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# Transport Central

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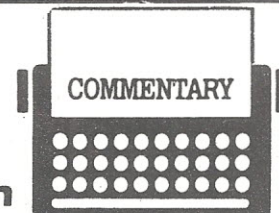


**FEBRUARY 1983**

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# INTERFACE



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## Watering down the transit crush

*[A new look at an old form of transport, from the "Point of View" Op-Ed column in the Chicago Tribune. -Ed.]*

There's a 12-mile-long superhighway running the length of the North Side of Chicago, but there's almost never been any traffic on it, not even during rush hours. It's called the North Branch of the Chicago River.

This is Chicago's sesquicentennial year. During these 150 years, the river has been little more than a natural barrier for neighborhoods, dead-ending streets, ending property lines and, alas, providing dumping grounds for industrial wastes. But if properly managed, the Chicago River could provide a connection for students to their schools; managers and workers to industry; shoppers to shopping and commercial centers; and all residents to Chicago's park system.

I am talking about creating a River Transportation System (RTS).

In 1979, Ald. Ivan Rittenberg [40th] and Ald. Anthony Laurino [39th] introduced a resolution into the City Council calling for hearings on the use of the city's waterways for public transportation. Ald. Vito Marzullo [25th], chairman of the Local Transportation Committee, has now agreed to hold hearings.

Ald. Rittenberg took up leadership for the planning phase. Rittenberg appointed John Ayres and myself as co-chairmen of a citizens' committee. Certain fundamental facts have been developed.

The city could operate a system of medium-sized boats, each capable of holding about 150 passengers. The craft would stop at five or six strategically placed docks. The system would provide an all-weather service since the river does not freeze even during the most severe winters, except for a thin coating of ice that occasionally forms in the downtown portion.

There are some natural restraints upon

the plan. The North Branch is generally wide and deep enough except north of Addison Street, where there are some shallow spots. That means that whatever craft are chosen must have a shallow draft. Such craft do exist and their costs are higher than those of city buses, but they have much longer lives and require less upkeep, thus making up many times the initial purchase price.

Protective sheathing might be required at some points in the river, especially in the North Shore Channel, to prevent erosion caused by wave action. However, this is inevitable even without river traffic, since the forces of nature alone have caused a deterioration of the river bank that cannot remain unchecked. Residents know that parts of the river bank nearer the Loop have been sheathed and, in places, seawalls exist.

There is also the possibility of using hovercraft, vessels that ride atop the water by the pressure of compressed air. These cause almost no wave action at all.

The North Branch cries out to be used for commuter transport. Tens of thousands of people live within easy walking distance. The list of communities that would benefit from a River Transportation Service includes North Town, Hollywood Park, Budlong, Albany Park, West Ravenswood, Horner Park, Riverview, Logan Square, Lathrop, Holstein Park and DePaul. Similarly, the South Branch could well serve Chinatown, Bridgeport, Brighton Park and other communities.

There can be no question of the value of a River Transportation System. The real question is what kind of transport should be used, who should operate it, how far it should run, where the stops should be and similar decisions.

*-Dick Bjorklund*



## □ On To O'Hare (Almost)

■ Regular passenger service on the first leg of the rapid transit extension to O'Hare International Airport is scheduled to begin Sunday, February 27, 1983 at 2:21 a.m.

Delayed a week beyond the original February 20 inaugural date to allow for completion of the cab signal system and to facilitate testing and crew training, regular service was preceded by a "final inspection train" on Thursday the 17th for city and CTA officials and the press. At ceremonies in the rotunda of the architecturally striking new River Road (Rosemont) station, the incumbent mayor [who was defeated in the primary five days later] officially turned over the truncated line to the CTA for operation.

Original plans had called for an opening of the entire line late last year. Two lengthy strikes intervened, however, pushing up the completion date to within striking distance of the important February 22 mayoral primary. It is an axiom of Chicago politics that public works projects with their high visibility are considered prime targets for all the hoopla that the Machine can muster when an election is nigh, hence the rush to open the facility within easy reach of the voters' memories.

When the walls began collapsing in the abuilding O'Hare station under its massive parking garage last year, all thought of a "RapidFest" (to use the current trendy terminology) went out the window, and it was decided to begin service on a bobtailed basis to River Road as soon as it was practicable to do so. The temporary terminal of the extension is about two miles from the airport station, and represents about the last outpost of civilization before entering the airport itself. (A curious quirk of Illinois law: although entirely surrounded by the village of Rosemont, the station itself, being within the right-of-way of the Kennedy Expressway spur to O'Hare Field, is physically within the city of Chicago by virtue of the municipal ownership of the roadway. Since Illinois law requires all sections of a municipality to be contiguous, the city in effect has "air rights" over the village of Rosemont at River Road, which the freeway crosses overhead, thus avoiding a bisecting of the suburb. The station, in fact, is dedicated in memory of a Chicago policeman slain in the line of duty.)

The main shop for the Kennedy branch is located adjacent to the station in the infield of the expressway; it is as yet unfinished, but some of its yard tracks are active, which will free the system's narrowest (and longest) yard back at Jefferson Park (in the expressway median) for through running and temporary storage.

The 5.4-mile segment of the extension to be opened February 27 also includes stations at Harlem Avenue and Cumberland, both also within the city. All three stops have bus interchange facilities (a number of CTA and suburban routes will be altered to feed the new line); Cumberland and River Road will each offer more than 700 all-day parking spaces for commuters who are expected to use the adjacent expressway to drive to and from a CTA connection. Harlem Avenue station, located in a built-up area, will only offer 33 kiss-n'-ride temporary parking spaces.

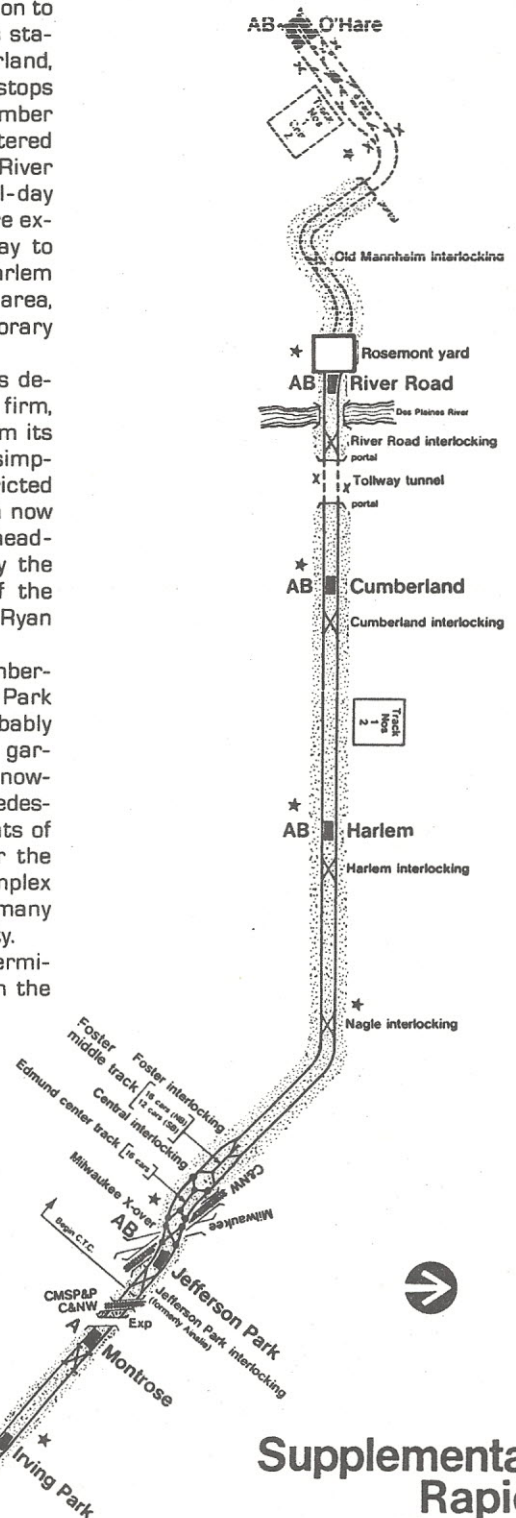
Each of the three new stations was designed by a different architectural firm, and each is significantly different from its counterparts. Harlem is perhaps the simplest, being located in a rather constricted area. It is of a straightforward design now common to the Chicago system, with head-house and separate bus bridge. Only the small temporary parking lot west of the stop distinguishes it from stops on the Ryan line, for example.

A mile-and-a-half to the west is Cumberland station, adjacent to the village of Park Ridge. It is the most massive (and probably overbuilt) of the three stops, with a gargantuan building (complete with the now-trendy circular walkway) replete with pedestrian passageways to virtually all points of the compass, including a bridge over the expressway to the Marriott Hotel complex just northwest of the station whose many employees will no doubt use the facility.

Last of the stops is the temporary terminal at River Road—"temporary" only in the

### Legend

- Elevated
- - - - - Subway
- Surface or median strip
- - - - - Unused track
- Gauntlet track
- Rigid switch  
normally aligned for tangent  
unless otherwise shown
- Spring-and-return switch  
normal alignment shown
- Interlocked switch
- Spring-and-stay switch
- Power-operated from local panel
- Trailable, power-operated  
from pushbuttons at switch
- SSS Single-slip switch
- DSS Double-slip switch
- x Emergency exit in subway
- ★ Substation

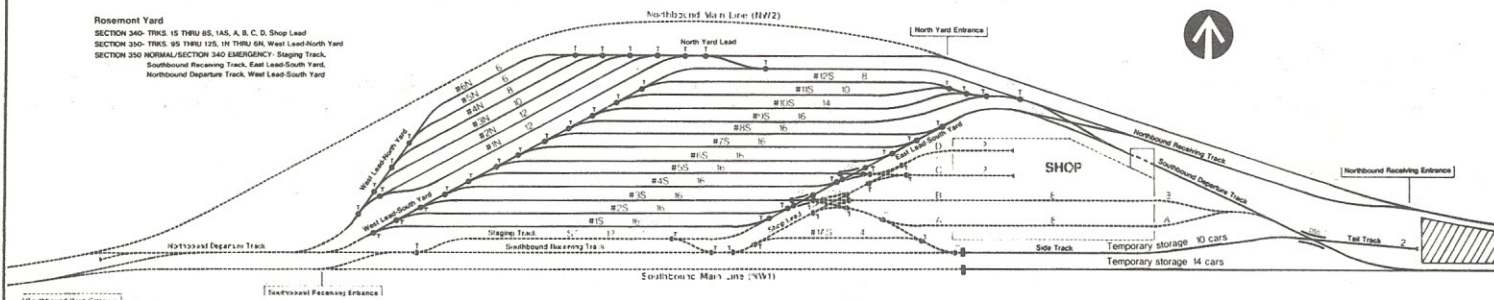


**Supplemental  
Rapid  
Transit  
Map**

Effective February 1983  
Jefferson Park to River Road



Rosemont Yard  
SECTION 340- THIS IS THRU 85, 145, A, B, C, D, Shop Lead  
SECTION 350- THIS IS THRU 105, 115 THRU 124, West Lead-South Yard  
SECTION 360 NORMAL/SECTION 340 EMERGENCY- Staging Track,  
Southbound Recalling Track, East Lead-South Yard,  
Northbound Departure Track, West Lead-South Yard



## Rosemont yard

254 cars

(includes 24 cars temporary storage)

fact that it will be the end of the line until October, when the last leg of the extension is expected to be completed. Probably the most attractive of the stations, it features a circular rotunda at street level just inside the paid area, with escalators and stairways up to the track area. The River Road stop is the only "elevated" station on the line; Harlem and Cumberland are below grade level in the depressed right-of-way of the expressway (and the O'Hare stop will be a true "subway" station, well below street level in a sub-basement of the parking garage).

In terms of potential traffic, Harlem is adjacent to a well-built-up residential area of largely single-family homes, and should generate a respectable walk-in trade. Cumberland, adjacent to a large high-rise residential and office complex, should easily become the busiest stop on the line; the present rush-hour express bus service between that complex and Jefferson Park is well patronized, and additional buildings for the area are on the drawing boards. As noted above, two large motels (the aforementioned Marriott and a nearby Howard Johnson's) no doubt will contribute some employee patronage to the extension.

The River Road station area is generally bereft of significant residential walk-in trade; Rosemont is slowly becoming a commercial and industrial adjunct to O'Hare, with housing being displaced for such projects as the Horizon stadium. Several large hotel/motels (including the massive Hyatt Regency) are nearby, and a large industrial area hard by the Tri-State Tollway is expected to require some sort of bus shuttle service to the rapid transit stop.

Long in the planning stages, the O'Hare extension project saw actual construction begin almost exactly three years ago. As in the case of the earlier Kennedy and Ryan median-strip lines, the City of Chicago Department of Public Works planned, designed and constructed the project, and ownership of the line (as is the case with the Congress, Kennedy and Ryan routes—all of which are legally "subways"—and the two downtown tubes) will rest with the city. Total cost of the project has been about \$196,000,000.

The scheduled running time from the Monroe Street stop in the Dearborn Street subway downtown to River Road will be 31 minutes over the 15-mile route. Trains will be operated on frequent headways during the day as an extension of the existing Congress-Milwaukee and Douglas-Milwaukee routes to Jefferson Park; owl service will be on a 30-minute headway from the junction of the two lines at the Medical Center north and northwestward to River Road.

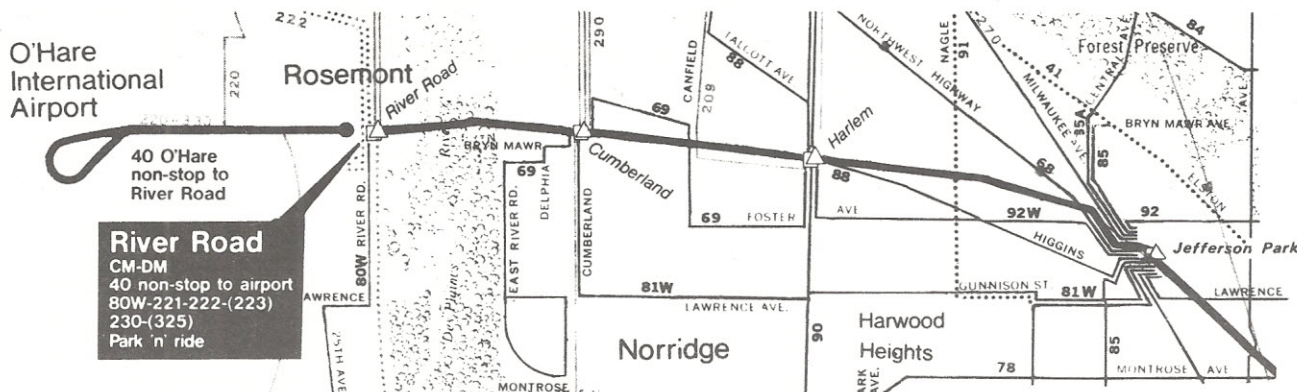
force SEPTA to keep the trains running. The initial timetable provided overall service at only 18% of normal system-wide weekday operations, with limited service provided on all of the ex-Reading lines and on the ex-PRR Paoli "Main Line", with NO service operated on the remaining ex-Pennsy routes. By the end of the first week in January, full service had been restored on the ex-Reading side, service improved on the Paoli line; limited service resumed on the Media branch, and a limited restoration of service to Marcus Hook announced for the week of January 10. However, no plans were released for restoring service on the remaining ex-Pennsy lines to Trenton, Chestnut Hill and Manayunk—and the rail unions were again making threats of a possible job action that could shut the system down completely.

Early in December, the Emergency Board which had been set up to mediate labor disputes between SEPTA and the rail unions released its report, which accepted SEPTA's position over that of the unions. The panel agreed with SEPTA the "SEPTA should be viewed as a transit operation rather than a railroad" and that "economy and efficiency require that the rail operations be assimilated into the existing transit system". The mediation panel's decision was non-binding, but it did give SEPTA somewhat of a moral victory on the labor front. The panel was set up under the "Final-Best Offer" approach, whereby both sides present what each side considers to be its final offer, and the mediation panel accepts what it considers to be the better (or fairer) of the two, without trying to mediate or otherwise reach a com-

## SEPTA Saga: III

[From Gerry Williams' "SEPTA Scene" column in RAILPACE Magazine, February 1983—Ed.]

■ SEPTA's commuter rail systems continued to operate after January 1, but on a much-reduced, temporary schedule. But the minimal service which was operated was more than SEPTA had intended to provide; and the fact that any service ran at all was the result of court action taken to





promise between the parties. SEPTA was so elated with the panel's acceptance of its position that it had the entire decision printed up as a 16-page booklet, which was distributed as part of SEPTA's publicity campaign. Spokesmen for the rail unions, predictably, continued to reject SEPTA's position, as embraced by the mediation panel, as totally unfair to the workers.

Actually, by the time the mediation panel's decision was released, SEPTA had already reached a negotiated tentative contract with two of the 15 rail unions, and claimed to be near agreement with several other unions. This first contract agreement was with the Transport Workers Union, which represents about 160 workers who clean, inspect, and repair commuter cars on the Pennsy side, and the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, which represents about 75 workers who perform similar tasks on the Reading side. Since the inception of Conrail, the two unions have negotiated and ratified contracts together. The contract was ratified by the combined vote of the two unions, although it was actually rejected by a majority of the Carmen on the Reading side. The contract reduces the wage for covered employees by about \$3.00 an hour, and contains numerous other contractual concessions by the union.

At its November meeting the SEPTA Board voted to replace Conrail ticket sales employees on the Pennsy side with Blue Ribbon Services, under contract as of December 20. As had happened on the Reading side, the Conrail suburban agencies closed earlier in the week, and the ticket offices at Suburban Station and Upper Level-30th Street closed on Saturday; all of the offices reopened under Blue Ribbon staffing on Monday, December 20. There were reports that Amtrak tried to force SEPTA to continue staffing the upper level suburban ticket office at 30th Street with unionized workers, threatening to bar SEPTA from using space anywhere in the Amtrak-owned building if SEPTA insisted on bringing in the non-unionized Blue Ribbon employees. Some agreement was reached between SEPTA and Amtrak, and the 30th Street office reopened under Blue Ribbon staffing on the 20th. SEPTA's bringing in of Blue Ribbon Services did result in a break in ticket sales activities between SEPTA and Amtrak, with Amtrak withdrawing its ticket stock from those suburban stations which had been selling Amtrak tickets. In the suburban zone, Paoli is staffed by Amtrak, and is now the only suburban station selling Amtrak tickets.

Problems between SEPTA and Amtrak came to a head on other fronts. Amtrak announced that after January 1, 1983 it was tripling its charges for SEPTA's use of Amtrak trackage—from \$4,000,000 charged

in 1982 to a whopping \$12,000,000. SEPTA began looking into different options for reducing Amtrak trackage-use charges, through various operational changes, including reductions in evening and weekend service on the Trenton and Chester-Wilmington lines; rerouting of Manayunk Branch trains over currently unused trackage in Conrail's 44th Street Yard, and the possible construction of a connection between the ex-PRR Chestnut Hill Branch with the Reading's Norristown Branch near 22nd Street. SEPTA eventually reached a track usage fee agreement with Amtrak of \$7,750,000 for 1983—still double what it paid last year. The possibility of connecting the Pennsy Chestnut Hill Branch with the Reading is still under consideration, however, as removing these trains from the Amtrak Corridor between North Philadelphia and 30th Street could result in significant additional savings. [We also understand that there is some interest on Amtrak's part for it to operate Philadelphia-Trenton and Philadelphia-Wilmington commuter service under contract. It's unknown whether there might be a connection between the trackage use fee issue and the possibility of Amtrak operating some of the commuter service itself.]

Throughout the early part of December, things were pretty much at a standoff. The unions kept charging SEPTA with failing to negotiate with them in good faith, and SEPTA said that unless the unions agreed to contracts under SPETA's terms the system would shut down, at least temporarily, on January 1. In the middle of December, SEPTA made an offer to continue paying railroad operating personnel at their current salary, but freezing it at current levels until such time in the future that its transit workers' salaries caught up to railroad levels. But SEPTA also put a cap on this offer, limiting engineers to a maximum of \$35,000 a year, and conductors and trainmen to a maximum of \$31,000—although by SEPTA's own figures the average salary earned by each group is \$4,000 to \$6,000 higher. SEPTA posted jobs in early December and started taking job applications. SEPTA apparently was counting on a number of workers to defect and sign up with them, even if contract settlements with the unions were not reached.

Then, on December 20, the unions dropped their bombshell—all the unions involved agreed not to strike, and would continue working past December 31 under whatever terms SEPTA wanted to impose. The unions said they would continue to negotiate with SEPTA, and would expect that whatever settlements were reached would be retroactive to January 1. The unions also expected SEPTA to pay workers pending final settlement under the terms of the most

recent SEPTA salary offer. The union offer seemed to catch SEPTA totally off guard—apparently SEPTA never expected the unions not to strike, and all planning and publicity was directed at preparing the public for having no trains after the New Year. On December 21, SEPTA announced that even if the unions did not strike, it would still be necessary to shut the system down come January 1 for an undetermined period of up to several weeks. SEPTA insisted a shutdown would be necessary for several reasons: SEPTA would not be sure until after January 1 just which Conrail employees would be taking SEPTA jobs, and needed time to train and qualify those employees who would be working over trackage they might be unfamiliar with. SEPTA would also need time to inspect equipment and its physical plant. SEPTA would also bring the system back to service gradually, and at its own pace, as crewmen qualified and the physical plant was made ready for service. SEPTA stated that it would accept the unions' offer to continue working without contracts; but said that this would be a basis for operating the system after service is restored following a shutdown. SEPTA further said that its offer to pay railroad workers at or near current salary was made only as a basis for a contract settlement, and in the absence of a contract it would pay workers after January 1 at the lower transit employee pay scale. The unions felt that a shutdown was not necessary; that SEPTA's excuses for needing one were unfounded, and that SEPTA should be willing to abide by its most recent wage offer, pending a final settlement.

During the week before Christmas, SEPTA continued planning for a system shutdown. Maps showing alternate transportation routes were prepared and distributed to rail riders. Schedules for increased bus service on several routes along the Paoli line (the heaviest single route on the commuter system) were also prepared, and the City of Philadelphia made ready a number of emergency parking areas around the fringe of the Center City area. SEPTA announced that rail service would end early on New Year's Eve, with final outbound trips leaving Reading Terminal or Suburban Station no later than 6:00 p.m. on all routes. After these final trains arrived at the outlying stations, all equipment would be dead-headed back into the city for inspection and secure storage. While no timetable for the eventual restoration of service was announced, SEPTA did say that service would resume first on the ex-Reading lines, followed by service on the PRR side sometime later. When asked why the union offer could not be accepted, and train service continue uninterrupted SEPTA officials replied that the union offer came too late for an orderly



transition—that if signed contracts had been reached with the unions earlier in December, a shutdown could have been avoided, but at this stage in the game a shutdown was unavoidable. [This position becomes somewhat suspect in light of SEPTA General Manager Gunn's statement at the December 16 Board Meeting that enough Conrail employees had already signed up with SEPTA to allow the avoidance of an "administrative shutdown" of the system.] Shortly thereafter, a lawyer who commutes regularly from Meadowbrook filed a class action suit against SEPTA, an action which was later joined by two members of the Philadelphia City Council. The suit charged SEPTA with failing in its duty and obligations to the public, and asked for an order directing SEPTA to continue the service uninterrupted.

After hearing arguments on the class action suit against SEPTA, Common Pleas Court Judge Abraham Gafni ordered SEPTA to continue running as much commuter rail service as possible after January 1. In his ruling after the hearing on December 28, the judge conceded that SEPTA might not be able to provide full service, and therefore he would continue to monitor the situation to ensure that a good-faith effort was made by SEPTA to operate as much service as possible. Although it was generally expected that SEPTA would appeal Judge Gafni's decision, the SEPTA Board at a meeting the next day decided to keep at least a limited rail service running, under schedules to be released the following afternoon. SEPTA officials urged commuters not to rely on rail service, and to continue plans to use alternate arrangements, at least for a short while after January 1. The SEPTA Board also voted at this meeting to discontinue all service south of Marcus Hook, PA to Wilmington, DE; and to drop the one SEPTA train between Downingtown and Philadelphia. Amtrak's higher track usage fees were cited as partial reasons for both actions, although the State of Delaware's consistent refusal to pay part of the cost of the Wilmington service was the primary factor in that service's elimination. Should Delaware want the Wilmington service restored, it would have to first negotiate track use fees with Amtrak, and then if Delaware agrees to assume those charges SEPTA would then be willing to negotiate the cost for restoring commuter train service to the route.

After rejecting several other proposed operating plans (such as operating all routes on a Sunday schedule, or operating every fourth or fifth train under a weekday schedule), SEPTA released on December 30 temporary emergency schedules which would be in effect on the commuter lines as of noon on New Year's Day. SEPTA would be operating about 105 trains out of the normal total of

550 weekday trains. Some service would be provided on all ex-Reading routes and on the Paoli line, but service on the remaining ex-PRR lines would be suspended until further notice. These emergency schedules were reprinted in full-page newspaper ads Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the New Year's weekend. The emergency schedules for all routes being operated were printed on both sides of a single large sheet of paper for distribution to passengers. Because of the limited number of trains to be operated, all additional transit services which SEPTA had planned in case of a total rail shutdown would be operated, and the city's plans for emergency parking and traffic control would be implemented as of Monday, January 3. The initial rail schedules called for 15 round trips on the Paoli line (but with only one inbound trip arriving Suburban Station before 9:00 a.m.), six round trips on the RDG West Trenton line, four round trips on the Norristown line, seven on the Chestnut Hill East line, seven on the Warminster line, six on Fox Chase, and four round trips to Lansdale, plus an additional four beyond to Doylestown.

Regular weekday schedules were operated during the day on December 31, but as had been originally planned, service shut down after the final runs on each line out of Reading Terminal or Suburban Station between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. The final Conrail-operated train was #560 to West Trenton, NJ, leaving Reading Terminal at 6:05 p.m. The first SEPTA-operated commuter train on New Year's Day was the 12 noon departure from Paoli. Fortunately, many workers had Monday, January 3 off as a holiday, and commuting into Philadelphia was generally light by all modes that day. By all accounts, things went fairly well on the rail system during the first week of January. With both the Chester-Marcus Hook line and the Media Branch shut down, heaviest loads of diverted rail passengers showed up on SEPTA Suburban (ex-Red Arrow) Division, but even there things went rather smoothly. On Tuesday, January 4, four additional trains were added to the Paoli line service, and a total of 17 extra trains added on the ex-Reading lines. No new temporary timetables were printed for this added service, although times for these additional trains were announced through the news media. Full service under the old Conrail timetables was restored on the Reading side as of Thursday, January 6, and effective that same day service on the Paoli line began operating using the old Saturday schedule, daily until further notice. SEPTA also announced that service to Marcus Hook would resume, also under the old Saturday schedule, effective Tuesday, January 11.

On Tuesday, evening, January 4, represen-

tatives of the rail unions announced that they were withdrawing their no-strike pledge, claiming that negotiations with SEPTA had thus far been too unproductive. The unions promised that no strike action would be taken until each union had at least one more negotiating session with SEPTA; but after that each union would be free to take whatever job action it might choose. If any one union struck, all the other unions pledged to honor the strike. Before the unions made their no-strike offer in December, reliable sources indicated that many of the unions locally were being told by their national headquarters that they would do themselves and their unions harm by a long hold-out; the same sources indicated that word seemed to be that picket lines might only be honored for a short period of time by the new SEPTA workers, and in any event picketers would make an effort not to interfere with Conrail's freight or Amtrak Corridor operations. We previously mentioned that there was a faction within SEPTA management that saw a total rail shutdown as necessary in order to make a clean break with traditional railroad operations. There appears to be a similar point of view within railroad labor. This school of thought holds that the national Railway Labor Act makes railroad labor contracts perpetual, and subject only to modification, unlike traditional industrial labor contracts that have a definite expiration date. According to this thinking, the unions are trying to avoid any discontinuity (interruption in service) in order to support a future contention that all the old rules still apply. It seems very probable that the entire SEPTA-rail labor situation may ultimately be resolved in the courts.

None of the railroad workers operating the trains under SEPTA were happy about the state of affairs in early January. None of them would know until they got their first checks from SEPTA just how much SEPTA would be paying them. (The unions announced they would go to court if SEPTA paid them anything less than the rate contained in SEPTA's last contract offer.) Part of SEPTA's inability to offer service on most of the Pennsy side resulted from SEPTA's initial hiring of mostly ex-Reading men for operating positions—they simply didn't have enough engineers and conductors qualified to operate over the Pennsy tracks! SEPTA's new work rules and train staffing practices are also a source of problems. SEPTA has abolished the position of Trainman, and intends to operate "base" service with two-man crews. Part-time "Passenger Attendants" (ticket collectors, under more traditional terms) will be assigned to assist conductors where needed, but many trains during the first week operated with a conductor and a single "attendant" trying to



# THE LAST PAGE

□ **TRANSIT TOPICS:** Although the Commerce Department has ruled that the Canadian government is subsidizing the \$622,000,000 order from New York City's MTA for 825 new subway cars by providing low-interest financing, Budd has withdrawn its petition to the Department and the International Trade Commission asking for an investigation of the matter. In effect, this action may pave the way for the MTA to receive the fleet from builder Bombardier without having to pay \$91,200,000 in duties. . . . The Southern California Rapid Transit District has asked for a share of the proposed state lottery's proceeds to help keep bus fares low after the 50-cent tariff ends in two years . . . The Chicago Transit Authority is requesting \$51,000,000 in capital improvement funds from the new federal Public Transportation Act; more than half will fund the cost of a new bus garage at 103-Stony Island. . . . The Dayton RTA plans to equip its entire trolley coach fleet with wheelchair lifts . . . Add Oklahoma City to the burgeoning list of properties with rubber-tired "trolleys" for special service routes . . . A Scania articulated diesel coach is currently undergoing testing in Providence (RI) . . . The San Francisco Municipal Railway has begun multiple-unit operation of its LRVs in rush hours on the J and N lines . . . The Fort Worth subway (nee Leonard's M&O) celebrates 20 years of service this year.

□ **RAILWAY REPORT:** Amtrak has operated a test train on the Denver & Rio Grande Western's scenic "Rio Grande Zephyr" route between Denver and Salt Lake City. D&RGW, the last holdout from the Corporation, has petitioned the RGZ; a decision on the new routing will be made in the spring . . . America, having gotten into training, is now being exhorted to take its next flight on a train; Amtrak's new media campaign (sampled on the reverse) has been widely hailed as innovative . . . After two years of declines, the number of passengers on Corporation trains will probably be up (by 2%, to about 19,400,000 in the year ending September 30. Amtrak, by the way, continues to improve its on-time performance record—now at 79% . . . **OBIT:** Robert Colson, 64, the retired owner of the old All-Nation Hobby Shop in Chicago, and originator of the "All-Nation Line" of 1/4"-scale model trains . . .

□ **AIRLINE ACTION:** A federal appeals court in New Orleans on February 22 temporarily blocked completion of an agreement between Braniff and PSA that would allow the latter carrier to form a Texas division with some of Braniff's assets. The court action may torpedo the pact, which PSA says must be finalized by the end of the month in order for the division to become airborne in time for the summer tourist peak season. Rival Continental Airlines and the FAA (embroiled in a flap over authority to reassign landing slots at busy airports) requested the court action; no date has been set for a further hearing on the matter . . . Mexicana has inaugurated daily nonstop service between Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico . . . American begins nonstop Chicago-Austin service March 2 . . . Boeing has developed a stretch version of its new 767 that will carry about 40 more passengers than the current 211-seat 767 with a range of up to 4250 miles . . . Unadvertised bonus: Under certain conditions, some passengers aboard various airlines serving New York are eligible for either free or low-cost transportation aboard New York Helicopter whirlybirds between the three area fields and NYH's Manhattan heliport (see your travel agent) . . . Pan Am's \$99 discount fare has been extended to April 1, but new conditions now apply . . . The same carrier will begin Chicago-San Francisco service March 1 . . . Delta began Chicago-Atlanta 767 service February 15.

cover six-car trains. Needless to say, many fares were not being collected, especially on inbound runs. It's unclear if SEPTA plans eventually to add more passenger attendants later. SEPTA did offer temporary passenger attendant positions to many former trainmen who were not hired for full-time conductor positions, but at \$7.00 per hour for part-time work, without fringe benefits, many of them turned it down. At least during this initial start-up phase, getting the trains running might be more important than making sure all fares are lifted. SEPTA did use some 20 office workers as passenger attendants during the first week of service—these workers received only minimal training, and reports circulated of them giving odd communication-buzzer signals, and opening car doors on the wrong side of trains. SEPTA apparently intends to use no more than 110 road engineers, and 110

conductors, down from over 150 engineers and 450 conductors/trainmen under Conrail. It seems possible that once SEPTA determines its need for passenger attendants, some of those positions might eventually be filled by "moonlighting" commuters! Another complaint made by operating employees is that SEPTA has scheduled some of them for as little as five-minute turn-arounds at Reading Terminal between trips (under the Reading and Conrail, 20 minutes was the shortest turn-around normally scheduled, resulting in many delayed outbound trains because the inbound crews were late. This may ease somewhat as SEPTA comes closer to filling all its staff positions, but SEPTA has made it clear that it intends to have as little idle time for its workers as possible.

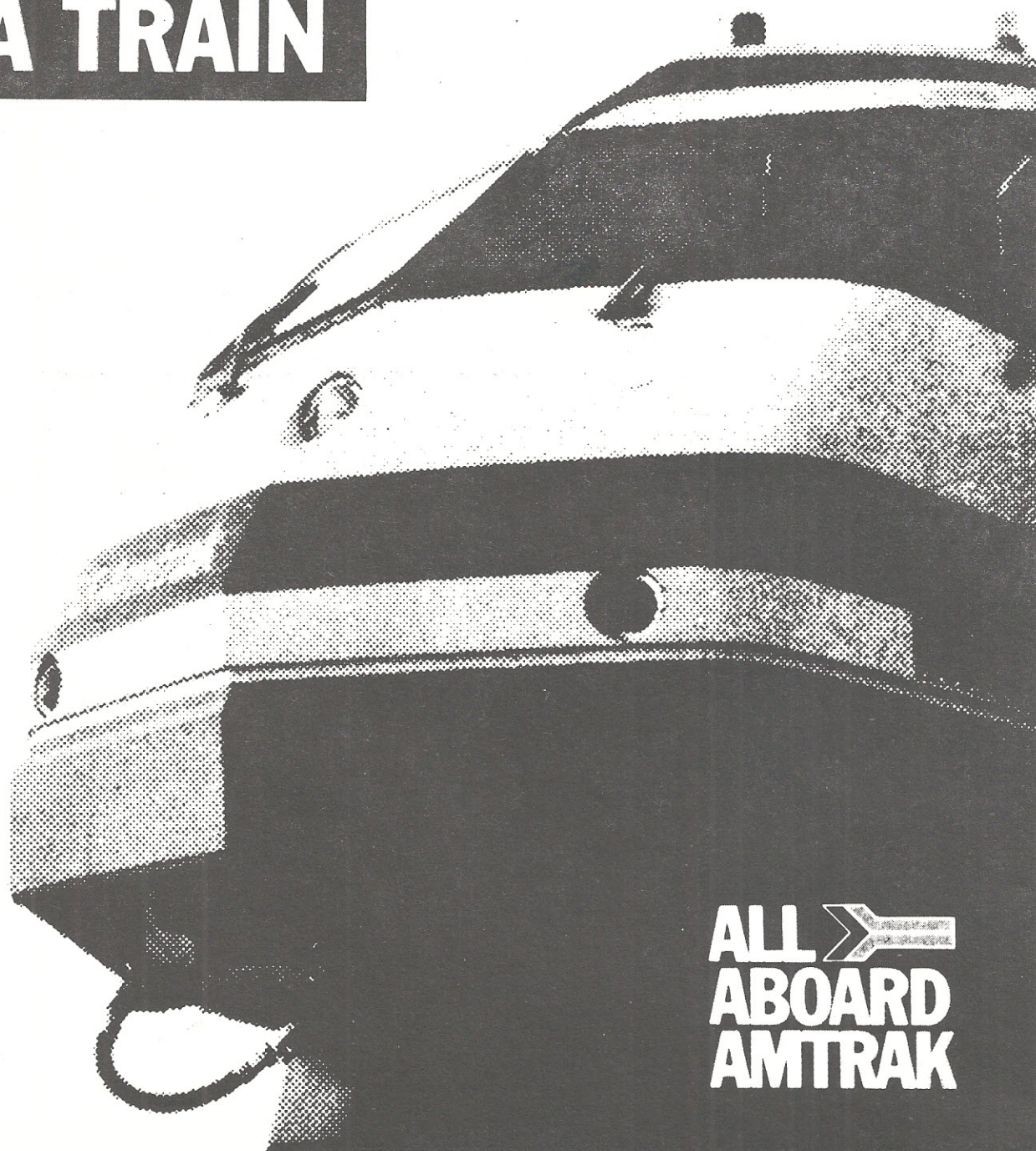
[In an earlier column we referred to figures, released by SEPTA, giving an annual

salary cost for Conrail commuter service operating employees of over \$60,000. In fairness to the railroad workers, we should point out that the figures SEPTA used included both direct wages plus the cost of fringe benefits; according to figures used more recently, SEPTA is now claiming average gross salary costs in the \$40,000-\$45,000 range, although union sources maintain the actual figures are somewhat lower. It does appear that both sides have been using the salary cost figures to their own advantage—SEPTA using examples at the high end of the range, while the unions seem to make sure workers at the lower end always seem to have a pay stub ready to show any interested reporter.]

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