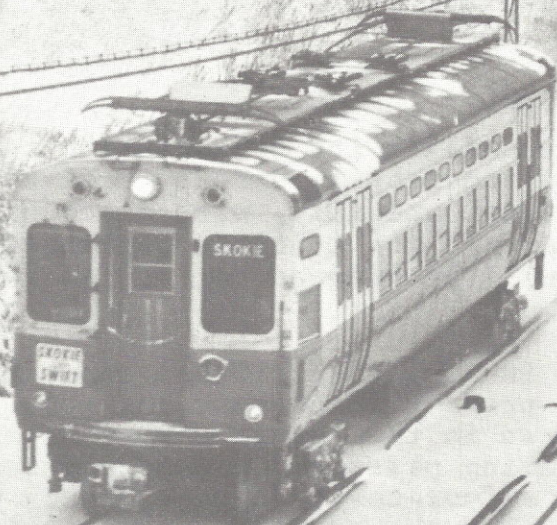


# Transport Central



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A Word from the Staff

Transport Central is raising its subscription rates, effective December 20, 1968. All new and renewal orders received after that date will be billed at ten dollars annually, with discounts for extended subscriptions beyond one year and for multiple copies sent to the same address. Other discounts will be offered for copies sent via third class mail, on a monthly basis.

Since its inception in July 1967, TC has constantly striven to upgrade the quality of its product in content and scope, and we will continue to pursue this course in the future. What began as a bi-weekly four-page newsletter covering passenger transportation activities in the midwest has evolved into a four-to-eight page weekly with a considerably larger area as its beat. For the same low subscription rates, we are now offering more than twice as much content as we initially promised some eighteen months ago.

We are extremely gratified that Transport Central has met with such a degree of public acceptance as to warrant its continuance in print, and the staff and I are looking forward to bringing you TC each week in the months and years ahead.

To do this, however, on a sound financial basis will require that revenues are brought closer in line with expenses. It costs us, on the present level of size and frequency, about 18¢ per subscriber per week to print and distribute TC, or a bit more than \$9.00 for each reader in an average year, leaving a considerable amount of red ink on our ledgers in that period. The staff has borne this loss collectively; we anticipated it and planned on losing money in TC's formative period while the publication settled on a format and struggled to establish itself.

Now, the losses must be cut, if we are to continue to do the job our readers have demanded of us, and if we are to continue to grow. In 1969, we will add more pictorial matter, using photographs wherever required to add clarity to a story. We have added correspondents this past year, and will continue to do so, attempting to bring to you as varied and comprehensive a standard of coverage as it is humanly possi-



ble to do. Within each week's quota of pages, we hope to be able to bring you insight on and interpretation of the week's events.

As always, we need your help. Your support has been most warmly appreciated in these past months, and we have thoroughly enjoyed bringing TC to you each week. We sincerely hope that Transport Central will be around for a long time to come.

THE STAFF

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## NEWSFRONT

**MERGER MATTERS** -- To no one's surprise, the Justice Department filed a last minute appeal to the Supreme Court blocking the Burlington Northern merger until the high court can make a final decision. The marriage would unite the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy; Great Northern; Northern Pacific and two smaller roads....Also on the "social register" Northwest Industries, parent of the Chicago & North Western and Swift & Company, the giant meat packer, have broken off merger talks, at least for the present....Further, the Interstate Commerce Commission has ordered Penn Central to absorb the poverty-stricken New Haven on January 1 next; although financial wrangling over who pays what to whom will probably congest the courts for years, PC says it is essentially in favor of the take-over and will do its utmost to effect the consolidation. The purchase price currently sits at \$178 million....Finally on the nuptial front, IC Industries, Illinois Central's parent and Abex Corporation, formerly the American Brake Shoe Company, have announced joint stockholder approval of IC's absorption of Abex as an autonomous subsidiary of Illinois Central Industries.

**ODD LOTS** -- The Gulf Mobile & Ohio has announced that its last Pullman operation, Chicago-St. Louis, will be discontinued December 30; the service is the last open-berth operation in or out of Chicago offered by any railroad, and the last sleeper on the route. As recently as ten years ago, three railroads offered nightly Pullmans between the two cities....Associate Editor Tom Kopriwa reports that Southern's petition on the Pelican (41-42, York-Trenton) has been withdrawn; Tom also advises that Louisville & Nashville's Hummingbird finally quit running on October 25 (regular readers will remember a spate of weekly petitions that kept the train running)....Penn Central 574-575, Harrisburg - Buffalo, must run until April 8, 1969 pending hearings....Baltimore & Ohio 107-112, Baltimore-Washington, went off December 4, without investigation....The Delaware & Hudson (and the Penn Central) have been allowed to discontinue the New York-Montreal parlor car service on the jointly-operated Laurentian.

**ODD OBIT** -- Buried on the obituary page of the Chicago Daily News yesterday was a brief item about the impending demise of the Illinois Central Commuters Association, a mere two years old. The ICCA is not dying from malnutrition or neglect; it has done its job. Among the accomplishments cited by the group have been more seats for passengers, upgrading of the Randolph Street downtown terminal, the equipping of the road's electric passenger cars with safety glass, the reinstatement of the 25-ride ticket, better housekeeping on trains; the start of a



courtesy program for IC train-service employees, and improved on-time performance of the line's many commuter trains (IC's passenger traffic is second only to that of the Long Island). Obviously, a job exceedingly well done.

**THE CROWDED SKIES** -- Last Monday, the Federal Aviation Administration set flight quotas for five major U. S. airports and immediately set off the expected storm of strong protest from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. Effective April 27, 1969 (the date of major schedule changes on most lines) takeoffs and landings in instrument flight rules conditions (bad weather) will be limited to the following: At O'Hare, 135 (including 115 commercial movements); La Guardia, 60 (48 commercial); Newark, 60 (40 commercial); John F. Kennedy International, 80 (70 commercial); and Washington National, 60 (40 commercial). All figures quoted are flights per hour; included in the non-commercial quotas are the air taxis (level III) and private planes. The new quotas sharply cut the number of general aviation (private plane) movements at the major fields, and the AOPA immediately criticized Transportation Secretary Boyd for the "illegal and discriminatory" ruling, further petitioning President-elect Nixon to reverse the edicts when he assumes office next month....At the same time, it was announced that planes bound for New York City will not leave the ground in Chicago if delays of more than 60 minutes are expected before landing at one of the three Gotham fields. At present, delays of more than two hours, spent circling the city in a holding pattern, have been experienced in New York during periods of peak travel. For the moment, the practice of holding flights at the point of origination will be limited to airliners leaving Chicago and bound for New York.

**JET JOTTINGS** -- Landing fees went into effect December 1 at Midway Airport on Chicago's south side for the first time; the charge is 30¢ per 1000 pounds; parking fees of \$30 per month and up also went into effect on the same date....The FAA has fined Seaboard World Airlines \$5,000 for having faulty navigation gear that caused one of the line's planes carrying U. S. servicemen to be forced down by Russian planes for overflying Siberia last June. The USSR held the plane for two days before permitting it to proceed to Japan....The Pan Am heliport on top of the company's headquarters building in Manhattan must close; its license has been refused renewal by the city....The CAB is looking into a National Trailways Bus System complaint against airline youth fares....Domestic airlines' 1968 gross profit will be about \$100 million less than a year earlier, and a further decline is expected next year....The Wall Street Journal reports that a Chicago pie company plans to bring out a pie pan shaped like the U. S.; TWA used such a gimmick in its advertising beginning last year and the line has been swamped with requests from homemakers wanting to buy one....The seven-plane Transglobe Airways, Ltd., a British charter firm, is also to file for bankruptcy, following on the heels of British Eagle (TC - 8 Nov 68).....The CAB has opted for review of an examiner's decision recommending that North Central be permitted to provide non-stop service between the Twin Cities and Denver; Braniff, Northwest, Frontier, Western and United have all protested the decision of the examiner.

**EQUIPMENT REGISTER** -- Last week's orders: Northwest, DC-10, Series 20 - 14 ordered, 14 optioned; Bahama Airways, BAC-111 -- 2 ordered; Trans-Australia, 3 DeHavilland Twin Otter ordered to replace DC-3s; DETA of Mozambique, 2 Boeing 737s ordered (fleet currently consists of 3 F-27 200 turboprops and 6 DC-3s); Japan Air Lines, 2 or 3 727-200s; TWA, 1 727-200 (the 100th such craft built); China Airlines, 2 707-320 C or-



dered; Autair (U. K.), 5 BAC-111s ordered and 2 more optioned; Middle East Airlines, 4 707-320Cs ordered; South African Airways, 2 Boeing 707-320Cs ordered....Two investment groups have ordered five L-1011 air buses from Lockheed, with an option for a sixth. With delivery beginning in 1972, this will bring to 181 the number of such craft Lockheed has on its order books.

COGENT COMMENTS -- "My railroad as well as the railroad industry in general has made very large, albeit unwilling, contributions to the development of airports and airways. It is probably safe to say that over the years the railroad industry has paid substantially more in taxes for these purposes than have the commercial airlines". (L. J. Parsons, the chief pilot for the Great Northern Railway, quoted in Air Travel, December 1968)...."What good are 40 years of experience if they're merely 40 repetitions of the same experience?" (Association of American Railroads president Thomas Goodfellow, quoted in Trains, December 1968).

DOT DOLES -- The week's grants to transit operations from the Department of Transportation: \$28 million to San Francisco's BART for the purchase of 125 air-conditioned, high-speed rapid transit cars; \$24,840 to the city of Chattanooga for a technical study of its transportation problems; \$31,800 to Waterloo, Iowa for the purchase of four minibuses for operation in a downtown loop, supplementing the operation of 30 other larger vehicles purchased in 1966 with another federal grant; supplemental additional funds to Erie and Topeka to meet higher than anticipated costs from projects paid for from earlier grants; and to the University of Pennsylvania for additional studies of the Minicar Mass Transit Concept. This concept envisions a system of rental vehicles specifically designed for short trips exclusively within the central city area. The system would also be able to grow into future automatic transportation systems.

METROPOLITAN REPORT -- Seven civic, political and religious groups have joined in a coalition to oppose the CTA's plans for a fare increase. A board meeting originally set for December 5 has been postponed one week because of pending labor negotiations that might affect next year's budget (and the amount of any increase in fares); there is presently speculation that any increase might be postponed for several months in an attempt to reach agreement with bondholders on the controversial depreciation fund requirement at least technically responsible for the hike, and to test riding on the new rapid lines scheduled to open in the spring in hopes that increased revenues derived from them might at least partially alleviate the dollar squeeze....The initial portion of the Crosstown Expressway has been approved by the Transportation Department; it is to run from a junction with the Stevenson Expressway near 42nd to 67th. The northbound lanes will run adjacent to Cicero Avenue; southbound lanes are to be located adjacent to the Belt Railway of Chicago tracks a quarter of a mile to the east. A buffer strip containing rapid transit rights-of-way will be located between the two roadways; construction is to begin in the fall of next year.

RIP AND READ -- Beaumont now joins the list of exact fare cities....An exclusive lane for bus operation, the second of two within the Halsted-63rd shopping center project on the south side of Chicago, now is in operation along 63rd street....The famed Indianapolis Traction Terminal is to be razed for a Blue Cross building....Construction on Peking's subway has run into labor trouble....A master plan for Tel Aviv recommends the construction of a subway by 1985....Gary Transit is in financial trouble.

THE COVER -- Our traditional December winter cover features a dramatic view of the phenomenal Skokie Swift on a day that makes it a decided asset, and is reproduced here through the courtesy of the CTA.



## TRANSIT JOURNAL

These days, the minibus seems to be the "in" vehicle; yet another system has become successful in a short time. Redwood City, California, with a population of approximately 60,000, now has a five-route basic system in operation with an additional line offering trial service on a temporary basis.

The stage was set for the introduction of small vehicles in a manner similar to that in countless other junior metropolitan areas. As a result of declining patronage since the middle 1950's, Peninsula Transit Lines (of East Palo Alto) had asked the city for a subsidy in one form or another several times since 1958 and had been refused on each occasion. PTL virtually halved service in March 1966, and in March of 1967 again approached the City Council for a subsidy to head off further service cuts or the total discontinuance of all operations. PTL cited a decline in patronage from 540,000 in 1956 with seven buses to 47,000 in 1966 with one bus; at that time service con-

sisted of from two to six trips per day on five routes. Also noted by the company was the fact that ridership in nearby Palo Alto had almost doubled as the result of a city subsidy. Notwithstanding these presentations, the council turned down the request for \$12,000 annually, on the basis that the current level of service was not worth that amount.

In July 1967, Peninsula Transit Lines submitted a petition to the California Public Utilities Commission for permission to discontinue all Redwood City services, citing the previous year's losses and anticipating even greater ones in the year ahead. Faced with this evidence, the PUC granted permission for the operations to be discontinued on a ten-day notice after January 1, 1968. In the interim, the Redwood City Council voted to set up a minibus system with six units on a 30 minute headway, 12 hours a day, six days a week on five routes; one of the coaches was to be kept in reserve. The system was to be operated by a private firm, under a contract with the city.

Revenues, based on an anticipated total of 610 passengers per day, were expected to average \$50,000 in the first year, with expenses in the same period exceeding that figure by \$25,000. A \$100,000 fund was authorized to buy equipment.

Bids were opened on October 24, 1967, and Minibus, Inc., of Pico Rivera was the sole bidder with a base total price of \$91,205.10 for six vehicles of 17 passenger size (27 with standees). Additional accessories of tinted glass, air conditioning, destination signs and AM/FM radios would boost that amount to a total of \$100,614.84, or a cost per unit of \$16,769.14. The council voted to purchase the units less radios (although wiring and speakers were provided); the total contract cost amounted to \$99,172.44.

In December, a subsidy totalling \$4000 was granted to Peninsula Transit Lines for the first four months of the year, in order to have continuous service until the inauguration of minibus service in April.

Proposals for operating the buses were submitted by three firms: San Mateo Burlingame Transit, ServiCar of Northern California, and the Mid-Peninsula Cab Co. The contract was awarded to ServiCar in February, guaranteeing them \$5.00 per bus



per hour of operation out of which repairs, running expenses and drivers' salaries are to be met. The contract runs for six years but is cancelable by either party on any July 1 with 90 days notice. An incentive clause gives ServiCar a percentage of passenger revenues above 50% of gross operating costs.

Fares for the first two weeks were set at 10¢ to encourage inspection of the new service, then rates reverted to 25¢ for adults and 15¢ for children and teenagers (up to the age of 18). Free transfers are permitted between all routes. Operation began April 1, and was preceded by a pancake breakfast complete with Dixieland band the Saturday before service started; the tab was picked up by the city and ServiCar. The breakfast was followed by a tour of the city's shopping centers, where balloons containing free tickets were released.

Heavy rains on opening day held down total riders to 385, but this quickly peaked to 1550 during the 10¢ fare period, slumping to 615 (as contrasted with the after-six-months prediction of 610) with the institution of permanent fares. Business then began a slow but steady rise, averaging 743 daily riders by the end of April. Several route changes were made early in the system's life to give a better pattern of service and in May local merchants underwrote free bus service between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM as a part of a "500 Days" sales promotion tied in with the Memorial Day 500 race in Indianapolis.

During June and July several minor problems were overcome when the city installed bus stop signs and had schedules printed. With the onset of municipal operation, the bus line quickly became a community undertaking; the Fun After 50 local service organization donated labor and materials for the construction of benches for waiting passengers at bus stops; the police department agreed to maintain a lost-and-found service, and local merchants supported the service in many ways. Though one irate passenger filed a complaint against a driver in the initial shakedown period, the system has had an excellent record of acceptance with the riding public.

A three month trial expansion of service to Canada College was undertaken with a subsidy from the San Mateo Junior College District and fares from an estimated fifty students daily using a leased bus. This extension will be made permanent should passenger volume rise to an acceptable level.

Fireside Thrift, a local savings and loan association, entered the lone bid of \$216 per month for a six months rental of the advertising space on the rear of each vehicle. Should Fireside's option for renewal be exercised for another six months (or a comparable contract with another advertiser be signed), the city's subsidy would be reduced by over \$2500 annually.

At present, after some six months of operation, about 1100 passengers each day are carried, nearly doubling the estimates on which the city council based its original subsidization. If the volume continues to grow, or even holds at the present level, the cost to Redwood City would be substantially reduced over the budgeted \$96,000 annual figure.

Summing up, it seems that Redwood City will join the ranks of the successful small bus operators. Cities with declining or defunct transit operators in the 50,000 to 100,000 population range seem to be able to make a go of it with small equipment and municipal (sometimes even private) ownership and operation. On most of these systems, riding increases sharply after the conversion to small buses. Perhaps the most eloquent comments on this type of service might be offered by the very successful operators of the precedent-setting Mansfield, Ohio, system, the acknowledged pioneer in the field: "New equipment, reasonable headways and the desire to serve will always win out over twenty-year-old buses, poor schedules and the constant clamoring for subsidies.

--HARRY R. PORTER



