



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.

The Omnibus Society of America is happy to unveil its new website "www.osabus.com". At osabus.com we will be posting upcoming fan trips and meetings information, as well as membership information.

Please visit our site when you have a chance and give us your opinions and comments.

• OCTOBER OSA MEETING

The next regular meetings of the Omnibus Society of America will be on October 1, 2004, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

The hospital is on California near Foster. Winona is one 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, "Transit Travels", will be a slide presentation on city bus transportation in the United States by Melvin Bernero

• CTA HAPPENINGS

Friday, September 10, saw the final run under wire on the CTA Yellow Line (Skokie Swift). The honors fell to Run 594, crewed by Operator/Motorman (?) Darwin Walker.

All service on the branch is now operated off of third-rail, just like all the other CTA lines. So, another era comes to an end in Chicago.

Anti-terrorism patrols have begun security sweeps of Chicago Transit Authority trains to look for suspicious packages and passengers.

Chicago Police and CTA security said they wanted to protect the city's elevated train system against terrorism similar to a deadly March train bombing in Spain. Islamic militants with possible links to al-Qaida are blamed for planting 10 backpack bombs on four commuter trains in the attack that killed 191 people and wounded more than 1,600.

While there have been no threats specifically targeting Chicago or the CTA, officials said on September 13, they wanted to reassure passengers the city will be proactive to prevent an attack.

"It lets riders know we are out there trying to harden the target, so their commute will be safe", said Cmdr. Ed Gross, who heads the Police Department's public transportation division.

The sweeps began August 30, officials said. Four eight-member security teams, including K-9 units, target randomly selected stations, stopping every train to search every car. The average search takes three to five minutes.

The sweeps were originally planned to last until the November 5 presidential election, but will likely continue past that date, Gross said. (www.chicagotribune.com September 14, 2004)

Donkin' Donuts added a concession stand at two L stations and has plans to open three more this month and seven later this year as part of a systemwide move to add convenience and amenities to CTA train stops.

More than snack shops, the round of refurbished station stores will be home to newspaper stands, photo processing and shoe repair stands and express mail stores at 33 stations.

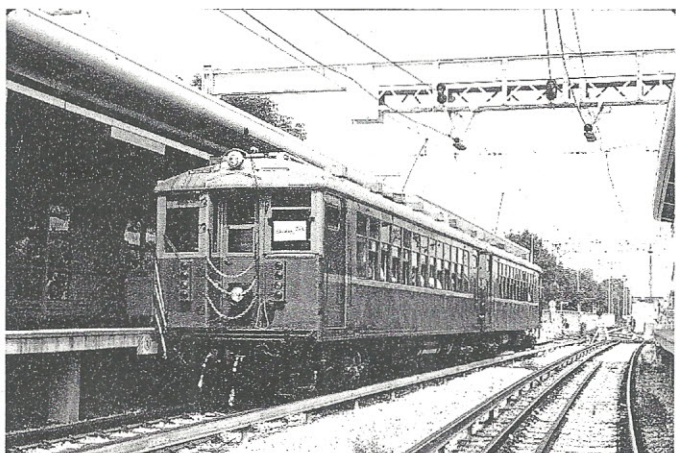
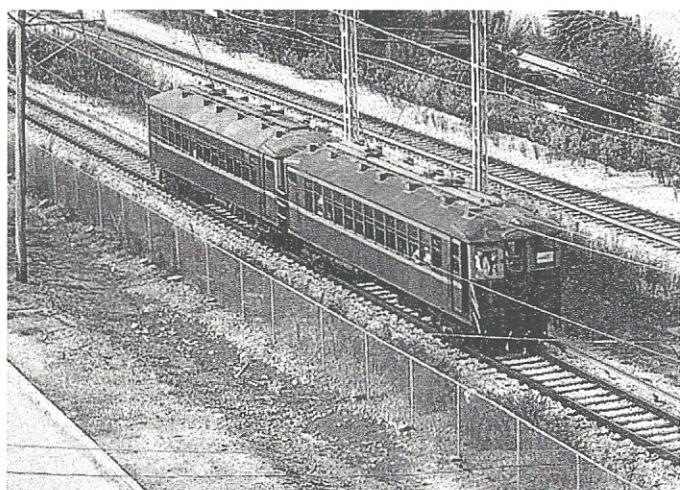
The concession stand improvement program, which started in 1997, offers vendors long-term leases that include provisions to make building improvements and paying market-rate rent.

CTA concession areas earmarked for opening are scheduled to receive \$4 million in renovations, agency officials said. In 2004, the CTA has already collected \$785,000 in rent from existing concession stands. (Chicago Sun-Times September 8, 2004)

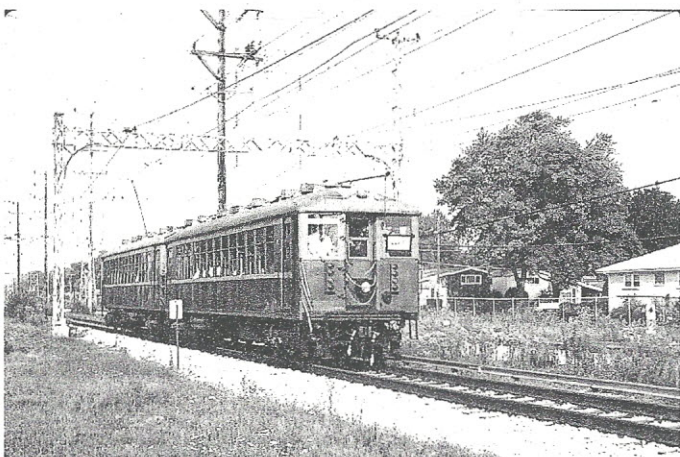
All bus and rapid transit service, including rush-hour operations would be subject to cuts starting January 2 if the General Assembly fails to provide more money to the CTA, the agency's president said on September 22.

(Cont on page 3)

Here are some photographs taken by J. Terrell Colson on the CERA 4000 Skokie trips operated on Sunday, September 5, 2004.



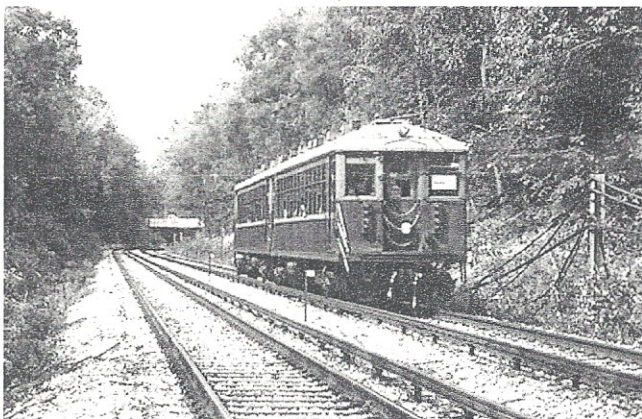
CTA 4271-4272 at Dempster Terminal of the Yellow Line.



CTA 4271-4272 in Skokie.



OSA member Bruce Moffat was the motorman for all three trips.



CTA 4271-4272 photographed in the cut in Evanston.

Again, I would like to thank J. Terrell Colson for allowing us to use these pictures in The Green Pennant Special.

(Cont from page 1)

CTA

While details of the cuts are not expected to be revealed until next month, CTA President Frank Kruesi said they would be "massive," CTA Chairwoman Carole Brown added, "There will not be a CTA rider that is not affected."

The board voted to hold three public hearings on the proposed service cuts next month. The hearings tentatively were scheduled for October 12, 19 and 25. The board picked October 27 to hold its annual budget hearing but pushed up the start of it by two hours, to 4 p.m., because the board expects a high turnout.

The CTA is projecting a deficit of up to \$100 million next year.

For months, agency officials have said the state-ordered funding formula for the CTA, Metra commuter agency and Pace suburban bus system is outdated, and the General Assembly needs to change it.

Officials have been meeting with legislatures to make their case and say they have had a receptive audience.

While some have said it was unlikely the legislature would take up the issue during its brief fall veto session, Kruesi said the last changes to the Regional Transportation Authority Act were made during a November session.

Kruesi and Brown were optimistic the legislature would address the transit funding issue, given the massive service cuts they said were likely if it does not. (www.chicagotribune.com September 22, 2004)

• PACE PATTERN

Pace held a public hearing to discuss the possible discontinuance of Route 892, which provides weekday express trips from East Chicago, Indiana, to the UPS facility in southwest suburban Hodgkins for employees who work the sunrise sort. The meeting was held on Thursday, August 26, at the East Chicago Public Library, 2401 E. Columbus Drive in East Chicago.

Route 892 was launched in July 2001, funded by the consortium of East Chicago agencies through the East Chicago Housing Authority. That funding source has ended, and the route is not carrying enough daily riders to support continued service. Route 892's farebox recovery rate, which is the percentage of operating costs covered by rider fares, fell to 10 percent in the first

quarter of 2004. Pace's system average for farebox recovery is 40 percent, and the agency's minimum standard is 20 percent. Only 50 passengers use route 892 each weekday. (www.pacebus.com)

Pace Route 550 Big Timber/North Randall in Elgin began operating expanded midday service on August 23 to better serve passengers and businesses in town. The service improvement is in response to customer requests for midday service that Pace received through an on-board survey.

Route 550 debuted in August 2003, initially providing weekday rush-hour trips between the Elgin Terminal and several businesses along Big Timber and Randall roads in northwest Elgin. Three midday trips were added in June that operate from the Elgin terminal to the intersection of Davis and Holmes roads. Those trips were extended to serve the entire route. The businesses that will benefit from the new service include Matsushita/Panasonic, Bank One, Country Inn and Suites, and several Northwest Corporate Park companies, including Motorola.

The northbound midday trips depart the Elgin Terminal at 9:45 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. The southbound trips depart at 10:15 a.m., 11:44 a.m. and 1:44 p.m.

Also effective August 23, the scheduled operating times of the other Route 550 trips experienced minor adjustments for better schedule reliability. Much of the data used to change the times comes from Pace's new Intelligent Bus System, which allows real-time monitoring of bus performance and provides valuable field data.

Adam Kerman has supplied the following information concerning the Pace North Shore Initiative. For those members with internet access, here are three links that will provide information on the initiative.

http://www.pacebus.com/sub/initatives/north_shore/ns_default.asp

Detailed information about the proposal (requires Acrobat Reader)

<http://www.pacebus.com/pdf%20Initiative%20Presentation.pdf>

<http://www.pacebus.com/pdf?NS%20Handout.pdf>

Pace has proposed comprehensive changes affecting most bus routes in the north and northwest suburbs, many to take effect with the March bus pick. It is proposed to through-route 250 with the 220 Des Plaines-to-O'Hare segment, with a significant improvement in headways on the former 220 segment, (Cont on page 3)

(Cont from page 2)

PACE

and the 208 Golf Road bus with the 209 Des Plaines-to-Woodfield segment, resulting in doubling of the 208's frequency to half hour middays and evenings and significantly more service on Sunday. 290 Touhy would be extended to the Rosemont "L" station (delayed until the June pick). Historic bus routes like 210 would be eliminated and routes like 212 and 220 assembled in the wake of the failures of the Glenview and Evanston Bus Companies would be cut up. New service would run to The Glen redevelopment of Glenview Naval Air Station (but Glen Town Center itself won't be served directly) while most service through downtown Glenview would be eliminated. Lastly, a new weekday Route 211 is proposed to fill in the Crawford/Pulaski and Main Street gaps in service.

Pace was motivated to do the North Shore Initiative in the wake of recent CTA changes to its Evanston routes which were made without coordination with Pace, especially the new Route 205 that mostly duplicates Route 212 between Davis Street and Old Orchard,

Pace held two rounds of public forums at which there were extensive objections to the loss of the 210. The 210 has a number of loyal riders between Glenview and North Michigan Avenue (a market badly served by Metra) willing to pay the extra fare and unwilling to give up their one-seat rides. The 210 also serves riders from west Glenview using it to feed into the Glenview Metra station and seniors from Skokie making occasional medical trips to Glenbrook Hospital. There are also riders making work trips between Glenview and Skokie that would be too difficult to make on remaining Pace routes if the 210 were withdrawn. Finally, there are riders from Skokie and Lincolnwood using the 210 to feed the Ravenswood "L" at Western/Leland. There isn't a big market for midday and Saturday shopping trips to Lincolnwood Town Center, but then, there isn't a big market for any part of the route.

At the August Pace board meeting, it was strongly hinted that if there's too much pressure to retain some or all of the 210, then the 211 will not be initiated; the two routes would have similar numbers of service hours.

The proposal would significantly affect Route 212, splitting it into three segments attached to other routes. Pace would abandon the route between Old Orchard and Davis Street, leaving the market to the new weekday-only 205, which would eliminate service on Golf Road on Saturday. The Glenview Road segment between Harms Road and Skokie Blvd. would be abandoned.

Route 422 would be extended to the Cook County Court House on Golf Road near Harms Road and then pick up the 212 segment to downtown Glenview and Waukegan Road as far north as Willow Road, turning west on Willow, then running south through The Glen and the through-routed with 228 Harlem. The entire route would be signed as 422.

Route 423 would provide all-day service to Kraft Headquarters in Techny and then pick up the Willow Road to Northbrook Court segment of 212. Today's 212 riders between Northbrook and Glenview or the former 228 will need to change buses on Willow Road somewhere near the closed landfill.

The very first shift 212 trip from Howard Street to UPS in Northbrook would still be run.

Route 421 Wilmette Avenue will lose all midday and Saturday service, retaining only school trips to New Trier West and rush-hour commute feeders to Linden. The three route variations would be eliminated: East Lake Avenue to downtown Glenview, Frontage Road to Northfield Plaza (office complex), and Willow Road to Kraft in Techny. 423 will continue to serve Northfield Plaza, and Kraft will get significant new service.

The Saturday-only Route 204 will be eliminated. Pace kept the route even though CTA eliminated the weekday route.

Route 254 will be eliminated. Saturday-only service run on a similar route to the weekday-only 54A North California service (without the diversion to the Skokie Swift bus terminal or court house service).

The 220 Central Road segment between downtown Glenview and Golf Mill will be eliminated. Downtown Glenview would lose route segments approaching from four directions: 210 from Glenbrook Hospital, 210 from Chicago, 421 Lake Avenue, and 220. The 212 from Northbrook Court will require a transfer between new 422 and 423 on Willow Road. The remaining routes – 422 portions of former 212 and the 422-228 through route – will no longer loop on Glenview Road. The traditional transfer point, now on the bridge over the tributary to the north branch of the Chicago River, will no longer be served.

When 290 picks up the O'Hare segment of 220, headways on the former 220 portion will be significantly improved. However, it will no longer loop through the passenger terminal area to pull into the bus terminal in (Cont on page 5)

(Cont from page 4)

PACE

The parking deck next to the O'Hare Hilton. Instead, its terminal will be the People Mover terminal in Parking Lot E, which should keep the bus out of a lot of congestion. This suggestion came from the public.

Other less significant changes: 213 will be extended several blocks north into downtown Highland Park, 226 will divert from Oakton Street to make connections in downtown Des Plaines and then return to Oakton. The east end of the route, east of Harlem, will get more service.

The changes to 230 Touhy (extending it to Rosemont CTA "L" station) won't take effect till the June pick. 240 and 241 will be adjusted to make up for the loss of 290 service between Harlem/Higgins "L" station and downtown Park Ridge.

None of these changes are final till they are final. Public hearings will likely be held in October. Will the 210 be saved? Will something less disruptive be done with the 212 segments? Will Pace start 211? Stay tuned. (Above article submitted by Adam Kerman)

• RTA MUSINGS

The Regional Transportation Authority board approved a funding plan on Friday, September 10, that anticipates an additional \$134.5 million in state revenue for Pace, Metra and the CTA, saying more public support is needed for mass transit.

At the same time, the board cautioned the state legislature that, if it does not go along with the funding request, it should not give more money to one transit agency at the expense of another.

"It would be counterproductive to cannibalize one service board increase funding for another service board," said Dwight Magalis, chairman of the RTA's Finance Committee.

The unanimous vote gives transit officials the advantage of having bipartisan and suburban/city support as they head to Springfield this fall to ask for the additional funds during the November veto session. Whether the General Assembly will heed their request is unknown, but CTA Chairwoman Carole Brown remains hopeful.

"We have to be optimistic," said Brown, and RTA board member. "We know they are dealing with a lot of

different issues. We just hope we are going to be one of those things on the plate."

Indeed it was Brown who proposed developing a funding plan that would include additional state revenue at an RTA meeting last week. The CTA has issued dire warnings about its financial situation, saying it would make major service cuts or slow capital improvements if it fails to secure new state dollars.

While Brown had the support of the city board members when she proposed her amended funding plan, she surprised her suburban counterparts at last week's meeting. Since then, the board reached a unanimous agreement that is similar to Brown's proposal.

The ordinance approved on Friday, September 10, asks Metra and Pace to follow the CTA's idea of preparing two budget proposals—one that counts on the additional state funding and the other, which reflects current funding levels.

If the additional \$134.5 million is approved, the CTA would approve \$82 million, Pace would get \$17 million and Metra would receive \$35 million under the plan approved September 10.

Rocky Donahue, Pace's director of government affairs, backs the idea of additional state funding for public transportation but said "the devil is in the details."

"We definitely support more funding for transit but we have to see where it comes from," he said. "To reallocate the existing pie for the benefit of one service board over another doesn't make a lot of sense to us."
(www.chicagotribune.com September 11, 2004)

• METRA MATTERS

Officials from Metra joined the Village of Schaumburg recently to break ground for its new \$3 million commuter rail station at the Schaumburg stop of the Milwaukee West Line.

Located at 2000 S. Springinsguth Road, nearly 27 miles from the line's terminus in downtown Chicago, the current small station will be replaced with new and larger facilities.

With approximately 1,600 boarding each weekday, Schaumburg ranks as the 16th busiest among 225 Metra stations outside of downtown Chicago. It is also the busiest stop on the entire Milwaukee West Line (Cont on page 6)

(Cont from page 5)

METRA

The 18-month project includes construction of a new 3,600 square foot depot, platform resurfacing with installation of tactile warning strips, and new platform lighting.

The project also includes a new commuter shelter, washrooms, ticket office and vendor space.

The Schaumburg project is funded by the Federal Transit Administration, The Illinois Department of Transportation, the Village of Schaumburg and Metra.

Boller construction of Waukegan, IL. will build the new facility.

Metra recently opened new parking facilities at the Gresham and 103rd Street-Washington Heights commuter station on the Rock Island District, increasing parking at each location almost 100 percent.

Daily parking is available for \$1 at each location. Furthermore, it will help to relieve parking at nearby Beverly Branch stations and to mitigate congestion during the Dan Ryan reconstruction project.

At Gresham, an all-new 162-space parking lot was added south of 87th Street, on Genoa Avenue. This may attract commuters from the nearby Brainerd and 95th Street stations, as more parking is available.

Metra's 103rd Street-Washington Heights station has a new 150-space parking lot located east of Vincennes Avenue, between 103rd and 105th Streets. The new and expanded facility replaces a gravel lot previously used by commuters.

The combined cost of these projects is \$1.8 million, funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

- CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

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

Oct. 13. Twentieth Century Railroad Club meeting. 7:00pm. Electricians Union Hall (600 W. Washington Blvd) Admission \$3.00. Program - *"To be announced."*

Oct. 8.. 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."*

Oct. 8. Kenosha Streetcar Society meeting. 7:30pm.- 9:45pm. Immanuel Methodist Church (54th/Sheridan - 1-1/2 blocks east of the Kenosha Metra/UP Train Station), Kenosha, WI. Donation asked of non-members: \$5.00 Program - *'Chicago streetcars, rapid transit, and Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee movies from the 1950's,'* by George Kanary.

Oct. 15. 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 - a slide presentation by Harold Edmonson

Oct, 22. Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting. 7:30pm. 205 W. Wacker Drive Suite 200 (Securities Training Corp). Admission is free. Program - Jeff Srivver will present a program on future plans for expanding and improving the 'L' in Chicago.

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