between CTA's Dearborn and State subways, the Block 37 site makes possible a track connection project that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive. By comparison, the recently completed temporary World Trade Center subway station for Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) trains in New York City cost \$300 million, but the estimated cost for the planned permanent center is \$2 billion, and Lower Manhattan's underground Fulton Street Transit Center project is projected to cost \$800 million.

Construction of the Block 37 station would constitute the first phase of the overall development process for the express train service. Subsequent phases will proceed as funding becomes available. Conceptual plans envision a premium amenity, premium fare airport express service that, in cooperation with airlines, could accommodate a future full service air terminal with ticketing, passenger check-in and baggage checking.

(Cont on page 4)

(Cont from page 3)

## CTA

The next step is for Mills Corporation to also approve the term sheet. Once that occurs, the CTA and Mills will develop final transaction documents, which will have to be approved by both Mills and the Chicago Transit Board.

## • METRA MATTERS

**The feeder bus service** provided by Pace to commuter train stations in the suburbs has been abysmal failure, serving only 3 percent of Metra riders, and a new effort to improve bus-to-rail connections faces a lot of roadblocks.

Fifty-eight percent of Metra customers get to the train by driving. In the outer-ring suburbs, up to 90 percent of Metra riders drive to the stations, said Patrick McAtee, Metra senior director of planning, real estate and development.

Metra officials are well aware that growth in train ridership is directly tied to the availability of parking spaces. This year, 14 suburbs have requested additional parking that would cost \$26 million, and Metra is trying to fulfill as much as it can.

But the strong focus on increasing parking capacity – Metra estimates 35,000 more spaces will be needed by 2010 – threatens to hold back any potential increases in bus-to-rail commuting, which has been one of the more difficult transit markets to serve.

Indeed, Metra's parking-expansion campaign and Pace's attempt to make feeder buses successful seem to be working at cross purposes.

Nonetheless, Metra chairman, Jeffrey Ladd is pledging support for retooling Pace's feeder bus service, including even repainting some of Pace buses so they look like Metra's trains, to lure more people out of their cars and onto buses for the trip to train stations.

Pace hired a consultant to map strategies and potential locations to test a more streamlined and reliable bus feeder service aimed at attracting riders – perhaps one day up to 25 percent of all Metra customers.

Park-and-Ride transit facilities do keep a lot of cars off the Chicago area's expressways and toll roads. But Metra and the suburbs spend up to \$10 million annually laying asphalt when the money could instead be invested in improving the commuter rail service. It costs \$3,500 on average to build one parking space in a service lot and up to \$18,500 per space in a multi-level parking deck, according to Metra planning officials ([www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com) March 22, 2004)

## - CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

In cooperation with the various rail and transit enthusiast organizations meeting in Chicago, we present this "Calendar of Events".

Apr 9. Chicago Chapter – Railway & Locomotive Historical Society meeting. 7:00pm. The Chicago Temple (77 W. Washington – Pierce Hall (lower level auditorium). Admission is free. Program – ***"To be announced."***

Apr 16. The Railroad Club of Chicago meeting. 7:30pm. The Chicago Temple (77 W. Washington – Pierce Hall (lower level auditorium). Donation of \$3.00 requested for non-members. Program – ***"To be announced?"***.

Apr 17. Kenosha Streetcar Society. ***"Saturday excursion in Kenosha, WI"***. From 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Leaving from McCarthy Transit Center, 724 54th Street. Fare of \$12 for members and non members. For the first half hour a "fishbowl" bus will travel over former Kenosha trolley bus and streetcar lines. Alternate Johnstown and Chicago streetcars (availability pending) will be used following. Photo stops throughout the afternoon.

Apr 23. Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting. 7:30pm. 205 W. Wacker Drive Suite 200 (Securities Training Corp). \$5.00 admission for non-members. Program – ***"North Shore Line"***, a presentation by John D. Horachek.

An online version of our Calendar of Events is available, courtesy of the Shore Line Interurban Historical Society, at [www.shore-line.org/calendar.html](http://www.shore-line.org/calendar.html)