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# INTERFACE

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## Reflections on an Anniversary

When we haltingly resumed publication on a regular basis after a much-too-long seven-year hiatus in December 1979, we sincerely hoped aloud that this reincarnation would be permanent, and that the false starts of the past would be behind us. After some 39 outings (totaling 278 pages) in the past 24 months, it would appear that we have been at least partially successful in our quest.

A lot of water has gone over the dam in just those two years—not to mention the fourteen since *TC* first appeared. Perhaps a review of that issue of 8 December 1979 is in order, along with an update illustrating just how the industry has (or has not) changed in the interim:

Our lead item then spoke of a possible strike against the Chicago Transit Authority by its operating personnel over the controversial cost-of-living allowance (COLA). It did take place a week or so later—in the height of the Christmas season—and, coupled with financial problems in the city's schools and a similar work stoppage by Chicago firemen severely curtailed normal activity in "the city that works". The "wildcat" CTA walkout lasted only four days, but clearly demonstrated the value of public transit (a lesson that has apparently not yet sunk in to the collective crania of state and local public officials).

Along with labor troubles came a backlash against the supposed "racist" berthing of buses at shelters along the State Street Mall (the controversy eventually died down); and base fare on the CTA was raised to 60¢ (it is now 90¢).

The LaSalle Street Station was mentioned as a possible site for a new office tower (demolition of the old building is proceeding apace), and it became increasingly clear that the Rock Island commuter services would not move to Union Station as had been originally planned.

The first of the "SnowFighter" CTA rapid transit work trains made their debut after the Authority was "caught short" in the snow-heavy winter of 1978-79 (the fleet has been augmented in the months since; one significant addition is a Japanese-made diesel plow that some wags have dubbed the "Yellow Peril").

There was also talk of a new office structure to replace the aging North Western terminal just west of the Loop (despite a great hue and cry from preservationists, landmark status was denied the structure, and demolition will begin next year). Rail of a lighter variety got the go-ahead in San Diego, as the Interstate Commerce Commission okayed joint freight/passenger service on SP's former ward San Diego & Arizona Eastern (needless to say, the light rail line engineered by the MTDB has been a huge success—and freight business has not been all that bad, either).

Amtrak's *Desert Wind* made its appearance at the end of October (somewhat unnoticed among the excisions from the system); it has done well, particularly in Los Angeles-Las Vegas service. Plans were announced for a Chicago-Peoria train to be called the *Prairie Marksman* (it has come and gone already), and a Chicago-Indianapolis run, the *Hoosier State* (more of a success than the Peoria train, and still with us).

Auto-Train, reeling from recent losses, contracted to build a new terminal at Cranford, N.J. for loading of automobiles. Passengers would go to and from Florida by Eastern Airlines (Auto-Train discontinued all operations earlier this year, and as these words are written is in the throes of a bankruptcy auction).

President Carter approved the Pan Am-National merger, paving the way for the disappearance of the "Airline of the Stars" (and any hopes for Pan Am profits as well). Allegheny became USAir (but changed very little otherwise). Midway Airlines began operations November 1, 1979 (and went on to be one of the most successful of the "budget" carriers).

Continental Air Transport (Chicago's airline ground transportation carrier), resumed bus service between downtown and the South Side airport to serve



Midway Airlines' passengers—at \$3.35 one-way (the tariff is now \$5.60 for the same service). At the same time, one of the biggest airline promotions was winding down, as United and American set December 15 as the last day for redemption of the half-fare coupons that had boosted the former's traffic significantly after a long strike earlier in the year. The latter airline, already feeling the pinch of inflation, put most of its hotel subsidiary on the block in an effort to raise much-needed cash (American is still in a financial bind—as are most of the majors—and has made wage and payroll cuts the order of the day—as have many of its fellow airlines).

Negotiations were underway for direct U.S.-China service (now, by way of Pan Am and CAAC, about to celebrate its first anniversary). Elsewhere on the international scene, the Concorde was flying into turbulent skies; production lines had closed down after completing just 16 craft out of a proposed total of 300—and few of its runs were at or beyond the break-even point. (Service continues as 1981 draws to a close—but not for long.)

And finally, faced with a traffic jam at the Milwaukee Road parking lot in their village, Deerfield officials set aside a "kissing zone" where commuters being dropped off at the train could buss their spouses and not block traffic—and a corresponding area was posted "No Kissing" to speed the flow of traffic. It was all a joke, of course, aimed at "adding a little levity" to a routine situation, but some commuters were not amused—and many, to their everlasting credit, flouted the new "law"—all of which goes to show that, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

Happy Holidays!

## AIR

# Lockheed: Obit for the L-1011

**"A Very Difficult Wrench . . . We Have a Great Plane Out There . . ."**

► The Lockheed Corporation has decided to phase out production of its L-1011 TriStar wide-body jet, after months of soul-searching over the deficit-plagued 13-year-old program. Despite the 1981 write-off of about \$400,000,000 on the project, most observers believe the troubled aerospace firm is strong enough to withstand the economic shock of the program's cancellation. Wall Street appeared pleased at the action, believing a shift in emphasis toward the military side of the company's business (Lockheed has a number of very lucrative military contracts) could only serve to strengthen the Burbank firm.

Lockheed will probably give its airline customers about six months or so to work out a program to meet fleet needs down the road before the production line is closed; the last L-1011 on firm order is currently scheduled for 1984 rollout.

Officially, the firm is "phasing out" the TriStar. Despite an intensive marketing effort in recent months to encourage further orders, the current slumping aircraft market contributed to the failure of the promotional push and, according to the company, the existing order backlog "isn't enough to sustain continued production at an economically justifiable level."

The L-1011 TriStar, was part of a new generation of large three- and four-engine planes developed in the mid-1960's for long-haul flights. It began regular service in 1972, and TriStars are currently on the roster of 15 airlines around the world; Pan Am is one of the biggest users of the jet, and considers the L-1011 "technologically superior"; the carrier has twelve TriStars in its fleet.

Throughout its life, the L-1011 has been faced with significant competition. McDonnell Douglas' DC10 (itself in the throes of a slump stemming from of the crash near O'Hare in 1979 that killed 273) is significantly bigger and heavier, while Boeing's long-range entry, the 747, outweighs and

dwarfs both.

Always in troubled economic waters, the L-1011 program was finally downed by a world-wide industry recession that halted most fleet expansion plans including purchase of the TriStar at \$50,000,000 (or more) each. Thus far, more than 200 L-1011s have been delivered, but even that number is far short of the break-even point. More than half of the TriStars in service are flown by international carriers; British Airways, West Germany's LTU (a charter airline), Japan's All-Nippon Airways, Air Canada and Gulf Air are some of the foreign-flag airlines that roster the jet.

Lockheed chairman Roy Anderson, when questioned after the board meeting that sealed the fate of the program, summed up the company feeling about the action scuttling the TriStar: "It was a very difficult wrench to reach this decision, because we have a great airplane out there and many of our customers believe it, too."

*[Comment from this desk: TC's 19 October 1970 cover featured a Rolls Royce ad touting the upcoming initial flight of the TriStar; it is reproduced on the back cover of this issue. It is ironic to note that in the interim the storied engine manufacturer filed for bankruptcy and Lockheed itself had to be rescued from a similar fate by the Congress.]*

## A Crackdown on No-Shows: NY Air, Air Florida—Stick vs. Carrot

► U.S. airlines are beginning a crackdown on no-shows with a weapon that makes chronic offenders take notice: an assault on the pocketbook.

The worst of the airborne miscreants double-, triple- or even quadruple-book flights at the same time to the same



destination on different carriers to assure themselves of a seat and then don't bother to cancel the overlapping reservations. Some carriers flying the same routes have computer linkups designed to isolate the worst of the multiple-bookings, but that is only a partial solution to the problem at best.

Now, several carriers are trying out more draconian measures to free up bookings, using both carrot and stick in their efforts.

Early in December, both New York Air and Air Florida set up new policies to discourage multiple-booking and the concomitant no-shows. New York Air imposed a no-show penalty on its Boston-Baltimore-Orlando flights; when reservations are made, passengers must provide a credit card number. If they fail to show without canceling their reservations at least 30 minutes in advance, NYA assesses a \$20 penalty per ticket.

The measure has been noticeably successful. The proportion of no-shows on some Orlando flights has dropped to 5% from a high of 30%.

Air Florida, on the other hand, offers a reward. On its Northeast-Florida runs (accounting for some 40% of AF's traffic) the airline offers a 20% discount on nonrefundable tickets, which are transferable to another passenger if the original purchaser decides not to take that particular flight. Air Florida reports a "very good" customer response to the new plan.

The Civil Aeronautics Board has authorized carriers to discuss among themselves various proposals to deter no-shows at an industry conference this month. In the meantime, a number of the majors have begun assessing a fee to redeem unused discount-fare tickets to offset the cost of writing them.

Other airlines have taken additional measures to discourage no-shows and to cut costs in other ways. Some have imposed baggage limitations on certain routes, and cut back on meals, lodging and other amenities for delayed passengers.

As might be expected, the walkout of air traffic controllers in August exacerbated the no-show problem. Faced with severe cuts in available flights, many prospective travelers made multiple reservations on the remaining flights, and no-show rates skyrocketed to as much as half of the bookings on some flights.

The carriers customarily overbook their flights according to a predetermined pattern to offset no-shows, but with wildly varying loadings in recent months and tough new penalties assessed them when passengers are bumped, the old rules no longer apply, and the problem has become much more acute.

## Equipment Eclectica: A Lesson from Lockheed?

► Lockheed is not the only builder of

commercial jets to face a declining market—the Burbank firm was only the first casualty of an international slump in the fortunes of airlines and their suppliers.

Since the economy is in a tailspin on a world-wide basis, the airlines themselves are not enjoying the best of times—and the effects of that downturn are quickly felt by the aircraft builders. Lockheed reacted by phasing out the L-1011 (see above), and the market appears soft for the other two U.S. builders, McDonnell Douglas and Boeing.

In a long article on the effects of the downturn in airline business on aircraft manufacturers, the *Wall Street Journal* notes several alternatives the carriers have to the purchase of expensive new jets from the big builders:

1. There is now a great push, led by American Airlines, to re-engine the large fleet of Boeing 727 tri-jets with a new two-engine tail that would reduce operating costs and obviate the necessity for new jet purchases. Considering that there are almost 2000 727s in the air today, a bypassing of normal fleet replacement through such retrofitting would substantially scale down new orders.

2. Some financially strapped carriers are considering delaying or cancelling delivery of planes ordered in the boom period of three years ago. The downturn in business all over the world has curtailed the need for additional capacity, and fuel prices appear to have leveled off at least temporarily, making it at least marginally economical to continue less-fuel-efficient aircraft in service.

3. One of the few airlines to have a strong financial base, Delta, is actively considering the purchase of a substantial number of A320 Airbus jets, bypassing the domestic plane manufacturers.

4. The U.S. level II (regional) carriers needing additional capacity are ordering smaller aircraft in lesser numbers, and often are turning to the purchase of used jets to increase their fleets, at least until economic conditions improve.

For the moment, however, production continues apace at both McDonnell Douglas and Boeing, as the result of orders placed during the 1978 "boom", but the pace is slowing down, and some layoffs have already occurred.

Boeing's immediate hopes are pinned on the 180-seat 757 and the 200-seat 767, both set for delivery beginning next year. Sales of the new craft, however, might well plummet if the re-engining of the 727 as proposed by American takes hold on a large scale within the industry.

McDonnell Douglas, on the other hand, has yet to really recover from the effects of that May 1979 crash near O'Hare that blackened the reputation of the DC10 in the eyes of many passengers. The DC10 shares the production line with the KC10 tanker for the military, and cutbacks in that Pentagon program may even termi-

nate production on its civilian counterpart.

Deregulation has caused profound changes in the airline industry, in many ways contributing to its economic problems by the increase in competition that has many a carrier's back against the wall. A current line of thinking in the industry has it that when marginal profitability appears on the airline horizon once more, a series of mergers will shake out (and up) the carrier community—incidentally further contributing to the builders' woes by adding the smaller carriers' planes to their larger partner's fleets.

► Boeing has modified the flight deck of its new 767 jet so that the standard version can be flown by two crew members rather than three. The change comes in the early stages of the production run; some planes have already been completed with a three-member flight deck, but will be changed at customer request (and expense) to the modified version.

The planes configured to a two-person cockpit will be fitted with the Engine Indicating and Crew Alerting System developed by Rockwell International. This computerized engine monitoring system does many of the tasks generally assigned to the flight engineer on a three-person aircraft.

Boeing reconfigured the 767 to a two-crew member standard after determining that the majority of its customers preferred that version. There are firm orders for 173 of the fuel-efficient 767s, at an average cost of \$40,000,000 each. United will receive the first of the new jets (it has an order for 79) in July 1982; all will be configured to provide for a two-person crew.

► Fuel Economy Notes: A four-engine Boeing 747 can travel about .133 mile on a gallon of aviation fuel, while a 727 gets about twice as much gas mileage. A single-engine, two-seat Cessna 150 does even better than most automobiles, with a rating of almost 25 mpg.

## Fare Facts: More Cuts; The Cartel Returns

► The air fare war continues: TWA has dropped its Chicago-California fares again, for the third time in three weeks.

The one-way coach tariff is now pegged at \$139 during the day, and \$109 at night; these reductions dropped another \$20 from a tariff which had itself been reduced by \$10 the week previously.

TWA is not "a big factor in that market," according to one of its spokespersons, and therefore could afford the cuts. American followed suit (except for the December 18 through January 6 holiday period); at press time United had not made a decision as to whether or not to join the fray.

► Domestic and European air carriers



have just concluded the first of a series of negotiating sessions aimed at settling their four-year squabble on fares over the North Atlantic route; the talks, thus far without any agreement, will resume in January.

Up until 1978, the International Air Transport Association, which sponsored the meetings, set virtually all international air fares in a classic cartel setting; only "renegade" carriers like Icelandic (today's Icelandair) bucked the system and published lower tariffs. In October 1978, talks aimed at continuing the price-setting broke down in Miami and the North Atlantic run has been the scene of cutthroat competition ever since. IATA estimates that carriers on the route will lose \$650,000,000 this year, an increase in the deficit of \$58,000,000 over 1981.

The price warfare has led to increased competition on the route—and flights of near-empty planes across the Atlantic. IATA estimates that overcapacity on the run is equal to 56 wide-body jets daily.

In addition to an overall fare hike on the run, the airlines flying it are anxious to simplify the whole tariff structure. There are now 49 different New York-London fares alone—and hundreds of others on all U.S.-Europe routes.

IATA says that carriers on the North Atlantic run must hike their average revenue per passenger (yield) by 15% to 20% in 1982 just to break even. Industry observers predict that final approval will be given in the next series of talks to a 5% fare increase early next year, with two additional 5% boosts in the spring and autumn.

Putting North Atlantic tariff economics in perspective, IATA announced at the conference that airline losses on all international services are expected to total some \$900,000,000 this year. IATA members' fuel bills have risen more than 1,000 percent since 1973, though fuel consumption has only increased by 55 percent. A gallon of jet fuel, for example, cost 20 cents then, compared with \$1.40 in 1981.

## Merger Mania:

### Turbulence for Western + Wien

► Western Airlines, which is anxious to acquire Wien Air Alaska, has flown into some bumpy skies in its attempt to take over the regional carrier.

On December 9, Western appointed Neil Bergt as its CEO. Bergt is sole owner of Eagle International Corporation. That firm agreed in November to acquire Wien from its owner, Household International, for \$50,000,000 in cash. When Household learned of Western's action, however, it said it planned to review the sales agreement in view of Bergt's possible "conflict of interest." Bergt, for his part, said he was taking steps to eliminate any such conflict; complicating the matter was the stock position in Western held by Air Florida,

which has won Civil Aeronautics Board approval for a merger with Western.

Wien Air operates 10 Boeing 737 aircraft on routes within the state and to the Pacific Northwest. Its route network would be a logical adjunct to Western's, feeding the latter's system from Alaskan cities.

Western flies a number of connecting routes to Alaska, and had earlier planned to purchase Sea Airmotive, an Alaskan commuter carrier. That move was apparently taken in response to Wien's own recent move into other markets in the Pacific Northwest.

## CAB Comment:

### More on Overbooking

► The CAB has announced plans to propose rules abolishing or easing requirements on airline overbooking policies.

Among the options under consideration: —Requiring carriers to compensate bumped passengers for only the amount of the fare for the first leg of a flight when connecting flights are available. (Now, such passengers must be paid the full fare of the whole trip, up to a maximum of \$200. Payment maximums are doubled when the airline cannot find the passenger a seat on an alternate flight within two hours—four hours on international runs; this rule has been temporarily suspended because of flight restrictions arising out of the controllers' walkout in August).

—Eliminating the present minimum compensation of \$37.50 for bumpees.

—Permitting carriers to forego any compensation when the customer gets a seat on a special flight added by the airline within an hour of the original departure.

—Exempting U.S. carriers from overbooking regulations on flights inbound to this country, as foreign-flag airlines are not liable on similar flights.

Comments on the proposals are solicited from the carriers within 60 days after they are published in the Federal Register (in about two weeks). Rules adopted by the Board will go into effect next summer.

## Jet Jottings:

### Safety, Service and Santa

► Independent federal investigators have found that the safety of the U.S. air traffic control system has not suffered since the PATCO job action in August.

These are some of the principal findings:

—There are no indications to support allegations that medically unqualified controllers have been used to direct air traffic since the strike began.

—Charges that unsafe procedures were used by the FAA because of the reduced work force are also invalid.

—The number of hazardous incidents, including reports of aircraft near-misses

and instances in which aircraft separation was less than normally allowed, have declined since the strike. There were fewer computer problems at the control centers in August than in the same month in 1980 and 1979.

One additional conclusion of no little import was that the FAA may be overly optimistic about how fast the air traffic control system can be rebuilt. The investigators said the restructuring may take up to a year longer than the agency has predicted, and may not be completed until late 1984; the FAA has suggested an entirely new, fully qualified corps would be in place by September 1983.

► SAS, aiming at the business traveler, has planned a substantial upgrade in service for its full-fare passengers. The Scandinavian system proposes these amenities: —At both check-in and departure, the business traveler will receive priority. A separate check-in area will be maintained for them, and they will be the first off the plane upon arrival.

—A business service lounge has been established at Kastrup Airport in Copenhagen and at JFK in New York with communications facilities and rest areas; a similar lounge is planned at O'Hare for the new international terminal.

—An upgraded service for business travelers on SAS DC10s features refitted seats in a separate business class with increased legroom and other comforts. A 56-seat section has been dedicated to this service, and the middle seat will be closed, so passengers will not be sitting more than two abreast.

—Catering for business class will be separate from coach, with higher-quality meals.

—An in-flight business magazine will be produced for business class different from those afforded other passengers.

—On trans-Atlantic flights, first-class passengers now have fully reclining seats (comparable to beds), as the section has been reduced from 16 seats to ten.

► Pan Am, now run by new CEO Ed Acker, late of Air Florida, has opted for several new strategies running counter to the ailing carrier's former game plan.

Acker has rescinded most of a plan to cut back operations sharply. Pan Am now intends to undertake a major re-entry into the New York-Florida market this winter, rather than virtually dropping out of it.

The airline has also cut regular fares in the U.S. and on international routes, though Pan Am has long been known as a high-fare carrier. The low fares, Acker notes, are not a short-term move, but will continue into the foreseeable future—despite loud grumblings from PA's competitors.

In addition, Acker is pruning the bureaucracy, and speeding up the decision-making process. He also plans to move company headquarters from New York's Pan Am Building (no longer owned by the airline) to



cheaper space in New York or even to Miami.

Pan Am has been hit with severe financial problems in recent months, and narrowly averted bankruptcy through the sale of its hotel subsidiary to raise much-needed cash.

► DOT has finally issued its long-delayed policy for reducing aircraft noise and congestion at Washington National Airport. The policy, basically unchanged from the agency's July proposal, was effective December 6. The only significant alteration is that new daytime maximum-noise levels for jets using the airport were postponed for at least a year.

► Braniff vice-president Russell Thayer is to become the first president of Texas American Airlines, a new carrier. Texas American, a subsidiary of Overseas National Airways, will begin Houston/San Antonio-New York service in April with a fleet of four Boeing 737-200s.

► American has begun new daily service between Chicago and Little Rock . . . Libya's state airline, Libyan Arab Airlines, has signed a contract to buy six A300 and four A310 Airbus jets . . . The Norfolk & Western Railway has formally agreed to purchase 1,200,000 more shares of Piedmont Aviation, giving the railway a 20% holding in the parent of the Winston-Salem based carrier. CAB approval is still needed.

► New "budget" air carrier Air Chicago is buying five 727-100s from Pan Am. Air Chicago plans to begin service next spring out of Midway Airport; Pan Am will train its cockpit, cabin and ground crews.

► Air Florida has not escaped economic problems common to many airlines and is planning layoffs, pay cuts, service reductions and aircraft sales in January to ease its financial pain. The carrier hopes to sell all of its eight older Boeing 737 jets . . . Texas International got into the spirit of the season earlier this month in promoting service to four new cities by flying free the first 100 passengers who would show up in Santa Claus suits and sing songs.

## TRANSIT

### Rapid Roundup: MARTA, WMATA Add Legs

► On December 4, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority opened the newest segment of the North/South line.

The new leg, from Garnett to North Avenue, penetrates the heart of the central

business district, with stops enroute providing direct access to most of the major businesses and other institutions in the Peachtree and West Peachtree corridors.

The North Avenue Station is directly under Southern Bell's headquarters, and the Civic Center Station, on a bridge structure sandwiched between West Peachtree Street and Interstate 75/85, is tied to the Peachtree Summit building; MARTA is one of the tenants.

Further south is the Peachtree Center stop, with access to the Atlanta Apparel Mart and Georgia Pacific's headquarters. This stop is still under construction, and trains will not halt there for several months.

Also becoming operational with the opening of the new link is the north-south portion of the Five Points station, the hub of the system, and the Garnett stop, the first station on the South line. The new segment of MARTA's rail system adds 1.9 miles to the network.

► One day later, on December 5, ceremonies were held to mark the opening of three new MetroRail stations on WMATA's Red Line; regular operation began the following day.

WMATA's rail network is now 39.21 miles long, with 44 stations in service. It is planned to ultimately include 86 stations along 101 miles of line.

The new extension runs northward from Dupont Circle under Connecticut Avenue, including stations at Woodley Park-Zoo, Cleveland Park, and Van Ness-UDC. The escalators at Woodley Park are, at 204 feet, the longest in the free world.

### Chicago Comment: Monorails and Open Windows

► A monorail is proposed to link the parking garage in Chicago's Grant Park with a new restaurant to be built in an abandoned Coast Guard station on the breakwater south of Navy Pier. The company, PRT Systems Corporation of Chicago Heights, has been trying to sell the city on the concept for many years, with little luck.

Prospects became a little brighter when restaurateur Arnie Morton developed the restaurant idea and a companion marina; a monorail, said the company, would be "a piece of cake" as a means of transit to and from the complex. The system would cost \$1,500,000 to build, and would be privately financed in return for the use of the city's air rights. The city would also get a share of the profits.

► Given the cost of buying, fueling and maintaining diesel buses with air-conditioning, the Chicago Transit Authority is seriously considering purchasing new units without that "luxury". The CTA is about to let a contract for new buses, and the option of non-A/C is being seriously con-

sidered. The Authority is known to want to shun the Advanced Design Bus in future purchases because of the raft of problems associated with the ADB, and an order for conventional "Fishbowls" from GM of Canada is a decided possibility.

► More details on CTA's winter program to battle snow; steps include:

-Purchase of a specially designed diesel-powered Snow Remover Vehicle (from Japan) with a high-capacity snow thrower at each end. Each snow thrower is capable of removing up to 1500 tons of snow an hour. The vehicle also is equipped with rotating brooms on each side to clear snow from third rails.

-Equipping all "L" cars with under-the-coupler snow plows to provide snow clearance in regular train operation.

-Creating three four-car SnowFighter train (out of 1950's-vintage 6000-series cars), each equipped with a five-foot-high, heavy-duty snow plow at one end and a smaller snow plow under the coupler at the other end. These trains also dispense de-icing chemicals to keep power rails free of insulating ice.

-Acquisition of 100 additional electric motors to increase the capability to quickly replace damaged motors.

-Installation of Irish linen covers to screen out snow from air intakes of "L" car motors which receive ventilating air from below the car's floor level.

-Expansion of the inventory of "L" car motor parts to increase the capability for quick repair of winter damage.

-Completion of weather-proofing existing motors on "L" trains. Motor cases, armatures, and other parts received a hot vacuum-pressure impregnation treatment, sealing them rock-hard to increase their resistance to damaging moisture.

-Installation of additional sleet scrapers on rapid transit cars to help keep the power rails clear of insulating ice.

-Installation of electric heaters on power rails on 13 inclines on the "L"-subway system. In addition, 28 miles of power rails have been fitted with electric heaters to help keep them ice-free.

A \$2,500,000 program to provide a modern public-address system for the CTA's 140 rapid transit stations and their platforms is also underway.

► The Authority has completed its 600-hour testing program on the first four-car set of its new 2600-series Budd-built rapid transit cars, paving the way for the delivery of the remaining 296 in the first part of the contract. The option for an additional 300 was exercised in October; all 600 are expected to be in service by 1984.

► Headline from the Chicago *Sun-Times* early in December: "11 million RTA rider loss: Drop since year ago blamed on service cuts, fare hikes." [The subhead comments far more eloquently than we could. -RRK]



## Urban Report: A Reprieve and a Homecoming

► Unexpected delays in the delivery of signal equipment are causing a 60- to 90-day delay in the extension of electric rail service from South Amboy to Matawan (NJ). Operation was originally expected to begin by the end of December with the extension of the electrification.

As a result of the equipment delays, New Jersey Transit is postponing consideration of a plan to eliminate the use of GG-1 locomotives on the route. Under that plan, riders from stations on the non-electrified portion of the North Jersey Coast Line would have to change trains in Newark.

An engine change from electric to diesel is currently required at South Amboy on the outbound trip (and the reverse on the Manhattan-bound run); complicating the delay is the EPA order for mandatory retirement of the GG-1's by January 1 because they use dangerous PCB's as a transformer coolant. NJ Transit has applied for a two-year waiver of the rule in order not to disrupt service on the line.

► As TC has reported, San Francisco's Municipal Railway has reversed an earlier policy calling for removal of track and overhead on Market Street when the light-rail subway under that thoroughfare is in full operation. Continuing problems with the new Boeing LRV's has delayed implementation of that program, and, as we have noted in these pages, PCC operation on weekends continues on the surface.

Trackage on Market Street is now to be retained for emergency purposes, as well as for a tourist operation that will flower during the [hopefully] temporary absence from the scene of all cable car service beginning next September.

To this end, a fleet of historical cars is being assembled as a partial replacement for the lure of the cable cars during their rebuilding process. The "queen" of the fleet, of course, is Muni Holman-built car #1, currently in excursion service on alternate weekends, going, as its head sign says, "NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR".

A recent arrival at Muni's shops is "Iron Monster" 178, long at the Rio Vista Trolley Museum. 178 arrived at the old Geneva barns in late September, to join sister 0131. That car, formerly 130, has been the Muni wrecker for many years, and is being restored to its passenger configuration by Muni shop forces. A Hamburg (West Germany) car rounds out the "nostalgia fleet".

Elsewhere in San Francisco, trolley coach operation is to come soon (if it hasn't already by the time TC reaches you) to the 55/SACRAMENTO line, helping to relieve a chronic shortage of diesel buses.

► The Jacksonville (FL) Transportation

Authority has awarded a contract for 63 Advanced Design Buses to Grumman . . . James City County Transit, a rural Virginia operator, has purchased four GMC 3102 coaches from the Colonial Williamsburg tourist operation . . . The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) is to be the first U.S. property to offer the TeleRide computerized passenger information system developed in Canada. With TeleRide, a prospective rider calls a special telephone number to determine the time the next bus reaches his stop. No telephone operators are required, and the information can be updated as needed.

► The San Diego Trolley exceeded first-year ridership projections in less than three months. Average daily ridership is 11,000 (and growing); the first-year projection was estimated to be 9,800 riders each day. Double-tracking of the line is proceeding apace, targeted for summer completion.

► The Generic Bus: Eisner Food Stores, a downstate unit of the giant Jewel combine, and the Champaign-Urbana (IL) Mass Transit District have cooperatively introduced the Generic Bus.

A refurbished 1960 GMC TDH-4517, the Generic Bus is painted to resemble the packaging used for generic food products sold by the Jewel chain, in a livery of white with olive drab and black striping. A former Peoria coach, the Generic Bus operated on CUMTD routes through the beginning of December. As is appropriate of any generic product, the cost to ride the Generic Bus was less; a ride aboard it cost 25¢, rather than the standard CUMTD 40¢ rate. The promotion also included the distribution of free samples of generic products to passengers on the special coach.

► The Carpenter Body Works established a new plant to construct its multipurpose coaches in North Vernon, Indiana. Carpenter is a 60-year veteran in the bus manufacturing industry, and one of the major producers of U.S. school buses . . . Elsewhere in Indiana, the Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) is experimenting with reduced fares (from 35¢ to 30¢) as its version of the "Super Saver" promotion now common on the nation's airlines . . . The city of New Castle has received five lift-equipped Wayne Transette buses, which now comprise the entire transit system of that Indiana city, NOW (New Castle On Wheels).

► The articulated bus designed by the Ikarus works in Hungary has now gained a foothold in Louisville, Portland and San Mateo (CA). The Ikarus coaches sold in the U.S. are equipped with Cummins diesel engines, and Allison transmissions, and are assembled in California by Crown Coach, the firm's U.S. licensee. The Hungarian parent expects to sell almost 14,000 units next year, many built as joint ventures with

home-country manufacturers.

► Ikarus, of course, is not alone in seeking U.S. markets for its transit coaches. West Germany's M-A-N has gained a substantial niche in domestic sales, and Neoplan is gearing up for a similar push. Now France's Renault is mounting an assault on the market through the use of a pair of demonstrators on New York's TA.

The Renault's body is white with a blue racing stripe. At 98 inches wide, it is four inches narrower than the standard U.S.-built wide coach, but is two inches wider than a Hino (Japanese) model also under test by the TA.

One bus has 33 seats, the other 39; nominal capacity is 41. Neither has air-conditioning of wheelchair lifts, but the French coaches can be so retrofitted. The Renault windows are lightly tinted, in fact almost clear-incontrast to the heavily tinted U.S. versions. And, the dashboard even has a clock.

► The squat black taxis that are a symbol of London are to be allowed to carry advertisements, breaking an 85-year-old ban first imposed on their horse-drawn ancestors. At the same time, about 250 taxis introduced coin-operated radios for passengers. Both innovations, say the city's 17,000 licensed cabdrivers, are necessary to cope with the ravages of inflation.

## RAIL

### Railway Report Amtrak Agony, British "Bullet"

► Amtrak's new reservations computer was not without its glitches when it went on-line some weeks ago. First, the Corporation discovered that about one-fifth of the available Pullman space on trains around the country had been sold twice; then the computer indicated all sleepers were sold out, even though there was plenty of room throughout the system.

Most of the space problems have been solved; Amtrak blames the difficulty on the need to quickly replace one overloaded reservations system with another far more sophisticated one in a very short period of time. The Corporation, by the way, logs more than 200,000 calls for information and/or reservations each week.

► Anxious to gain a foothold in the speed race, Britain has unveiled its own high-speed Advanced Passenger Train, which entered regular passenger service early in December.

British Rail's APT incorporates a revolutionary design that tilts the cars as they negotiate curves, enabling the train to use existing track at higher speeds than were previously considered possible.

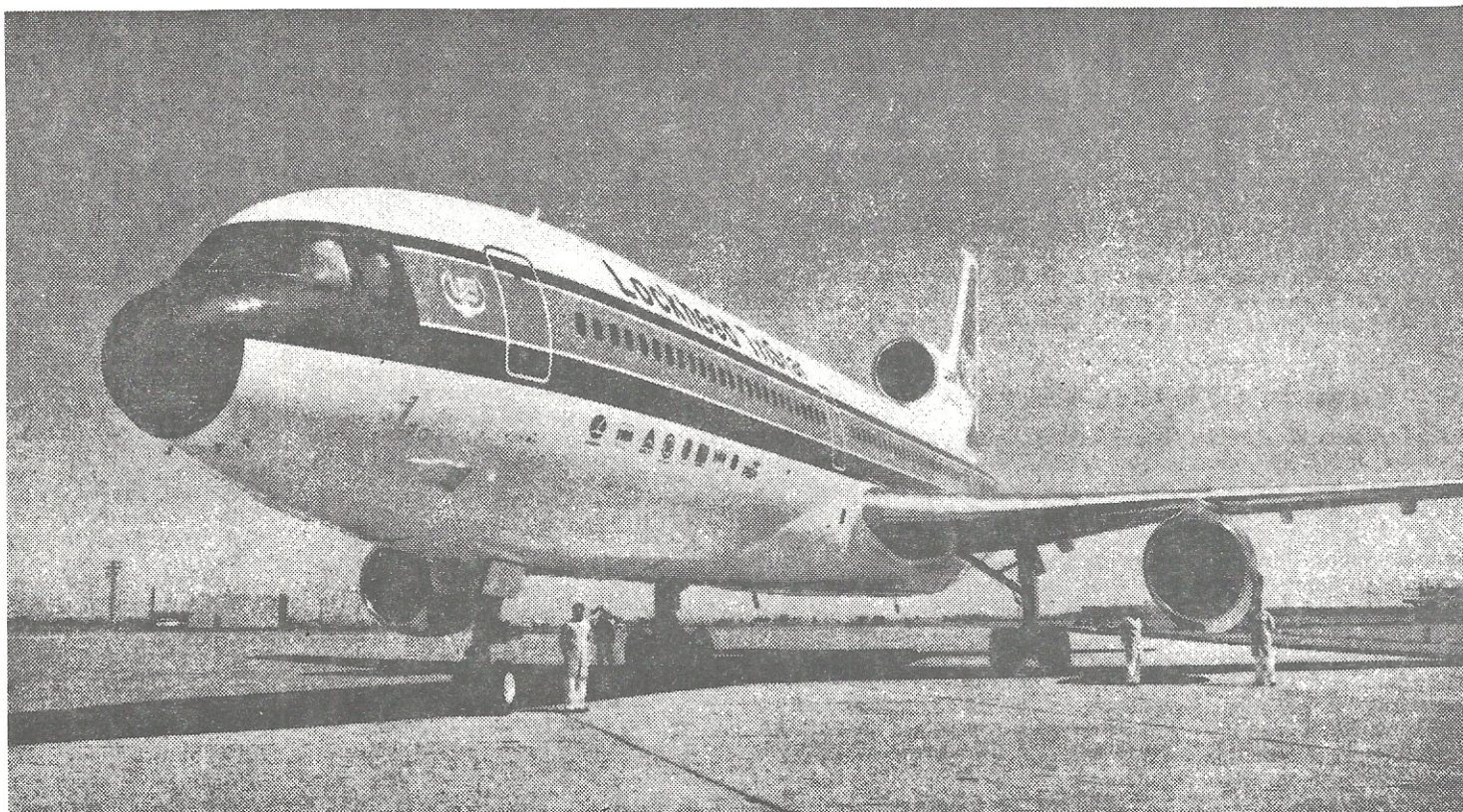




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## FIRST CLASS MAIL

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### ☆ TriStar nears initial flight

The first of the new Lockheed TriStars is off the assembly line and getting ready for her maiden flight—powered by Rolls-Royce fanjet engines.

The TriStar is easily one of the most sophisticated airliners ever built. Its body

is almost twenty feet wide and can take up to 345 passengers. The three Rolls-Royce RB.211 engines are designed to be extremely clean and quiet—cleaner and quieter than jet engines half their size. They will generate over 40,000 pounds of thrust apiece, and do it on surprisingly

little fuel. Result: An airliner economical enough for short intercity hops, versatile enough for cross-country flights.

To date, 178 TriStars have been ordered. Customers include Eastern, TWA, Delta, Air Canada, Air Jamaica and Pacific Southwest.