

transport central



"Traveling in these sure beat those airborne sardine cans."

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INTERFACE

How About Some Transportation Priorities?

In the last 10-15 years this country, its government, selected groups, and a portion of its citizens have become increasingly aware of the partially related issues of the environment and the availability of energy sources. As a society, and I include even those supposedly well-informed individuals such as scientists, we still know precious little about either the environment or the availability and quantity of energy sources.

But some tentative conclusions are now possible merely by examining the more obvious data available. And it appears that these conclusions lead one to say that we as a society had better start making some decisions and acting on them.

The following statistics are from the year 1980:

- U.S. population is 7% of world population.
- U.S. crude oil use is 26% of total world use.
- U.S. uses 53.8% of its oil for transportation, and 49.4% of that amount is for private cars; thus, private cars use 4.28 million barrels per day (MB/D). The 4.28 MB/D is roughly 1/4 of all the oil the U.S. uses.

Now let us look at some very interesting population statistics: Of the 265,00,000 people in the U.S., 103,000,000 live in the major metropolitan areas, and of these roughly one-half, or some 50,000,000, reside in outer suburban areas.

The suburbanites in this country have historically shunned public transportation (or so the story goes), but the writer wonders whether the opposite isn't the case, and transportation agencies haven't in fact shunned suburbanites.

At any rate, the people who drive to work daily in these metro areas use a staggering amount of fuel, especially since many of them drive long distances, and very few cars carry more than one person.

If one assumes that one-third of these 50,000,000 drive to work, and further that a substantial percentage can be diverted to public transportation, then a truly meaningful savings in fuel consumption would result.

The reader may well say at this point, "Great idea, but it will never happen because the cost in construction and operating subsidies would be astronomical!"

I beg to differ with that opinion, even though it is a commonly held one. Between the utilization of buses and the revival of existing rail lines, a tremendous amount of service can be rendered at little or no capital cost. And, as regards operating losses, it has been proven that where services are tailored to needs, operating deficits are either very low or nonexistent.

The writer sees the real problems as being elsewhere. In order to accomplish (or even begin) the type of program just mentioned, two basic ingredients are required—leadership and a clear understanding of how and when people will patronize public transportation. One other ingredient which also plays a part is national priorities as they affect transit, either directly or indirectly.

Public transportation is, simply put, a service, and as such has to be marketed and sold. Why? Because its main competitor, the private automobile, is something that is sold to the public constantly. In order for people to realize that a usable (and in many cases better) alternative exists it has to be put before the public eye on a continuing basis.

This marketing of public transportation has essentially been nonexistent. The reason for this goes back to public transit's past history. Transit companies in the period 1910-1945 were generally successful enough to stay in business and earn at least a small profit. They capitalized on having a somewhat captive market, in the process developed a highly complacent attitude. The steady and

constantly increasing encroachment of the private automobile on their traffic did not ring any warning bells until well into the 1950's and even the 1960's—by which time it was usually far too late.

Beginning in the 1950's, and extending into the present, public transit increasingly became the province of governmental bodies. These agencies have suffered from three distinct problems. The first has been that since they were originally staffed with many of the management employees of the private carriers, the complacent attitude previously mentioned was simply carried on.

This attitude was then strengthened by two factors. The first was the entry into these agencies of professionally trained transportation planners. These individuals, while in many cases well-intentioned, were not—and are not today—equipped for the task. They have no practical experience, only a theoretical background—and worse, their training has almost exclusively been by other theoreticians who relate well to numbers but not to people. Thus, these planners don't understand under what circumstances people are attracted to public transit, or how transportation systems work and what their strengths and limitations are.

The second factor is the age-old and worldwide existence of government bureaucrats who have little motivation to strive for improvements and excellence.

The insertion of the bureaucrat into the planning and operating process was a result of the governmental takeovers of transit and the accompanying introduction of separate regional planning agencies. These agencies have exhibited the very worst traits of bureaucratic planners working in ivory towers and planning in a vacuum; their total output has had the same solid quality as the above-mentioned vacuum.

But not only did these planning agencies contribute nothing tangible, in their self-perpetuating arrogance they managed to consistently subvert plans put forth by others while tying down future plans with their multi-year documents of refined gibberish. Thus, even during the 1970's, when sizeable public funds were being made available for transit, much of it was totally wasted.

Still another factor which has generally been ignored is the tremendous change in the geography of the metropolitan area. For example, the Chicago Metro Area doubled in population from 1940 to 1980—but its area expanded on the order of 400-500%. Thus, metro areas, while they grew in population, were simultaneously reducing the population densities. These changes, while greatly affecting public transit services, were generally ignored, and went practically unnoticed during the 1950's and 1960's.

Having defined, at least partially, the problem—and assuming that solutions are important to the well-being of this country, let us look at some strategies which could be implemented in order to bring about the badly needed results.

First and foremost, there must be a general acceptance of the premise that public transportation must *actively* strive to succeed and to serve greater numbers. In metropolitan areas transportation should be viewed as the fourth necessity of life as we know it, coming right after food, clothing and shelter. To foster such a premise it must first be clearly enunciated in the local enabling laws which give virtually all transit agencies their basic direction. However, to give meaning to the premise some enlightened leadership is required, and this may be hard to locate. Ensuring that transit agencies are free of local political ties would be a first step toward creating the type of environment that could identify and attract such leadership.

Secondly, there needs to be a far better recognition of the various specific elements of any transit service, and of how the actual or potential user perceives and reacts to these elements. These elements include routing, frequency, speed, specific scheduling, safety, comfort, fare structure and connections.

The one element most often mentioned by the public is convenience; this in turn translates into three basics:

- 1) Can transit take riders to their destinations?
- 2) Does it do so at the right times?
- 3) Is there a minimum of transferring and waiting?

The historically acceptable and generally used approach of grid systems and memory schedules may have been effective in the cities of the 1920's and '30's, but is pretty well useless in today's metro areas with their distant and more diverse destinations, haphazard street layouts, and less dense population concentrations.

Third, transit agencies must be operated in the same manner as businesses. No longer can they count on continuing subsidies. While subsidies may indeed always be required, the systems need to be managed on a cost-effective basis consistent with effectively serving the greatest number of people. This entails, at the minimum, the following components:

1. Planning which, to the largest extent possible, is based on empirical data and goals rather than theoretical ones, and which is not superseded by any other regional planning organization.
2. Accounting systems which clearly show the costs and incomes of each segment of a large transit system.
3. A comprehensive auditing system which is capable of assessing financial activities as well as operational efficiencies and rider satisfaction.
4. An aggressive and creative marketing department.
5. A continuing means of dealing with operating unions effectively.
6. A trained and responsible cadre of managers and supervisors.
7. An in-house training capability.

All of the above components working together harmoniously should result in an organization which is able to operate

in both a responsive and responsible manner.

One of the side benefits of healthy increases in all types of ridership (i.e., rush-hour, off-peak, student, senior citizen, weekend, evening) is that the gigantic deficits currently being generated could be greatly reduced. A second benefit could well be a slow but steady reduction in fares. And, of course, a great many more people could be served by and benefit from the advantages of public transit.

Having said all this, the question still remains as to how such an organization can be created in a metro area, given today's realities of entrenched bureaucrats, local politics, and a general lack of understanding of the general and specific problems involved.

The approach to what seems to offer the most likelihood of success is one where a grass-roots, consumer-oriented coalition can be successfully created consisting of concerned citizens, independent politicians, civic organizations and interested professionals and businessmen. Such an organization would have the rather awesome task of achieving the three following tasks:

1. Helping to determine long- and short-term goals for the area's public transit.
2. Taking the necessary steps to structure (or restructure, as the case may be) the area's transit agency.
3. Evaluating on a continuing basis the agency's performance while acting as a clearinghouse for rider needs and reactions.

These goals certainly add up to a formidable load for any volunteer organization with only a small nucleus of salaried employees. But the U.S. has a history of truly impressive achievements on the part of volunteer groups. And, as has been clearly demonstrated in a few metropolitan areas, it can be done.

The beneficial results of such an effort, many of which are subtle and thus not readily visible, would be tremendous. Not only would many residents benefit directly, but the metropolitan area, its many institutions and its population as a whole would also benefit in many diverse ways.

The city of Pittsburgh has achieved some results with a citizen's group of this general type. Many more such groups are urgently, if not desperately, needed elsewhere throughout our country. There is now the need for small, unselfish and open-minded nuclei of citizens to begin the same process elsewhere.

True, if successful, the process and its results could mean some fundamental changes in the very structure of metro areas. One such change took place in the period 1950-1975, when influences of the automobile, highway construction, government financing and the movement of families out of central cities brought about today's metro areas. Today the problems besetting these areas constitute time bombs which in the next 20 years could mean lower standards of living and a spreading of misery and chaos where only the good things of life were supposed to prevail.

Grass-roots leadership is needed now to begin this long-overdue process of renewal of the transit system with its attendant changes in the metro areas served. No other viable approach to the overall problems of public transit appears to be at hand.

Public transportation in our many metropolitan areas must receive a high priority in 1982. The time for action is already long past. This country can no longer afford to ignore an area of public concern and activity which affects and influences almost *half* of this country's population.

—CLAUDE G. LUISADA

[Claude Luisada is a Chicago businessman, Civil Air Patrol member, former transportation consultant and suburban bus operator currently active in improving area public transit.]

TRANSIT

Chicago Comment: Shuttle Swan Song, Ridership Report, CLOUT Commentary

► Quantitatively, transit service in Chicago continues to shrink, as the latest round of cuts went into effect (on the surface system January 3, on the rapid transit network January 24), part and parcel of the Chicago Transit Authority's steps to stem the flow of red ink on its books.

Yet another substantial group of bus routes were either eliminated or trimmed (earlier cuts were made in September); included in the excisions were two shuttle routes of long standing.

Route 149/STATELINER, operating from the Soldier Field parking lot on the lake-

front to the Merchandise Mart by way of State Street, was inherited from the Chicago Motor Coach Company when that Omnibus Corporation subsidiary was sold to the CTA in 1952; it provided reduced-rate service linking the parking lot with downtown, as well as offering a convenient connection to the two subway lines from the Merchandise Mart office complex. In its place, two regular-fare routes were altered to offer some replacement service.

Route 15/CANAL-WACKER was a former Chicago Surface Lines bus run that had partially replaced a largely redundant

rail line stemming from the grand 1924 route consolidation. In its most recent form, route 15 linked Navy Pier on the lakefront to an industrial area immediately southwest of the Loop, by way of Wacker Drive and the commuter rail stations on Canal Street. It was the longest shuttle-fare line on the system, and was heavily patronized to and from the railway stations in peak hours. It, too, has been replaced in part by reroutings of other regular-fare lines.

On the rapid transit side, the Ravenswood route was further trimmed to bobtail at Belmont Avenue during late evening hours

[trains had been running through to the Loop until well after midnight].

West-Northwest trains operating to the two branches [Douglas and Congress] will run on increased intervals in late evening and owl hours, and between 10:00 p.m. and 12:30 a.m., alternate trains will be turned back at the Morgan "pocket" just west of the Halsted station in the Congress Expressway, lengthening the headways on the branches to 30 minutes. [Original plans had called for discontinuance of all owl service on the Congress branch; public protest forestalled such a cut.]

In addition, service on the Skokie Swift was discontinued in late evening hours, and a number of stations were shut during certain off-peak hours.

➤ All of these changes were put in place as a result of the adoption of an austerity budget for 1982.

Not surprisingly, the budget and service cuts have spurred much criticism. One of the most vocal groups critical of CTA and RTA policy is the acronymically styled CLOUT (ChicagoLanders Organized to Upgrade Transit), which ridiculed the CTA's reform budget and urged the agency to adopt a sweeping program of economy measures, calling the 106-page document [first to incorporate line items, as opposed to a total amount "requisitioned" by each department] "a damning indictment of CTA waste and mismanagement."

CLOUT noted that the budget calls for most CTA secretaries, typists, clerks, material handlers and bus servicemen to be paid well over \$20,000 annually; CTA bus drivers will be paid nearly three times more than the going rate at private suburban bus companies.

Among the economy measures urged by CLOUT are:

- rolling back CTA salaries up to 30%
- substituting opening windows for air-conditioning on buses and trains
- consolidating CTA and RTA office space into a low-rent building [CTA occupies 1 1/4 floors in the Merchandise Mart, a property of the Kennedy family, and RTA has several floors in Marina City, owned by a confidant of the Mayor].
- consolidating parallel CTA and RTA departments for law, library services, personnel, planning, purchasing, public relations, complaints, etc.
- reducing IC Electric fares within Chicago to 90¢, and allowing those passengers to use 10¢ CTA/RTA transfers [a similar plan for the area north of 79th Street on the main line and South Chicago branch is expected to go into effect soon].
- routing Dan Ryan B trains to Ravenswood, instead of out Lake Street, since the Lake Street leg has but half the patronage of the Ryan segment.
- eliminating many official cars used by CTA management.
- abolishing the Administrative Joint

Commission [set up by the city as a part of its plan to take over control of the agency from the state].

- suspending the CTA newsletter.

CLOUT also criticized a new agreement between the CTA and its operating unions that keeps the controversial cost-of-living allowance in place in return for several concessions by the union. The group has charged that such a settlement, which will extend the present contract for two years, will cost an additional \$60,000,000, and will pave the way for a crippling strike in December 1983, when the pact expires.

➤ To simplify a situation that had unduly penalized some regular riders, the CTA revised its surcharge plan for express buses (express fare is \$1.00) to call for the collection of both segments of the extra fare in the p.m. rush. Riders boarding outbound express buses in the Loop will pay a 20¢ surcharge when they board. Inbound riders will pay the regular 90¢ fare as they board; outbound rides on express buses on the local portion of the route in outlying areas will also cost 90¢.

➤ A condemnation suit has been filed by the Regional Transportation Authority seeking to acquire the privately owned Suburban Transit System of Oak Lawn, one of the four major non-public bus carriers the agency currently subsidizes. STS operates a network of routes in the southwest suburbs of Chicago, and is the last of the four to face a court date. The West Towns Bus Company has already been purchased by the RTA, and condemnation proceedings are pending against the Waukegan North Chicago Transit Company and South Suburban SafeWay Lines. All four properties are to be assigned to Cincinnati-based ATE Management and Service Company for management.

➤ Following up our earlier item several issues back on declining ridership in the RTA service area, figures through November for commuter railroads and through December for suburban bus lines have been released, and show graphically the dramatic drop in ridership in the wake of 1981 fare increases and service cuts.

On the rail lines, overall ridership was down 27.8 percent in November over a year ago, continuing the pattern of declines since last August.

The Burlington Northern and Chicago & North Western, as well as the Norfolk & Western showed decreases in riding, while the Illinois Central Gulf and the Rock Island posted slight increases. The South Shore Line, however, recorded a dramatic hike in riding, gaining more than 6,000 riders in the year ending last November 30. [Only the Illinois tariffs [largely to Hegewisch, one of the busiest stations on the electric line] were increased; the railroad has applied to the Interstate Commerce Commission for a hike in interstate fares].

On the suburban bus lines administered by the RTA, December ridership increased by about 5 percent over November. However, patronage is still down almost 34 percent over the same period last year. [Some excursions in service on the bus routes, largely in off-peak periods and particularly on weekends, has yet to be restored.]

It should also be noted that ridership is down significantly on the Milwaukee Road's two suburban rail divisions as well. The Milwaukee, currently in bankruptcy, withdrew from the RTA last year with the assent of the federal court, and imposed a 75% fare increase on its riders. With that hike, the road came close to breaking even on its suburban services; the same can also be said of several of the RTA rail lines, most notably the North Western.

NOPSI Notes: Contracts and Subsidies

➤ Transit workers late in December overwhelmingly approved a new, 12-month contract with New Orleans Public Service, Inc., heading off a threatened strike. The vote came just after the New Orleans City Council voted to subsidize the city's bus system for another six months.

The new contract calls for 9 percent across-the-board wage increases as well as improvements in numerous fringe benefits. The hikes boost hourly wage levels to \$8.45 for the most experienced drivers.

Less than half of the 798-member union approved NOPSI's contract proposal by a reported 17-to-1 margin, pending clarification of a single clause by union and company officials. The clause allows NOPSI to close down the system after as little as one month if the city does not provide the money to run the system. The company agrees to pay operators' salaries for at least one month, but does not promise to uphold the contract through the full 12 months. Although the union cannot accept this clause, it agreed to forestall any job action pending its clarification to the satisfaction of the local.

➤ Earlier, the City Council, in an unusual move, agreed to keep the transit system running until June 30, 1982. After that, a \$16,000,000 transit deficit will force the council to find new revenues, increase fares or drastically reduce service to keep the system alive.

NOPSI operates the city's transit system under a subsidy agreement with the City Council. Thirty-five streetcars and 473 buses serve about 270,000 riders each workday.

The prevailing opinion among many councilmen is that New Orleans must find a permanent source of money for the transit system. A city task force is considering a number of possible revenue measures, in-

cluding taxes on employees and parking.

At the same meeting, the Council also passed a resolution saying the best way to solve New Orleans' transit problem is to create a metropolitan bus system operated by the Regional Transit Authority. But councilmen warned that the city must present new tax proposals to the voters in the spring so revenues would be available before June 30.

If a permanent source of transit revenue is not found by June 30, the city will likely have to drastically reduce bus and streetcar service and significantly increase fares, moves that would have a crippling effect on the transit system.

Recent figures show NPSI earnings will fall about \$35,000,000 below expenses for the year. Local, state and federal money is expected to make up about \$19,000,000 of the deficit, leaving the city to decide on ways and means of covering the additional \$16,000,000.

Transit Tabloid: Tax Breaks and Trolleys

► U.S. transit systems have until March 1 to negotiate the sale of depreciation rights on transit vehicles purchased during 1981, according to the U.S. Treasury. The new regulations are not limited to sale/leaseback transactions for vehicles purchased in 1981, but apply to those of future years as well.

A number of cities have taken advantage of the new regulations to secure much-needed funding in this era of federal cut-backs; the list is growing, and includes New York, Boston and Houston.

► The New York City Transit Authority's new RTS buses from General Motors were delivered with a new device that activates a warning light and beeper when a passenger steps over the white line behind the driver.

However, after months of beeping and flashing, the TA has decided to have the warning devices disconnected, citing the fact that the sound was "driving everybody crazy" and did not fit into New York commuting patterns, especially during the rush hour, when the coaches are jammed to the front doors.

► The last of the 160 MetroBuses borrowed from Washington in the temporary absence of the trouble-plagued Grumman went out of service in New York City December 17, exactly one year after they arrived in 1980. The 15-year-old coaches from WMATA's reserve fleet were rented by the TA to take the place of the 870's.

Of a total order of 837 Grumman, 239 had been put back in service by the end of the year after repairs. Under a recently extended agreement, the last of the 870's must be back by March 31. Beyond that

date, the TA does not have to accept them—or pay for them.

Separately, all 837 General Motors RTS Model O4 coaches ordered by the TA are now in service on New York streets; the last arrived late in December.

► Bombardier was awarded a contract valued at more than \$5,000,000 (Cdn) by New York's MTA for six aluminum push-pull commuter rail cars.

The coaches are virtually identical to 117 cars ordered earlier from Bombardier by New Jersey Transit, and will be operated jointly by the two transit agencies on the former Erie-Lackawanna lines out of Hoboken north into New York State.

The cars will be built in Quebec, with final assembly at Bombardier's Barre (VT) facility.

► The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has ordered 620 RTS O4 Advanced Design Buses for routes within its service area... GM of Canada recently delivered its 10,000th bus in 20 years of production, one of an order of 160 for the Toronto Transit Commission.

► The long-delayed waterfront streetcar line in Seattle is now promised for a spring debut. Three cars from Melbourne, Australia are currently in the process of being rehabilitated for the mile-long route between Washington and Broad Streets.

Construction of a barn and preparation of the overhead, power and signal facilities is also going forward toward a projected May opening.

As is currently the practice on the monorail to the 1964 World's Fair site, Seattle Metro will operate and maintain the trolley route for the city.

► Those two foreign transit coaches in test service for the New York City Transit Authority have finished their demonstrator duties in Gotham and are now in Buffalo.

Both the Japanese Hino and the French Renault (a joint venture with Mack) will later move on to Rochester, Syracuse, Albany and Westchester County for additional testing and evaluation.

► Nine new City Cruisers, manufactured by a Greyhound subsidiary, are now in service for the Washington County (MD) Transportation Commission County Commuter service, headquartered in the city of Hagerstown.

► Tampa's transit system, once a National City Lines property, has been renamed the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority; needless to say, its information telephone number has been christened the HART-Line.

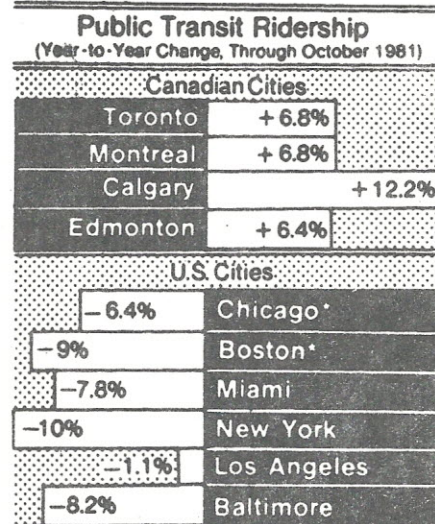
► A transit footnote to Super Bowl XVI, contested between the Cincinnati Bengals and the San Francisco 49ers in the Silver-

Dome in Pontiac, Michigan: Some 1200 buses of all stripes brought fans to the contest; a new feature at the gridiron duel this year was the use of two special trains operated by the Grand Trunk for SEMTA from Detroit. Fortunately, the SilverDome is located in an industrial area with excellent rail access, and only a temporary platform near the stadium needed to be constructed to serve Super Bowl patrons.

► A lengthy article in the *Wall Street Journal* recently pointed up the great disparity in ridership between U.S. and Canadian properties. While riding in New York dropped 10% in the first ten months of last year, riding in Calgary went up over 12 per cent.

Because the Canadian systems are modern, clean and generally free of crime, they are widely accepted in their communities as a way to get to work, to go shopping or to reach entertainment spots of an evening. Toronto's transit system, for example, carries more than three times as many passengers as Boston's though the cities have comparable populations.

Accompanying the *WSJ* article was a graph dramatically portraying the disparity; it is reproduced below.



*Chicago figure is through September. Boston figure is an estimate.
Source: American Public Transit Association

► The drive to collect enough contributions to fund the local share of the cable car rehabilitation project in San Francisco, set to begin in October, has some \$5,600, pledged thus far toward a total goal of \$10,000,000. (Send your contributions to the Muni, and help preserve history).

► A new firm, Toronto Streetcar Tours, is offering both CLRV and Peter Witt excursions on Toronto streets. For further information, write the company at Suite 401, 3 Massey Square, Toronto M4C 5L5.

► A recent article in the *Christian Science Monitor* reports on several ways some transit operators are coping with the shut-off of federal operating dollars. San Diego,

for example, built its new trolley line to the border without the use of any federal funds, and relies on the city and county for operating assistance. Bridgeport (CT) is using private contractors wherever possible to provide service during rush hours, and is even thinking of leasing buses to private contractors to meet peak demand. The Greater Bridgeport Transit District has contracted with a private, non-profit operator to provide service to the elderly and handicapped at half what it would cost the authority.

In addition, the District has experimented with different forms of marketing. Instead of selling monthly passes at a discount, it sells them at full price. However, the GBTD has been fairly successful at getting employers to subsidize the cost of these passes to their employees; some firms pick up the entire tab for their workers because it is equivalent to the cost of providing them with parking. In addition, the system has conducted a successful campaign to get merchants near transit stations to offer discount coupons to those riders buying monthly passes.

Another type of cooperation that is becoming more common is joint development projects. These projects, which are being extensively pursued by the Washington Metro (among others), involve the leasing of air rights above stations to developers who build office and retail space on the site.

► For the record, M.A.N. has orders for a total of 635 articulated coaches, placed by Seattle, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Washington, Denver, Westchester County (NY), Indianapolis, Nashville, Santa Clara County (CA), and Memphis.

Some 400 M.A.N. articulateds are currently in service in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Oakland, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, San Diego, San Rafael (CA), Seattle and Washington.

► Capital projects continue on the rail side as well: *Metro* magazine reports that almost every car builder has a backlog of orders—Budd, 1000; Bombardier, 277; Breda, 324; Hawker Siddeley, 93; and Kawasaki, 266.

Atlanta is going out on bids for 30 rapid transit cars, with an option for an additional 70; Calgary plans to buy 35 more light rail vehicles; Cleveland is negotiating with Tokyu Car Company for 60 heavy-rail cars; Pittsburgh is soliciting bids for 55 LRV's; BART is preparing to bid on 90 prototype rapid transit cars; and Toronto is preparing to order 24 Intermediate Capacity Transit System cars for its new Scarborough line.

RAIL

Track Topics Along the Right-of-Way

► The National Railways of Mexico has arranged financing for the largest North American electrification project in 50

years, a total of 385 route miles on two lines north of Mexico City. General Electric will build 39 locomotives for the two routes: 166 miles to Queretaro, for traffic to Monterrey, Nuevo Laredo and Ciudad Juarez, and 219 miles to Irapuato, for traffic to Guadalajara and Nogales; both corridors are northwest of Mexico City.

► Who says passenger trains are not popular with the American public—during the heated debates of last year over the fate of Amtrak by the Congress as the result of David Stockman's budget-cutting proposals, more letters (most of them handwritten, not mimeographed) on the subject than even the otherwise hot issue of Social Security arrived on Capitol Hill. Further, in one month alone last summer, there were more than 1,000 newspaper editorials on the subject. Not all of them were favorable to the Corporation, but few called for an end to the service.

► With the passage of the Northeast Rail Service Act of 1981, ConRail was relieved of the responsibility of providing commuter service, and a new subsidiary of Amtrak was created to take it over.

In addition, the Act provided an option for state commuter agencies to run the service themselves. They must decide by April 1 which course to follow, and the transfer is to be accomplished by January 1, 1983.

The new board of Amtrak Commuter will be comprised of three members from state commuter agencies and two from Amtrak. They will select the sixth, who will be president.

AIR

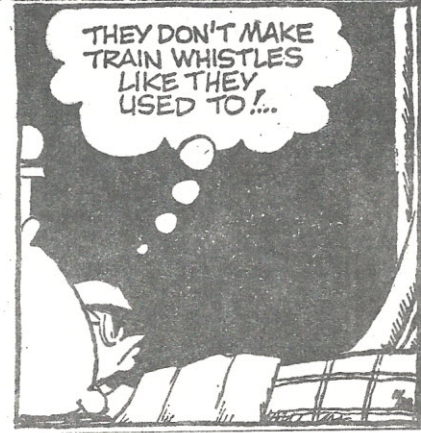
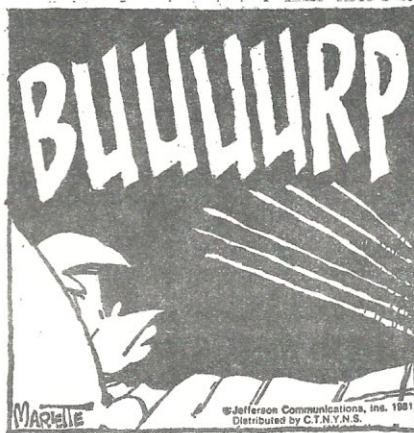
Jet Jottings: Notes From the Crowded Skies

► Icing on the wings of Air Florida flight 90 appears to be the principal cause of the January 13 crash into the 14th Street bridge over the Potomac in Washington. The transcript of the cockpit voice recorder reveals concern by the flight crew over the inability of the plane to gain sufficient lift, and an apparent problem with one of the instruments. And then, "We're going down!"

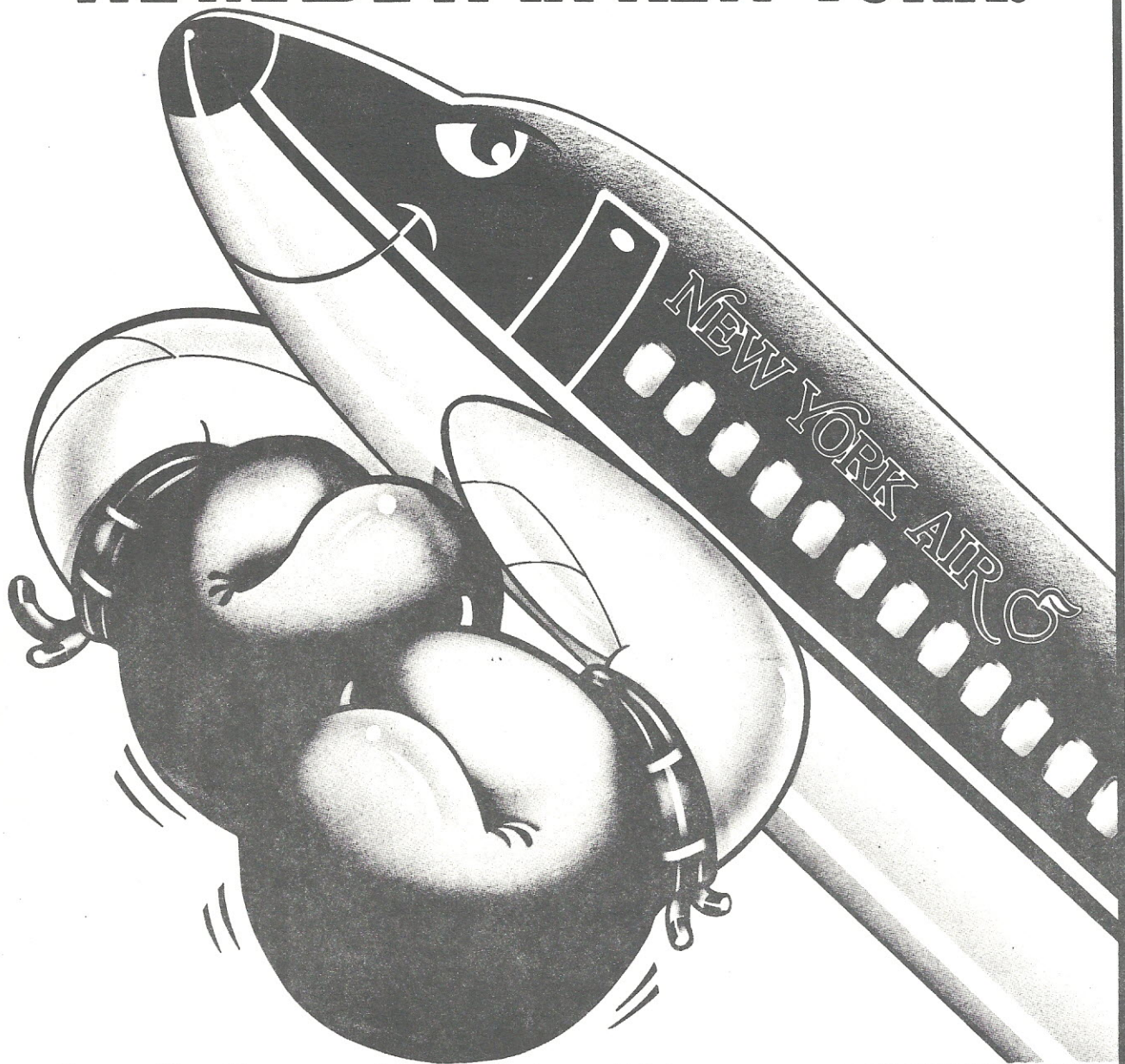
► The pilot of a World Airways DC10 was relying on two runway condition reports that were 45 minutes and two hours old when his plane skidded into Boston Harbor. Two persons, originally not thought to be on the plane, were apparently drowned in the accident.

The report was provided on a radio frequency set aside for information on field conditions reported by other pilots, and indicated braking conditions on Runway 15R were "fair to poor". It did not include a later report by a Delta pilot that braking conditions were "poor to nil".

KUDZU



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We did it because of the hard work and the winning attitude of the people of New York Air.

Thanks to your support, we made it in New York. And if we can make it here, we can make it anywhere.

MARKETS IN OUR FIRST YEAR	FARE BEFORE NEW YORK AIR	NEW YORK AIR FARE PLEASURE/EXECUTIVE
N.Y.-WASH.	\$60	\$29/49
BOSTON-WASH.	\$108	\$45/65
CLEVELAND-N.Y.	\$135	\$45/65
LOUISVILLE-N.Y.	\$172	\$69/89
BUFFALO-N.Y.	\$69	\$29/49
DETROIT-N.Y.	\$128	\$49/69
CINCINNATI-N.Y.	\$176	\$59/79
BOSTON-ORLANDO	\$179	\$79/99
BALTIMORE-ORLANDO	\$139	\$59/79
CLEVELAND-ORLANDO	\$159	\$89/109

NEW YORK AIR

WE'RE FIGHTING TO KEEP AIR FARES LOW.