Transport Central

APRIL 1983

INTERFACE

COMMENTARY

Chicago's first citizen: the car

[An interesting perspective on the role of the auto in the Windy City, from the architecture critic of the Chicago Tribune]

After 30 years of ravaging dozens of neighborhoods to build billions of dollars' worth of highways, Chicago still treats the automobile as an iron god worthy of great sacrifice. And the worst part of it is that hardly anybody seems to care much any more.

There was a time, back in the 1950s, when Lewis Mumford and a few other distinguished urban critics saw what was coming. They warned the nation about such things as the federal interstate highway system rending the fabric of our cities, and they were right.

Not that there weren't occasional victories when the highwaymen went too far. In Chicago, protesters stalled the proposed Crosstown expressway for years until it finally died. Even so, superhighway construction here forced more than 50,000 persons from their homes—far more than those displaced by urban renewal projects. And the city, despite lessons learned the hard way, continues to give the movement, control and storage of automobiles inordinately high and costly priority. Before examining a few new projects, let us recall some of the mistakes of the past.

Chicago's lakefront and park system are its two greatest physical resources, but the highwaymen of the '50s and '60s cared little about natural beauty.

In 1964, the Park District and the Department of Public Works decided to cut down some 2,000 trees to permit the straightening and widening of Lake Shore Drive between 47th and 67th Streets. Five hundred trees in Jackson Park were destroyed before a citizen uproar finally tempered the destruction. Architects Harry Weese and Bruce Graham came up with a plan to get the highway out of the park, but officials ignored it. Later, the city boldly sawed down trees to widen North Lake Shore Drive.

At about the same time, highwaymen blighted 14 acres of Burnham Park with stilt-legged interchange ramps connecting the Stevenson Expressway with Lake Shore Drive. They wanted to put another ugly elevated interchange at Oak Street and the drive, but wealthy and powerful residents of the area vetoed the scheme.

Another highway fiasco affecting the lakefront and riverfront is the one still being played out in the vicinity of Illinois Center, already an esthetically grim and barren Never-Never Land.

The first blunder made there was the extension of Wacker Drive in a due easterly direction. By hugging the river's edge, the elevated street extension forever precludes creating a large and sunny pedestrian promenade next to the water. Fifteen years ago, the architecture firms of Skidmore Owings & Merrill and C. F. Murphy Associates made an elaborate study of the area and recommended that the Wacker extension be canted away from the riverfront. The city dismissed the idea.

Extending Columbus Drive through Illinois Center and across the river on a $33-million lift bridge appears to be one of the least cost-effective city projects in recent history. Cars heading north on the extension simply wind up on Fairbanks Court, which was never meant to be a main street and stubs into Chicago Avenue at its terminus. Eliminating the S-curve in Lake Shore Drive at a cost of $122 million is another vastly overrated traffic improvement. It will not reduce anyone's driving time by more than a few seconds, and serious accidents seldom occur at curves where cars must momentarily slow. Worse yet, a hulking riverside interchange will be built to connect the straightened drive with Wacker.

Chicago, like other big cities, could never afford such projects without federal help. But federal highway officials care almost nothing about cost-benefit factors, and their rationales for spending border on the bizarre. Consider the State Street Mall, for example. It rated federal funding because it was supposed to speed bus traffic and thus reduce air pollution. Yet just last summer there were several downtown carbon monoxide warnings because of congestion on other streets nearby.

Street widenings are another form of obeisance to the iron god, but should really be called sidewalk narrowings. Typically, sidewalks are narrowed so concrete median strips and left-turn bays can be built in the center of the street. In densely populated Chicago neighborhoods, narrow walks studded with parking meters force pedestrians to walk in single file.

No one has ever costed out the waste of unnecessary traffic signs, signals and street lights in Chicago, but the cost must be enormous. Sophisticated signalization makes sense, but have you ever stopped at an intersection, counted the clutter of six or seven red lights aimed at you and wondered why there were so many?

New auto-related projects are approaching the final planning stage, among them several related to the 1982 World's Fair. The city will spend at least $30 million relocating part of Lake Shore Drive, $80 million on widening of the Dan Ryan Expressway and $20 million on a Stevenson Expressway spur. Will these run up an esthetic debit as well? Parking lots accommodating 34,000 cars will be built for fair visitors. A big shuttle bus terminal will be constructed across the street from the fragile little Prairie Avenue Historic District. Don't those projects carry obvious threats?

Chicago and scores of other cities have turned themselves into places where the pedestrian is a second-class citizen. They also share the insanity of spending billions to serve motorists while letting their mass-transit systems fall apart. This waste of money and proliferation of auto-connected ugliness is accepted far too casually. Chicago cannot afford to have its remaining places of beauty and urban charm further eroded. The highwaymen should be leashed and their power transferred to officials who have some notion of what a civilized city is all about.

–Paul Gapp

editor/publisher
RICHARD R. KUNZ

roving editor
WILLIAM E. THOMS

roving editor
CHARLES F. ROZEMA

canadian editor
TED WICKSON

contributing editor
CLAUDE G. LUISADA

contributing editor
MICHAEL M. McGOWEN

research
ANDRIS J. KRISTOPANS

research
WILLIAM SHAPOTKIN

research
CHARLES L. TAUSCHER

archivist
BRUCE MOFFAT

source material

Chicago Tribune
Chicago Sun-Times
Wall Street Journal
USA Today
Runzheimer Reports
Amtrak
The Short Line
Pacific News
Dayton RTA
Newsweek
Urban Transportation Abroad
UPTRAN Update

cover photos

FRONT: The "grand old man" of Dayton transit, W. W. "Bill" Owen, with City Railway Marmon trolley coach 501, restored in commemoration of the twin-wire system's 50th anniversary. The Marmon is to be donated to a local park as a permanent exhibit. BACK: The same coach operated on a special excursion on April 23 to mark the occasion, pausing here at Lorain-Pritz, the site of the old Dayton Street Transit barn from which the first trolley coach operation began exactly 50 years ago. –Both, TRANSPORT CAMERA

photographic services
TRANSPORT CAMERA

typesetting services
THE COPYSHOP

printing services
SWIFT IMPRESSIONS

Published monthly by Transport Central, 5701 Marina City, Chicago, Illinois 60610. 312/828-0991. Annual subscription: $20.

A NOTE FROM THE STAFF: For many years, Transport Central has been put together with the help of computerized typesetting equipment; the publication's parent is a graphic arts service specializing in phototypesetting. That equipment is presently in the process of being upgraded to include full word-processing capability to provide for faster and easier completion of pre-publication work. With this upgrade comes (naturally) some delays in the publication cycle, but—more importantly—an improved "look" to TC. Some aspects of that new "look" have already become apparent in the issues immediately preceding this one; others are to follow. We are currently in the process of trying out various typographic alternatives in these pages, hence the variation in overall appearance from issue to issue over the past several months. Soon, however, our "image" will again be stabilized, and TC will attain a familiar look once again as tge months wear on. In the meantime, however, rest assured that our typographic fulminations have not diverted our attention from filling those pages with our customary mix of news and information.

AIR

■ **The Perils of Putnam, Chapter 5:** Perhaps the headquarters of Braniff International should have been in Phoenix, given the number of times the supposedly dead and buried airline has risen from the ashes. After the last rites were administered by its many creditors virtually in mid-flight last May, Howard Putnam's airline survived to field at least three separate plans to "merge" with Pacific Southwest Airlines of San Diego, only to have each shot down by one faction or another.

Then, the Byzantine "winding-down" of Braniff's affairs took yet another turn, as the bankrupt carrier proposed shrinking itself down into a ground service organization dedicated to serving the needs of its airborne contemporaries. To this end, it arranged a deal with maverick People Express to sell the budget carrier 20 of its 727-200s, lease it a 747 and provide the Newark-based airline certain ground services, all with a view toward giving Braniff a "toe-hold" in its new field.

All of this was in keeping with a federal court dictum that Braniff soon present the judicial body with a plan for the disposal of its assets in an orderly fashion (after the sale to People Express, Braniff would have some 41 jets left on its roster, including 31 727-200s. Both Piedmont and Continental had expressed interest in some of the 727s, but nothing firm had been decided upon). Thus, it seemed that the tortured saga of Braniff was about to come to an end.

But wait–the cavalry was about to come to the rescue–or was it? Regular readers of the Wall Street Journal were no doubt astounded to discover, early in April, that a knight in shining armor had been spotted riding to the rescue at virtually the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour.

In the tradition of the tangled Braniff saga, even the account of the proposed rescue reads like a John Le Carre novel. The scenario has two retired Braniff pilots discussing the fate of their former employer over drinks one day in Dallas. Both left Braniff's employ before the carrier's grounding, and both believed the airline's management hastened its demise. The pilots, Jack Morton and Glenn Shoop, share investments in undeveloped land around the Dallas-Forth Worth airport, and claim the friendship of many of the carrier's employees.

Obviously, Braniff's workers had an interest in the continued existence of the airline, and Morton and Shoop cast about for ways to keep the carrier going. Business associates in the Dallas area suggested the two contact the Pritzker family of Chicago, which controls the successful Hyatt Corporation; perhaps the Pritzkers, a Midas-endowed group if there ever was one, might be interested in backing an employee effort to revive the fallen airline.

The Pritzkers indeed were, and the wheels were set in motion for a bailout. Morton and Shoop canvassed Braniff staffers and their union representatives and claimed enough support to put together a group willing to make the sacrifices necessary to get Braniff airborne once again. With a bankruptcy court deadline of April 18 looming ahead, the ad hoc marriage of capital and labor hastily worked up a preliminary proposal to submit to the court. Once again, it seemed that Braniff was not ready to be counted out-just yet.

But was it? Industry observers were quick to point out the risks in such a proposal. Howard Putnam (who might not be a survivor in the "new" Braniff) went on record as believing the plan to be underfinanced. Others characterized the deal as basically "too little, too late."

The Pritzkers, however, apparently thought differently. With $60,000,000 in seed money, and the marketing muscle and reservations capabilities of the Hyatt chain, they obviously believed Braniff could operate successfully. The Hyatt plan envisioned using about 25 Braniff jets to fly low-fare routes from Dallas to major centers, including New York, Chicago, Denver, Miami, Los Angeles and Kansas City–a proposal not unlike the PSA ventures that preceded it.

In return for its contribution, Hyatt wanted an 80% interest in a reorganized company–a stake that

air

allows the hotelier to apply a substantial portion of Braniff's $300,000,000 in unused tax credits to its own books–an out-of-pocket savings to the Pritzkers of as much as $150,000,000. In effect, Hyatt would be converting Braniff's creditors to venture capitalists. Even so, there appeared to be a great deal of interest in the plan from creditors and their representatives, and it appeared as if the proposal might have a chance to succeed where others had failed.

Soon, however, the eleventh-hour rescue plan began to go sour, as evidenced by a flurry of stories in the press:

- Thursday, April 14: While noting that a Hyatt-Braniff union could be a "perfect marriage", USA Today also reported that, two days before, Braniff's creditors rejected a Hyatt proposal to gain a majority interest in Braniff by giving the airline $10,000,000 and arranging for more than $30,000,000 in loans. The creditors, which include 37 insurance agencies and banks, hold the mortgage on the airline's planes and ground equipment and are owed about $350,000,000. Under the Pritzker deal, these creditors would have been required to subsidize the company with as much as $50,000,000 by taking new notes for the money they are owed. While rejecting the initial proposal, the creditors nonetheless asked Hyatt to submit a new plan before April 18, when the carrier was required to file its reorganization plan in federal bankruptcy court.
- Friday, April 15: The Wall Street Journal reports that Hyatt, Braniff and the airline's creditors were due to huddle in New York that day to seek a consensus on a "sweetened" plan by Hyatt to get Braniff airborne once again. While the size of the Pritzker's proposed investment in the failed airline seemed to be the chief hurdle to overcome in reaching agreement, considerable discord between the carrier's secured and unsecured creditor blocs and a division within the company's own ranks appeared to be an even bigger stumbling block.

In an effort to mollify the proposal's critics, Hyatt chairman Jay Pritzker flew to Dallas two days before to boost the amount of his investment in Braniff beyond the $10,000,000 he first proposed; while the increase in the ante was not revealed, it appeared his offer allayed the fears of at least some of the airline's creditors that Hyatt would not spend enough to make the plan work. The catch in the Pritzker offer, however, was that financial support was still required from the various infighting factions among the creditors; each subgroup of which is understandably jockeying for the best position in a revived Braniff.

The Hyatt proposal suggests restarting the grounded carrier with funds lent to it by the Pritzkers and the creditors–in all a combined investment of more than $60,000,000 (including the raised ante by Hyatt offered in the Dallas meeting). However, Braniff's secured creditors are balking at their assigned role in the consortium. These lenders, who hold the mortgage on Braniff's remaining roster of 31 jets, are being asked to lease at least 25 of these planes to the "new" airline, at bargain-basement prices. In addition, they are also being asked to forgive about $15,000,000 in notes currently owed them by the airline.

As a result, some of the secured creditors appear to be leaning toward a complete liquidation of the airline's remaining assets, so that they would be able to recover at least a sizeable portion of their investment almost immediately. They fear a relaunch of Braniff would be a risky proposition at best, in effect saying they'd rather take the money and run now–even if they came out with only 60 to 70 cents on the dollar. (On the other hand, the carrier's unsecured creditors stand to get only about 10 cents on the dollar–giving them that much more incentive to take the risk of restarting Braniff for a possible increase in that return.)

- Monday, April 18: The Wall Street Journal headlines charges of "sabotage" by some Braniff officials toward Hyatt's rescue plan–as the court-ordered deadline nears. It is rumored that Braniff is planning to offer the court a "stand-in" reorganization plan that could be amended later; despite the

air

sparring between Braniff and Hyatt, it appears that some sort of agreement might still be possible.

For the record, however, the Hyatt and Braniff interests appeared to be at each other's throats. The Pritzker forces, in a letter to Braniff's board, criticized certain members of Braniff's management who "questioned the sincerity" of the Hyatt proposal (an assertion vigorously denied by Braniff chairman Howard Putnam). Pritzker also threatened to withdraw the proposal unless Braniff's board approved the Hyatt plan and instructed the airline's management to prepare and support implementation of the deal offered by the hotel chain. Braniff's management denied it was "sandbagging" the Hyatt proposal, asserting it had been rejected by the secured creditors; for his part, Putnam refused to be placed in the position of having to negotiate in the media.

- Tuesday, April 19: The Journal reports that Braniff's board had rejected a $35,000,000 offer by Hyatt to revive the grounded airline, and instead filed a reorganization plan that would create a small ground-service and maintenance concern as the carrier's only surviving business. However, even as the papers were being filed in bankruptcy court in Fort Worth, negotiations with Hyatt were still goin on toward salvaging the Pritzker proposal.

Further complicating the issue was the fact that the reorganization plan states that Braniff will have until May 16 to offer a revised proposal that might provide for resumed flight operations–leaving a clear window for Hyatt to jump back into the fray if terms could be agreed upon.

In addition, the reorganization plan established a special litigation fund to pursue legal action against archrival American Airlines, which Braniff accused of perpetrating a series of "dirty tricks" designed to use Braniff's financial problems to knock the failing carrier out of the skies once and for all; American declined any comment on the suit.

Braniff's plan clearly favored its secured creditors, who obviously felt that the Hyatt proposal was too shaky financially to attempt; most of that group apparently were unwilling to risk another bout with the bankruptcy court if (as they expected) a revived Braniff would fail once more.

- Wednesday, April 20: The Journal reports that Hyatt has withdrawn its proposal to revive Braniff, but the newspaper opines that the move appears to be "less a final curtain than a late attempt" to bring Braniff's management around to its way of thinking. The Pritzkers released a statement noting that its position had been "mischaracterized publicly as that of an aggressor rather than an invitee", and that in order to "avoid further acrimony" it seemed in the best interests of both parties for Hyatt to withdraw its proposal. Meanwhile, however, talks between the two factions continued.

Floowing up, the paper noted that a legal war could erupt soon between Braniff's secured and unsecured creditors in federal bankruptcy court. Unsecured creditors, who strongly favored the Hyatt proposal, are asking the court to oust Braniff's management and to invalidate liens held by its secured creditors on the carrier's assets, mostly its remaining 31-plane jet fleet. On the other hand, the secured creditors are asking the court to reaffirm those liens, and to allow the group to take direct control of those assets, presumably to sell them. Braniff officials are trying to mediate.

- Thursday, April 21: The Journal reveals that Braniff is talking with other groups with a view toward getting its planes flying again. Company officials have confirmed that discussions are taking place with other groups, but decline to identify any principals. Most observers suggest that Braniff's tax credits, about $300,000,000 worth, would be attractive to any well-heeled buyer, hence the continuing interest in the fate of the grounded airline.

- Sunday, April 24: The Chicago Tribune reports that a "complicated web of self-interests" was ruling the ultimate fate of Braniff International. Noting that the Pritzkers had pulled out, and that Braniff had half-heartedly attempted to resume negotiations, the paper reported that four of the airline's key unions had made a desperate attempt to pull things to gether with some $10,000,000 of their own money. By the end of the week, agreement over a Hyatt-Braniff deal seemed to be as far off

air

as ever when Pritzker expressed interest in resuming talks but the unions insisted Chairman Putnam be excluded so Pritzker could deal directly with Braniff's creditors. The Hyatt chairman said he had reconsidered when he realized the depth of the employees' commitment to get the airline's planes aloft again. For their part, the unions' members are willing to work without pay for several months if necessary to resume operations in conjunction with the Hyatt offer.

Thursday, April 28: Finally, as we go to press, the Wall Street Journal indicates that the Braniff-Hyatt discussions are continuing, although agreement is not near. Now, there is concern on the part of some of the airline's creditors that if a deal is not struck soon, the necessary gates and landing slots for a "new" Braniff would not be available. Braniff spokesmen say, however, that discussions are continuing with the agencies responsible for gates and slots, and that if there is any possibility whatever that Braniff could be flying again within the near future actions to close the door on such a service resumption would not be taken.

At the same time, the bankruptcy court entered an order effectively establishing a "cease-fire" with respect to any action taken by any side toward liquidation of any of Braniff's assets until the new deadline of May 16. Both secured and unsecured creditors have apparently agreed to the truce in order to give the ailing carrier some breathing space in its dealings with Hyatt.

Thus, as April segues into May, the situation remains as fluid as ever, with each side jockeying for maximum advantage. Officially, the negotiations between Braniff and Hyatt remain alive, but the continuing intramural squabble between Braniff's creditors would appear (at this juncture at least) to preclude any early return to the skies of the embattled airline. (Stay tuned).

■ **Equipment Eclectica:** Thai Airways International has changed its collective mind and decided on purchasing a pair of Airbus A300-600s after all. The Thai flag carrier had originally contracted for the Airbuses three years ago, but fell out with the European consortium over engine options and decided to go with two Boeing 767s instead. Intense lobbying by Airbus, eager to crash the Asian market, resulted in the eventual change of heart. The contract calls for September 1985 delivery, and the purchase by Airbus of three Thai Airways DC8s.

■ People Express has agreed to purchase eight used 727-200s from McDonnell Douglas, which acquired the jets as a trade-in by Alitalia. The budget carrier expects to take delivery of the craft next year, and depending on availability and economic conditions will buy an additional nine used 727-200s from Boeing in the months to come . . . Pacific Southwest Airlines plans to acquire four DC-9-30s from Air Canada for about $6,000,000 each. PSA will use the jets to enter new markets and expand its route system. The four DC9s are the same group Air Canada originally sold to Philadelphia-based Altair last July. Altair soon went bankrupt, and Air Canada had to reposses the jets . . . Pakistan International Airlines has borrowed $42,000,000 from a consortium of international banks to purchase two used jets from other carriers. PIA will buy a DC-10-30 from Alitalia and an A300/B4 Airbus from Hapag-Lloyd, an airline charter company.

■ **Fare Facts:** The fragile truce that brought at least some rationalization out of the chaos of airline pricing continues to hold, albeit tenuously (with the significant exception of Pan Am among the majors), but there are occasional defections here and there. Pan Am, which slashed its domestic fares from April 15 through May 15 in an attempt to build feeder traffic for its international runs, has slashed its tariffs by up to 54 per cent on flights to the Caribbean from 10 U.S. cities; the new rates are good through December 15 . . . Air Jamaica joined the fray by cutting its New York-Kingston fare from $258 to $199 round-trip May 1; the new rates (good through June 30) apply to weekday travel

air

to and from both Kingston and Montego Bay (the weekend rate is $224) . . . Eastern has lowered its weekend shuttle fare between Boston and New York and between Washington and New York to $29 one-way for an indefinite period.

□ Despite the ongoing fare wars, several carriers did make money in the first quarter of 1983: People Express (based in Newark) and Southwest Airlines (Dallas) posted profits for the January-March period. Also in the black were Air Wisconsin, Aloha Airlines and Alaska Airlines.

Even though business has been bad in recent months, some airline executives have been taken a bit aback by the recent upsurge in traffic that could ironically lead to higher fares. The public perception now seems to be that the worst of recessionary times are behind us, and that the economy can only get better, hence more people are taking more trips to more places this year. If the demand continues strong (PSA, for example, posted a 26% jump in traffic in the first quarter), the probability is high that a midsummer price increase will be implemented to take maximum advantage of the demand (and not incidentally make up for the poor returns of recent months).

Some carriers are going even further, on the theory that there will always be a market for first-class service, no matter what the economy is doing. Last month, Air One Inc. began all first-class service at regular coach fares over several routes from the Northeast to the Midwest. A one-way ticket from Washington to St. Louis, for example, costs $213 . . . And World Airways has decided to avoid the fare wars and give its passengers "Ultra Service", redesigning its cabins to provide more seating room and amenities that include electronic games and inflight sweepstakes. Even so, its fares are below regular coach tariffs . . . The ultimate, however, is coming this summer, as noted before in these pages. The new First Air Corporation will begin super luxury service, offering its coast-to-coast passengers manicures, Queen-sized beds, secretarial service and stock market quotations for a $1,500 one-way fare. First Air's competition is reckoned to be the private jet, not commercial airlines.

■ **Route Report:** US Air has expanded its system all the way to the West Coast with service from Pittsburgh to Los Angeles and San Francisco . . . A new commuter airline, Atlantic Express, has begun service from Farmingdale, NY (on Long Island near the Nassau-Suffolk county border) to Boston, Syracuse, Albany and Washington . . . People Express is virtually set to begin low-cost Newark-Gatwick (London) service at the end of May. A one-way ticket is to cost $149 (less than half the regular coach tariff); all seats (471 on its 747)are reserved, but food and drink will cost extra.

A Shinto priest blessed a Boeing 747, its crew and passengers as Northwest Airlines inaugurated daily service from Minneapolis-St. Paul to Tokyo . . . United will begin twice-daily service linking Chicago and Portland (ME) June 10 . . . TWA resumed St. Louis-Ontario (CA) service April 24, will restart flights linking St. Louis and Oakland May 24, and begin St. Louis-Portland (OR) service June 9, in a move to strengthen its Gateway City hub.

■ **Flight Paths:** Capitol Air, the Smyrna (TN)-based carrier, is now being "courted" by its employees, in an attempt to change what they consider poor working conditions and unresponsive management . . . Howard Hughes' legendary "Spruce Goose" officially opens to the public as the key part of the "Hughes Flying Boat Expo", hard by the Queen Mary in Long Beach Harbor. The seaplane, weighing in at 400,000 pounds (largely of non-strategic plywood), and with wingspan almost 20 feet longer than a football field is housed in a 12-story aluminum geodesic dome–the world's largest. The "Spruce Goose" is housed on the site of its first (and only) flight in 1947.

RAIL

■ **Amtrak Addenda:** With the coming of Daylight Saving Time on April 24 came the usual schedule changes on the Amtrak system – this time featuring a number of significant improvements in running time.

● LAKE SHORE LIMITED

One hour and 22 minutes was cut from the LSL; the reduction was made possible by improved track conditions and tighter scheduling negotiated with Conrail. The Lake Shore now departs Chicago at 6:20 p.m., one hour and 30 minutes later thean formerly, arriving the following day in New York at 1:15 p.m., and in Boston at 3:30 p.m. Westbound, the LSL departs New York at 7:30 p.m. (45 minutes later than previously) and Boston at 5:15 p.m. (50 minutes later); the combined train now arrives in Chicago at 12:51 p.m. the following day.

● BROADWAY LIMITED

The Broadway Limited now departs Chicago at 4:50 p.m., three hours and 10 minutes earlier than previously (in effect flip-flopping with the Lake Shore), arriving in New York at 1:22 p.m. the following day. The total running time of the Broadway has been reduced by 7 minutes westbound and 5 eastbound.

● THE CAPITOL LIMITED

Amtrak has also shortened schedules on the Chicago-Pittsburgh-Washington Capitol Limited. The Capitol, combined with the Broadway between Chicago and Pittsburgh, now operates 21 minutes faster westbound and 20 minutes faster eastbound. Westbound, the Capitol departs Washington at 3:35 p.m., 15 minutes later than previously, arriving in Chicago at 8:53 a.m. Eastbound, the train now leaves Chicago at 4:50 p.m., arriving in Washington at 11:45 a.m., 3 hours and 30 minutes earlier than formerly.

● THE EAGLE

The Corporation has also reduced the running time of the Chicago-San Antonio Eagle by 30 minutes northbound and 15 minutes southbound. As a result, the Eagle now leaves San Antonio at 8:45 a.m., arriving in Chicago at 12:55 p.m. the following day. Southbound, the Eagle continues to depart Chicago at 5:20 p.m., arriving in San Antonio the next day at 9:25 p.m. The Eagle is a tri-weekly train departing both termini on Sunday, Tuesday and Friday.

● NORTH STAR

The North Star, operating between the Twin Cities and Duluth, went to daily operation April 24; the train, a joint Amtrak-Minnesota 403(b) operation, had been operating on Friday, Saturday and Sunday only. It has resumed weekday operation to accommodate the increased demand for rail passenger service during the peak spring and summer travel season. Coincident with the change, all departures from Midway station in the Twin Cities area were rescheduled to 8:00 a.m.; the Friday run had been leaving at 6:00 p.m. to handle ski traffic to Duluth area resorts. The all-reserved North Star operates with SuperLiner equipment, including snack and beverage service.

□ Delivery of the last nine of a 150-car order of Amfleet II coaches and lounge-cafe cars from the Budd Company is expected in mid-may. Designed primarily for long-distance use, the new model Amfleet cars are now running on the New York-Chicago Lake Shore and Broadway Limited, the Washington-Chicago Capitol Limited and all Florida trains.

rail

□ Amtrak's newest rehabilitation program, now underway at Beech Grove, includes seven domeliners; the first of these is already in service on the Capitol Limited . . . Two slumbercoaches are also undergoing renovation at Beech Grove, bringing to 25 the number of such cars in use on the system. Slumbercoaches were added in April for overnights runs on the Washington-Atlanta Crescent.

As time and availability permits, each of the 70 SuperLiner sleeping cars will have a toilet installed on the upper level for more convenient use by occupants of the upper deck. At the same time, two of the lower-level washrooms will be combined to provide dressing space in both sleeping cars and coaches. Other modifications range from a new dual brake system in all cars to improved refrigeration in the diners, more baggage storage space in all coaches, and the installation of a coffee dispensary station in sleepers.

On Amtrak's drawing boards are plans for a new single-level sleeper and a single-level diner, which will eventually replace the Heritage equipment used in the East. Amtrak will first build prototypes of each car and place them in service for up to two years to determine which parts need improvements.

□ Amtrak has opened a new ticket office at the World Trade Center in New York City. The new facility is on the lobby level of One World Trade Center, directly opposite the Satellite Air Lines Ticket Office. The ticket office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is a full-service facility, where passengers can obtain information, make reservations, book tours and purchase tickets. This is the fourth city ticket office to be established in New York; the others are in Grand Central Station, Penn Station and at 12 West 51st Street.

□ Effective with the April 24 schedule change, the Friday Newport News-New York Tidewater was discontinued without replacement. The northbound Friday-only train had been introduced on an experimental basis for students and military personnel heading northeast for weekends and holidays. Ridership had reached only half the projected levels.

□ As expected, Amtrak assumed operation of passenger rail service between Denver and Salt Lake City over the route of the Rio Grande Zephyr with the change to Daylight Time. However, the April mudslide at Thistle, Utah renders through service still impossible to perform with rail equipment. As we go to press, the newly-renamed California Zephyr is operating over the Wyoming route of its predecessor San Francisco Zephyr, and all stops of the former train are being made, albeit on a different schedule. Service between Denver and Salt Lake City along the route of the RGZ is being provided by buses leased from Trailways, run over paralleling highways. In Salt Lake City, the buses connect with the Desert Wind for a rail connection to Ogden. There is no word on when nature's havoc will have been righted sufficiently for the Corporation to resume service over the D&RGW (which it has thus far never operated for its own account). There is also no word on Wyoming's plans to seek restoration of passenger rail service through that state, which will be effectively discontinued when the CZ begins operating over the Rio Grande.

□ Amtrak is investing more than $5,000,000 and employing more than 100 workers in Michigan in the next six months on continuing track renovation projects. The major track work will be concentrated along a 100-mile segment of the Corporation's heavily traveled Detroit-Chicago rail corridor, located between Kalamazoo and Porter (IN). This track is used by six daily trains linking Detroit and Chicago, and by an additional pair operating between Chicago and Toronto.

rail

The right-of-way improvements will include the installation of 12,000 new ties and 25 miles of continuously welded rail, as well as the upgrading of switches. In addition to the roadbed rehabilitation, work will continue on a separate $1,800,000 program, jointly funded with the Michigan DOT, to improve the signal system in the same corridor.

■ **Along the Right-of-Way:** The entire White Pass & Yukon Railway will not resume service of any sort for the 1983 season, as the on-line Faro Mine remains closed without government subsidy. Thus, the passenger service, including the popular steam excursions out of Skagway, will also not be operated this year . . .A Spokane dentist now boasts a retired E-unit to add to the Pullman car and caboose that makes up his office, reception and treatment areas . . . The Waterfront Electric Railway Museum of Toledo has moved its operating site from International Park opposite downtown to the former Toledo Angola & Western tracks west of the city. There will apparently be no operation at the new site this summer, while wire is strung for the operation of a real electric railway; the line has used a diesel locomotive to pull its cars about (including a former Chicago 4000-series Cincinnati-built "L" car) . . . A group of area business men have purchased the Mt. Washington Cog Railway from the Teague family for $1,200,000; continued operation is planned.

The Williams (AZ)-Grand Canyon line of the Santa Fe is apparently headed for abandonment, after efforts to sell it for various purposes (including possible tourist passenger service) all fell through. The station at Grand Canyon has been preserved by the National Park Service as a historic site . . . The airline industry, not unsurprisingly, is up in arms over those "Maybe your next flight should be on a train" ads currently being run by Amtrak, asserting that taxpayer dollars are not "being wisely spent". . . . Alfred Perlman, former head of the New York Central, and later chairman of the Western Pacific, died April 30 in San Francisco at the age of 80 . . .The Chase Manhattan Bank is helping to arrange financing for Conrail employees to buy their railroad . . . The Canadian National-owned Central Vermont Railway is for sale; its owner cites the Mellon-arranged New England rail consolidation as "threatening its long-term viability". . . The Senate Commerce Committee has voted to authorize $750,000,000 in funds for Amtrak for FY 84-$68,000,000 more than the Reagan administration had requested. Amtrak was granted about $700,000,000 for FY 83.

URBAN

■ **Metro Memo:** Except for the Illinois Central Electric's South Chicago branch (where reduced fares are still in effect) and the South Shore Line (with most trains now in service made up of new cars), all Chicago area bus and rail services are showing a continuing decline in ridership . . .Grumman has sued Rohr for $500,000,000, charging it was "hoodwinked" when it bought the Flxible Company from Rohr in 1978. Grumman had to spend $90,000,000 to reinforce the rear wheel assembly of its 2600 Model 870 coaches when hundreds developed cracks in their undercarriages. Grumman claims Rohr knew the 870 design was defective when it sold the Flxible division . . . Morrison-Knudsen of Boise has received a $20,000,000 contract from the New York City Transit Authority to refurbish 200 subway cars over the next two years . . . San Jose plans to add a historic streetcar line to its new light rail project; two historic San Jose Railroads wooden cars are currently undergoing restoration.

THE LAST PAGE

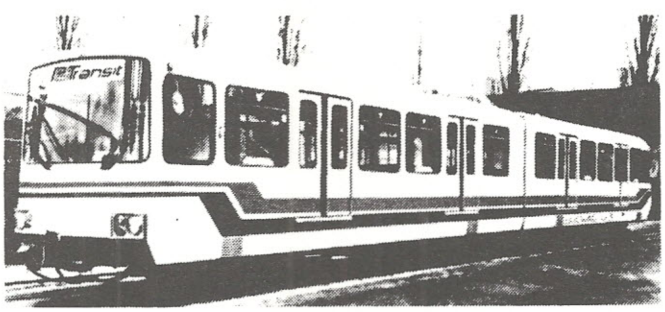
A zephyr blows by

We saw a story the other day about the Rio Grande Zephyr, one of the last non-Amtrak intercity trains in the country, and we thought back a decade:

- Sitting in the vista dome of a sleek, clean little train, coursing through the Moffat Tunnel, 6¼ miles of darkness through the Rockies west of Denver, one of the longest rail tunnels in the world.
- Bursting through into an aspen-filled valley with a tiny creek, a stream that grew and tumbled and turned into the Colorado River as the miles flew westward.
- Passing an afternoon with wild rock formations and magical names—Battlement Mesa, Cathedral Bluffs, Roan Cliffs, Grand Valley—and speeding past tiny towns called Eagle, Gypsum, Antlers, Rifle, Helper.
- Trying fresh brook trout cooked on the wood stove in the dining car for supper, followed by hot apple pie.
- Sitting back in an overstuffed chair while George, a red-jacketed waiter, called frequent travelers by their names and remembered their favorite brandies.
- Derailing ever so gently in the mountains of eastern Utah, and being brought hot coffee while we watched the repair crew outside in a snowstorm.
- Finally peering out on the lights of Salt Lake City, twinkling far below, cold and clear in the night.

The Denver & Rio Grande Western RR ended service on that route Sunday. Amtrak is diverting one train from southern Wyoming to Central Colorado to take up some of the slack. But, from the trout to George to the coffee in the snow, an era is ending nonetheless.

– Chicago Sun-Times



REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

CITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO-O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
INTRA-AIRPORT TRANSIT SYSTEM

The City of Chicago invites letters of interest from firms which are interested in being evaluated as qualified candidates for the supply and installation of Intra-Airport Transit vehicle and hardware systems and the associated operations and maintenance thereof. The system is scheduled to be operational by mid-1986 and will consist of approximately 3.5 miles of single and double guideway. Most of the guideway will be on elevated structure and seven to ten stations will serve the system. The vehicles/trains shall be operatorless for the normal automatic mode of services including automatic train protection, automatic train operation and train control supervision. A fleet of vehicles will ultimately be required to accommodate a capacity of 6,000 passengers per hour.

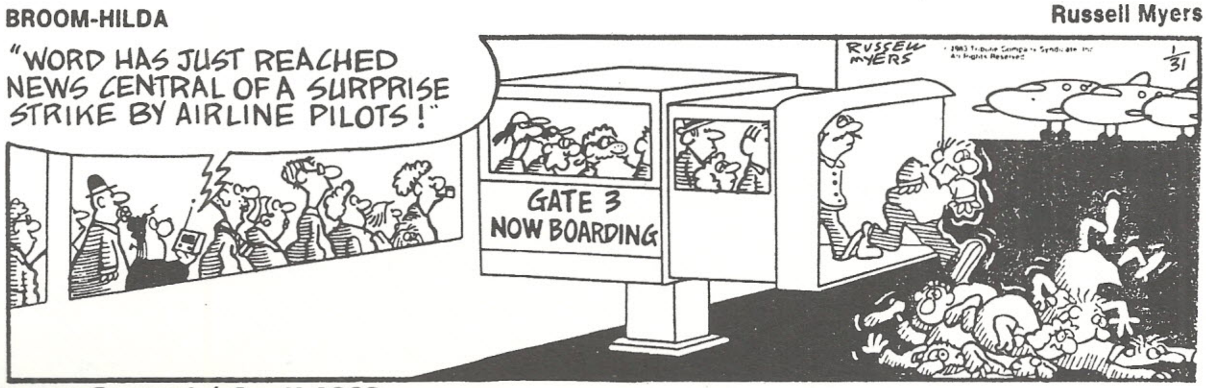
Firms interested in being evaluated as candidate transit system suppliers and for the on-going operation and maintenance of the system should submit a letter of interest prior to May 5, 1983. The letter of interest shall be addressed to:

Donald M. Pries
Program Manager
O'Hare Development Program
20 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60602

Drawing by Vietor © 1982 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

'Do you have any gimmicks that would get me to Toledo, Ohio?'

BROOM-HILDA **Russell Myers**




CITY RAILWAY
FIRST TRACKLESS TROLLEYS