



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.

Visit the Omnibus Society of America website at www.osabus.com. At osabus.com we will be posting upcoming fan trips and meeting information, as well as membership information.

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

The OSA is offering for purchase photo DVD's containing scanned images of slides and photographs from the collection of Melvin Bernero.

The DVD's contain close to 300 images each and the current offerings consist of: CTA buses (color and black & white on one DVD); Northern Illinois (color and black & white on one DVD); CTA/CSL streetcars (black & white) on two separate DVD's; CTA "L"/Subway (color and black & white on one DVD); Transit Properties of Wisconsin (color and black & white on one DVD); Chicago Trolleybuses (color and black & white on one DVD and Bus Wraps (color on one DVD).

All DVD's are priced at \$15.00 and can be purchased at any OSA meeting from Melvin. We are also offering them by mail.

All funds raised by the sale of these DVD's go into the OSA general fund to help support the Omnibus Society of America.

• DECEMBER OSA MEETING

The December meeting of The Omnibus Society of America will be held on December 1, 2006, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Ave, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 8:00 pm.

Our program for the evening "Seattle Transit," will be a slide presentation by Ed Montejano on motor transit in and around Puget Sound.

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.

The terms of two OSA Directors are up this year and all members in good standing will find a ballot in this issue of Green Pennant to vote on filling these two spots.

Vote for just **TWO** people, Vote for either both of the listed candidates; one of the listed candidates and one write in; or none of the listed candidates and two write ins.

If you vote for more than two people, your ballot will not be counted. So remember vote for **TWO** people only.

You can either mail the ballot to the address on the ballot or turn it in before the start of the December meeting.

Half of the November mailing of Green Pennant was lost in the mail so this issue is being remailed to all members. It is easier to re-mail it to all members rather than find out who did not get their copy.

Also, in this mailing you will find the rules governing the OSA auction that we will be holding at the December meeting. The auction was to be held in November, but since half of our mailing went missing many members did not know the auction was being held. So the OSA board decided to hold it again in December.

• INDUSTRY NEWS

BusCon, the annual light and medium-duty bus expo, was held October 23-25, 2006, at Navy Pier in Chicago. Among the exhibitors were ElDorado, with its new EZ-Rider II low-floor bus for Pace, and a 40' Axess low-floor; Optima; ABC Bus, the exclusive U.S. distributor for VanHool, with an AC Transit A300K; Navistar International, who hosted a "ride & drive at Soldier Field: (cont on page 2)

(Cont from page 1)

INDUSTRY NEWS

Cobus: and Rexhall Industries, who is marketing FAW/Taihu buses from China in the U.S.

Michael Pompili has graciously allowed OSA to reproduce photos that he had taken at BusCon in Green Pennant Special.



ElDorado EZ-Rider II Pace 2602



Interior of Pace 2602



Cobus airport ramp shuttle



ElDorado Axess 40' low-floor bus



ElDorado Axess interior

More photos are on page 8

• CTA CORNER

A CTA transit card vending machine will be installed at Metra's LaSalle Street station to accommodate commuters who use both Metra and CTA.

The CTA board approved the agreement with Metra on Wednesday, October 17, 2006. The transit card machine will be installed by the end of the year at the station, 414 S. LaSalle, which serves Metra's Rock Island District Line.

A CTA transit card vending machine and a visitor pass vending machine were installed near the Metra ticket counter at Union Station this year. CTA card vending machines will eventually be placed inside all downtown Metra stations, officials said. (www.chicagotribune.com October 18, 2006)

Another 200 new CTA buses will hit the streets, and an equal number of 15-year-old buses will be retired, under a \$74.4 million bus-purchase deal that the Chicago Transit Authority board approved Wednesday, November 8, 2006.

The bus order increases the CTA's purchase of New Flyer buses to 650 vehicles since a contract for a base order of 265 buses was signed in February. Currently, 276 New Flyers are in service at the CTA.

The CTA has purchased 1,400 new buses from different manufacturers since 2000.

The New Flyers are equipped with low-emission engines to reduce pollution.

Twenty of the 650 new buses are diesel-electric hybrids, powered by both diesel engines and electric motors to further reduce emissions and improve fuel efficiency. CTA expects delivery of the hybrids to begin by the end of the year.

Also, Wednesday, the CTA board approved the reappointment to the board of transit agency Chairwoman Carole Brown. Brown receives a \$25,000 annual salary for serving on the CTA board. She also receives \$25,000 for serving on the RTA board. (www.chicagotribune.com November 8, 2006)

The festive CTA Holiday Train will make its debut Saturday, November 18 spreading holiday cheer to CTA customers.

Now in its 15th year, the six-car train is decorated with thousands of multi-colored lights and features a flat car in the middle that carries Santa and his reindeer. Car interiors are decked out with bows, garland, red and

green lighting, and hand poles wrapped to look like candy canes.

Debuting on the Red and Purple Lines, the Holiday Train will travel various CTA rail lines in November and December as part of regular rail service. Normal CTA fares apply.

The train will run between approximately 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekends and 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays (schedules for each individual line will vary), and will make stops at all stations along the respective routes.

November 18 – 19
Red and Purple Lines

November 24
Loop Elevated and Blue Line

November 25
Blue Line

November 26
Pink Line

December 1
Blue Line

December 6 – 9
Green Line

December 13 – 16
Brown and Orange Lines

December 18
Red Line

December 19
Purple Line Express

December 20
Red Line

December 21
Yellow Line

(www.transitchicago.com November 9, 2006)

• PACE PATTERN

Starting the last week of October, Pace riders began seeing the first so-called suburban-friendly buses – smaller, more comfortable vehicles than most of the transit agency's existing fleet.

The new blue buses are also more economical than larger buses and burn biodiesel fuel, which is 10 percent soybean oil, making their exhaust cleaner. (Cont on page 6)



2006 Annual Christmas Pizza Party

- When:** Saturday, December 2, 2006
- Time:** 5:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M.
- Where:** Immanuel Methodist Church, 54th & Sheridan Road, Kenosha, WI.
- Directions:** From I-94, go right at second Kenosha exit, Wisconsin Route #158 (52nd St). East to Sheridan Road. Turn right (south) two blocks to church. Parking available at both west and east lots. Side entrance is at north side of building.
- Dinner Served:** 6:00 P.M. until 6:30 P.M.
- Entertainment:** Streetcar videos, while sipping hot apple cider.
- Menu:** Pa's Famous Kenosha Pizza, beverage, and dessert (hot dogs for kids who don't like pizza.)
- Cost:** Members \$5.00, non-members \$8.00, children under 12 years, free.

Candy Cane Special

Come ride with Santa on two Christmas decorated streetcars with free candy canes for all the kids. Santa will be on one car, and Mrs. Santa will be on the other car, with live music. Watch Scrooge argue with the old time conductor about the 25¢ fare being too high.

- Time:** 1:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M.
- Fare:** 25¢ – Board streetcars at the Transit Center (one block east of the Immanuel Methodist Church) or at any stops along the line.

Kenosha Christmas Tree Lighting

- Time:** 4:00 P.M.
- Place:** Kenosha Public Museum (west side and south of fountain) 5500 1st Avenue--on the streetcar line.
- Listen to Christmas Carols and watch as Santa lights the city Christmas Tree.

2006 OSA Auction II
Friday, December 1, 2006
7:15 PM – 8:00 PM

Several members did not receive prior notification of the OSA Auction held at the November membership meeting. To correct this error, the auction will be repeated at the December meeting. Members are encouraged to participate and bring one or more friends to the December meeting. The non-members admission charged is waived.

1. Sellers must be 2006 OSA members in good standing.
2. Sellers will be charged a \$10.00 participation fee.
3. Starting at 7:15 PM, sellers will have 15 minutes to set up their merchandise on the auditorium stage.
4. Starting at 7:30 PM, buyers will have 30 minutes to view and purchase any merchandise on display.
5. All merchandise available for sale must be hobby related.
6. All transactions are between the sellers and the buyers.
7. Buyers need not be OSA members.
8. Transactions to be completed by 8:00 PM.
9. During the time the auction is in progress, venders will not be allowed to display or sell merchandise unless they have paid the participation fee. If the fee is paid, rule #5 will apply. Participating venders who normally occupy a table at the back of the room may continue to do so and sell from their tables.
10. No OSA sponsored merchandise will be sold while the auction is in progress. However, membership dues will be accepted.
11. Following the auction, there will be a 15-minute intermission while sellers remove any unsold merchandise and non-participating venders set up their displays.
12. In the event a clarification of any of these procedures is required, the interpretation of the Program Director (in his absence the Gatekeeper) will be final.

The regular December meeting will begin at 8:15 PM. Please note the hospital closes the entrance doors at 8:00 PM.

(Cont from page 3)

PACE

Bus service isn't a one-size-fits-all proposition, and the new 30-foot EZ Rider II buses will provide more flexibility to serve different customers, officials said.

"They are a direct response to our customers and elected officials in the collar counties and smaller communities," said Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross.

Seating 27 passengers and costing about \$276,000 each, the new vehicles will supplant many of Pace's 40-foot buses on suburban routes. Existing 30-foot buses are expected to remain in operation, and the larger buses will continue to be used in heavy-ridership needs.

"We aren't going to stop buying 40-foot buses. We still need them," Ross said. "It's a matter of mixing your fleet so you can get more efficiency out of it."

The EZ Riders come equipped with a satellite-based communication system to improve efficiency and safety.

In addition to plotting the exact location of every bus, the system collects passenger counts so Pace can assign buses more efficiently across the six-county region, Ross said.

The first of the 102 new buses ordered thus far have made their debut in Aurora. A second set will go to northern Cook County, including Highland Park and Niles. More vehicles will be assigned to McHenry county routes before the end of the year.

Pace's board of directors authorized the purchase of 222 EZ Riders over the next five years. The agency was able to afford more buses than initially thought because the cost per bus came in \$25,000 less than expected, Ross said.

The EZ Riders are manufactured by ElDorado National in Riverside, California.

The new buses have low-floor ramps for easier boarding and larger, more-readable LED exterior destination signs. The seats on the EZ Riders are wider, padded and upholstered. Disabled riders will find a new system to secure wheelchairs.

The buses also have the latest heating and cooling systems available, Pace said.

With fuel mileage estimated to be 30 to 40 percent better than Pace's current fleet, the new buses are expected to provide significant cost savings, Ross said.

The new buses are expected to get about 4 to 5 miles per gallon, compared with 3½ to 4 m.p.g. for the old ones, Ross said.

And for riders who want even more fuel economy, the EZ Riders have bike racks, as many Pace buses now do, so passengers can pedal home from the bus stop. (www.chicagotribune.com October 23, 2006)

Pace has added a stop to its Route 921 Geneva Shuttle to help commuters inconvenienced by the closing of a parking lot near the Geneva Metra station, the bus agency announced.

Effective immediately, the shuttle is also stopping at the 1800 South Street Park-n-Ride lot at Southampton Drive and South Street, north of the Geneva Public Works parking lot. Buses will board on South Drive and will not pull into the lot.

The shuttle makes four runs during morning and evening rush hours between the First Baptist Church Park-n-Ride at 2300 South Street and the Metra station.

The City of Geneva has begun construction of a new parking deck near the Metra station, which prompted the closing of the nearby lot. (www.chicagotribune.com October 26, 2006)

A pattern of declining ridership and failure to meet minimum performance standards has caused Pace officials to consider discontinuing a bus route serving a small area of West Cook County. Route 312 Ogden Avenue - 31st Street, which operates only during weekday rush hours, has seen ridership with double digit declines for the past several months. It currently carries an average of about 60 people a day: if they are making round trips it is likely there are just 30 regular riders.

Farebox recovery ratio, the amount of a route's operating costs covered by fares, is one of Pace's performance standards. Routes are expected to have a farebox ratio of nearly 40 percent, the farebox recovery ratio for route 312 is 10 percent. Pace is reviewing its service throughout the region and hopes to revisit this west cook area, including the Ogden Avenue corridor, as part of a service restructuring initiative that should begin late next year. (www.pacebus.com November 3, 2006)

Despite last-ditch pleas from the handicapped and elderly to delay action, the Pace Board of Directors on Wednesday, November 8, 2006, apologetically but unanimously approved a 50 cent increase in paratransit fares and a \$3.25 increase in taxicab vouchers for disabled riders in Chicago. (Cont on page 7)

(Cont from page 6)

PACE

Pace, which took over running the federally mandated paratransit service from the Chicago Transit Authority July 1, said it was bound to impose the fare increase by a state law requiring that at least 10 percent of the program's cost be paid for with farebox revenue.

Effective January 1, disabled riders will pay \$2.25 for paratransit service and \$5 for taxi access vouchers.

Pace directors also approved the bus agency's \$166.1 million suburban service budget for 2007.

Pace officials said they sought help from Chicago and Cook County to make up the farebox shortfall, but none was forthcoming.

"We're in a trick bag here," said Pace Chairman John Case. "I don't want to knock the CTA, but we did inherit a mess when we took over."

At an all-day forum held Monday, November 6, at Harold Washington College in downtown Chicago, hundreds of disabled Chicagoans and advocates for the elderly complained about poor paratransit service and opposed the fare increase.

More than a dozen turned out again Wednesday, November 8 at Pace's headquarters in Arlington Heights, asking that the fare increase not be imposed, or at least stalled until other funding alternatives could be explored. But the board was adamant.

"The fare increase falls on folks who are least able to pay it," acknowledged board member and Elmhurst Mayor Thomas Marcucci. He asked for help in lobbying for more funding. "The folks in Springfield have got to listen." (www.chicagotribune.com November 8, 2006)

• RTA DOINGS

In a major campaign to build broad support for increased public transportation funding, the Regional Transportation Authority has recruited more than 280 municipalities, civic organizations and agencies so far to lobby Illinois legislatures, officials said on Thursday, September 4.

The list includes dozens of local governments, from Waukegan to Will County, and school districts.

Other organizations include labor unions, chambers of commerce, and civic and environmental groups.

Northeastern Illinois transit agencies – including RTA, the Chicago Transit Authority, Pace, Metra – face a

"critical crossroads" in 2007, at which time additional investment and improvement of the \$27-billion transit network must take place, said RTA officials, who presented a progress report on the strategic plan, known as "Moving Beyond Congestion"

The alternative would be "shrinking" the system and a downward spiral of service cuts, increased fares and declining reliability, officials said.

The transit agencies' strategic plan for more funding includes enlisting local governments and organizations on the grass-roots level.

At least \$163 million per year in additional funding from Springfield will be needed, officials estimated.

The interim report is intended to describe the current status of the RTA system and lay the groundwork for upcoming reports, including a financial analysis of the transit systems. All will be ammunition in the battle for more transportation funding.

The RTA system provides the region with more than \$12 billion annually in economic impact and congestion relief, as well as substantial non-monetary environmental, mobility and quality of life benefits, the report states.

Yet, the region's traffic congestion is the third worst in the nation, according to the Texas Transportation Institute, and costs the region more than \$4 billion in travel delays and excess fuel consumed.

The congestion costs the average peak-period travelers \$1,000 annually, the report states.

The system faces a large operating and capital shortfall because there have been no new state capital funds for transit since the Illinois FIRST program and because funding has not kept pace with demand.

Transit ridership has grown since 2003, but the rate of auto travel is growing at a faster rate, the report states.

Metra provides excellent peak-period commuter rail service to and from downtown Chicago, but service for reverse commutes and off-peak travel is not convenient, the report found.

Similarly, Pace provides good service levels on traditional high-ridership bus routes, the report states, but many routes do not operate all day or every day, particularly routes in Aurora, Elgin, Joliet and Waukegan

SOME MORE PHOTOS FROM BUSCON



FAW/TAIHU Model CA6100SH2 Chine bus



Rexhall Interior



FAW/TAIHU interior



VanHool A300K AC Transit



Rexhall XQ6103YH2



VanHool interior

Omnibus Society of America Photo DVD Order Form

The Omnibus Society of America is producing photo DVD's of slides and prints from the collection of Melvin Bernero. Each DVD contains close to 300 images of transportation related subjects, both streetcar, bus and subway/elevated.

At the moment, we are offering the following photo DVD's: CTA Bus (color and black & white images on one DVD); CTA Subway/'L' (color and black & white images on one DVD); Transit in Northern Illinois (color and black & white images on one DVD); Chicago Trolleybuses (color and black & white images on one DVD and CTA/CSL Streetcars (black & white images on 2 DVD's). Other subjects will be added as time permits.

Each DVD is selling for \$15.00 with \$3.50 shipping and handling and all funds raised goes to help support the Omnibus Society of America. Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery.



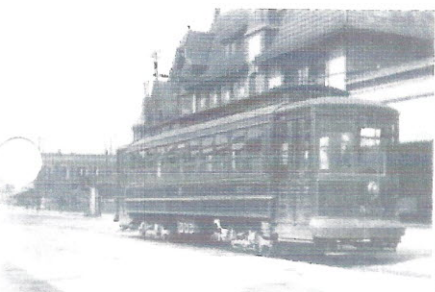
CTA Subway/Elevated



Transit properties of Wisconsin



Chicago Trolleybuses



CTA/CSL Streetcar Volume 1 & 2



CTA Buses in Color



Transit in Northern Illinois

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>DVD Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
_____	CTA Subway/Elevated	_____
_____	Transit Properties of Wisconsin	_____
_____	CTA Buses in Color	_____
_____	Chicago Trolleybuses	_____
_____	CTA/CSL Streetcar Volume 1	_____
_____	CTA/CSL Streetcar Volume 2	_____
_____	Bus Wraps of the U.S. & Canada	_____
_____	Transit in Northern Illinois	_____
_____	Total Order	_____
_____	Shipping/Handling	3.50
_____	Total amount enclosed	_____

Please enclose a check or money order for the number of DVD's you are ordering to:

Omnibus Society of America
PO Box A3051
Chicago IL 60690-0351

Ship To:

ELECTION BALLOT -- OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

**BALLOT MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE THE START OF THE
DECEMBER 2006 MEMBERSHIP MEETING WHICH WILL BE HELD
DECEMBER 1, 2006**

**VOTE FOR A MAXIMUM OF TWO CANDIDATES. IF MORE THAN TWO
NAMES ARE LISTED BALLOT WILL NOT BE COUNTED.**

JOHN LEBEAU _____

DAVID ZUCKER _____

WRITE-IN #1 _____

WRITE-IN #2 _____