



WashARP NEWSLETTER

Sept./Oct.
1986 Issue

Washington Association of Railroad Passengers

" . . . getting the Pacific Northwest on the right track."

President: Charles Mott

Vice-President: James O. Neal

Secretary: Jim Hamre PE

Treasurer: Hans Mueller

Editor: Barbara Hilton

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Dr. James W. Bell, Seattle

Thomas J. Martin PE, Seattle

Steve Spear, Auburn

The regular WashARP Business Meeting was held September 13th at Andy's Diner. The most important topic was the September 29 Membership Luncheon at which President Chuck Mott will give introductions and Executive Director Lloyd Flem will give a summary of Washington State events including a rundown of the Expo Train Project. Jim Neal, of the Eastern Division, will be the main speaker. His topic will be the future of rail passenger service as it relates to the total railroad scenario. The Board discussed ways in which to activate our membership and get them more involved with Board activities, giving them more input and giving WashARP more clout. We want an active membership.

Final plans were discussed for the upcoming NARP Board of Directors meeting October 9 - 11 in Portland. Most of the board members will be in attendance and private discussions are planned with the East Coast directors to let them know how we in the West feel about cuts in service out here.

It was suggested that WashARP man a booth at the upcoming AMTRAK display on October 4. This will be handled through our Special Projects team and volunteers will be in touch with Dave Morse.

Rocky Shay introduced a Resolution of Censure against Amtrak for train eliminations and service reductions in the Northwest. The Resolution passed unanimously after some discussion. This will be used to get NARP's attention. We hope NARP will more actively lobby for our Northwest corridor.

Editor's Note: This issue may be the last in this format. We plan to expand and have special columns from directors.

REMEMBER STAMPEDE PASS?

Say hello to the Washington Central Railroad. . . the new shortline that's buying the Burlington Northern line segments between Kennewick and Cle Elum and between Connell and Othello. The Kennewick to Cle Elum segment is part of the former Northern Pacific main line over the Cascades. Owner Nicholas Temple, who recently moved to Yakima from Las Vegas, says the matter of through service to Seattle in cooperation with Burlington Northern is still an open question. He says AMTRAK has never come up in any discussions. He also told a Seattle radio station recently that Washington Central will move as soon as possible to remove all remaining signaling from the line. He indicated that signaling might be restored if through service were restarted over either Stampede or Snoqualmie Passes. Burlington Northern says it is still keeping both passes available for possible future use. Temple says Washington Central will be a non-union operation with no formal craft lines. . . and will pay what he called "the going rate" in the Yakima area. Temple says he hopes to have Washington Central up and running physically by mid-October, with formal approval of the sale expected later.

--Rocky Shay

**FALL 1986 MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION
LUNCHEON**

Approximately 55 guests were present at the 1986 Fall Membership Appreciation Luncheon on September 27, at the Edgewater. President Chuck Mott introduced the speakers and commended key Board Members for work done. Executive Director Lloyd Flem updated members on changes in rail passenger service in Washington and the Pacific Northwest.

The keynote speaker was Jim Neal of Ephrata. He gave a broad picture of what rail passenger service could be like in the future. His legal background provided special emphasis on corporate power structures. The speech was optimistic but key areas of concern were legislative.

As a finale, several beautiful railroad calendars, courtesy of Hans Mueller, were given away in a drawing.

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In this issue, we would like to extend a warm welcome to the folks who signed up at the WashARP booth for a free copy of this paper. We hope you will want to continue reading this paper and support our cause. The money received from membership fees is used to actively support our legislative program as well as pay our Executive Director a small ongoing fee. He does far in excess of what he is paid to accomplish. If you find you are interested in our cause, we urge you to fill out the form on this newsletter and send it in. You will receive a bi-monthly newsletter plus any special announcements sent out on train service. We welcome you and urge you to ask your friends to join. We also want to hear your comments on Amtrak service and how WashARP can best help restore trains we can all be proud to ride.

AMTRAK SHOWS ITS STUFF!!!

The October 4 Amtrak equipment display featured Superliner cars. A tour of the equipment was provided but no rides were offered. Media and travel agencies were briefed the previous night. Several booths including WashARP, were set up in King Street Station. Amtrak officials were present to greet the public and answer questions. Free balloons and paper engineer caps were provided for the kiddies. A number of people stopped by the WashARP booth and signed up for a free newsletter. Many expressed interest and were eager to find out what they could do to help save rail passenger service in the Pacific Northwest. This was our theme - WashARP is the organization to join to save and upgrade trains HERE as well as back East. We feel the Northwest has not been given a fair hearing by Amtrak officials. Train service on the Pioneer and Mt. Rainier faces periodic challenges from these officials who find it easier to cut service here rather than in the eastern population centers. Equipment on these trains needs upgrading and regular service established on a DAILY basis. This is what we are about. We lobby Congress, state legislative bodies, and cities to promote more train service, more stops, more equipment. The '86 Expo Train Project is an example of how effective WashARP can be. This train nearly became a reality and received a lot of backing from Canadian officials who still are interested in establishing service across the Border in conjunction with Amtrak. We plan to continue working on this goal. This Expo was far more successful than anticipated and the Expo train would have helped Amtrak with a positive cash flow and pay off the deficit showing critics trains can pay their way.

Barbara Hilton, Editor
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The Board met on July 12 at Andy's Diner for the regular second Saturday in the month meeting. A reliable informant gave us warning that the Pioneer was being set up for a cutback to tri-weekly in October despite Amtrak's firm denial of this to NARP. Board members are preparing to fight this and ask membership to ride the train and write letters encouraging Congress to support the Pioneer.

Lloyd Flem summed up the Vancouver Expo Train effort. We were derailed by 3 factors: (1) AMTRAK had no real plans to run the train despite upfront promise of equipment; (2) WSDOT had no interest, hiding behind 403b; (3) BN does not want passenger trains period.

Jim Hamre will write Amtrak to make sure that there will be a station at or near King Street if King Street Station is no longer available from Burlington Northern who is moving out to make way for sale.

The Board still has plans to fight 403b in this state, focusing on the legislature for now. We need to settle the 403b issue before we can expect any real help from the State on any transit/rail service.

Brief summaries of Jim Hamre's reports on the Mt. Rainier and Empirt Builder will appear later in the newsletter.

We are still paying off debts for the Executive Director we hired, so any early renewals, new members, or donations would be appreciated to help us through this. There is a possibility of having the Director set up a civic club speaking tour to help pay expenses in future.

Latest BN rumors circulating: All new management is due to come in. (1) We found out in the Expo Train battle that BN is "on the other side" when it comes to passenger trains. (2) A non-union company or Union Pacific will buy Stampede Pass.

Welcome to new members who have joined since the first of the year:

Floyd Urschel

Dave Morse

Sam Matousek

Phillip Hull

Mike Ofsthus

Mary Wiese

Joshua Shields

Bob Mathiesen

Christopher Reeves

Larry Yohe

Edgar Rynerson

Ginger Zimmer

Fred Kechnel

Michale Warfel

Mr./Mrs. Larry May

Frank Potter

Carl Weber

Greg & Shiela Griffith

Dan McFarling

Dale Menchofer

Dave Rohr

Burton, WA

Seattle, WA

Eatonville, WA

Everett, WA

Woodinville, WA

Seattle, WA

Seattle, WA

Puyallup, WA

San Francisco, CA

Des Moines, WA

Seattle, WA

Lynnwood, WA

Puyallup, WA

Redmond, WA

Granite Falls, WA

Seattle, WA

Seattle, WA

Olympia, WA

Portland, OR

Seattle, WA

Fullerton, CA

From CONNECTIONS - TAC-SEA CONNECTIONS
#1 of 7/86

"Light rail is the preferred transit alternative for nearly half (48%) of the residents. . ." according to their recent public opinion poll.

In future issues of the WashARP Newsletter, we will keep you posted on our meetings, the NARP meeting in Portland, BN rumors and the Amtrak budget battle results. We will have news of any changes regarding King Street Station and local transit (light rail) possibilities in planning.

Jim Hamre presided over the August 9 Board Meeting, as President Chuck Mott had other commitments. Minutes of previous meeting and Treasurer's Report were given and approved. There was an update on the current AMTRAK situation, revealing John Miller voted for cuts in Committee while Gorton and Evans did not.

Rumors abound on old Northern Pacific line over Stampede Pass. Union Pacific has shown interest and a new non-union railroad - Washington Central Railroad - is being talked about in connection with possible sale.

Jim Hamre gave more figures on Pioneer ridership and give possible solutions which we should encourage AMTRAK to consider. . .

Next Board Meeting will be September 13 and the General Membership Lunch on September 27 (reservation attached to this newsletter).

Upcoming NARP meeting in Portland October 9 - 12 was discussed. The public is welcome and encouraged to make their views known to the national organization and see how they are doing their job.

PROBLEMS WITH THE MT. RAINIER AND PIONEER WITH POSSIBLE ANSWERS TO THOSE PROBLEMS

by Jim Hamre.

Labor Costs: The typical Mt. Rainier of 3 to 5 cars could easily and safely be operated with a 3-person crew.

Time Incentives: Does a train with a 3 hour and 50 minute running time need incentive payments?

Marketing: Amtraks' "Dollar Return Fare" promotion and advertising was highly successful. . . Even with the return of regular fares Amtrak is still half the price of special bought-six-month-in-advance airline fares between Seattle and Portland (United round trip: \$68.). Amtrak fares are comparable to Trailways and Greyhound. Proper marketing of fares and services on a continuing basis is essential in the Seattle-Portland corridor.

Speed Restrictions: (. . . municipal speed restrictions can be reduced without spending large sums of money.) Amtrak must take the initiative on this as the Burlington Northern could care less.

Mail and Express: Has Amtrak ever looked at this possibility? In combination with the northbound Pioneer, the Mt. Rainier could carry both first class mail and parcels between Seattle and Portland.

The main problem with the Pioneer is with corporate Amtrak management. They fail to understand that the Pioneer is actually two very distinct trains: a long haul between Seattle and Chicago and a corridor operation between Seattle and Portland. . . One can attempt to justify a tri-weekly operation for a long haul, but it is impossible to even attempt justification for running a corridor train on a tri-weekly basis.

It is interesting that the worst long haul in the system (by far) is the Montrealer, yet Amtrak has made herculean efforts to reduce costs and improve revenue. A similar effort was done for the Southwest Chief, with very positive results. Why, then, does it appear that Amtrak is making an effort to do just the opposite with the Pioneer and wipe it off the map? We must fight Amtrak every step of the way on their attempted destruction of the Pioneer.

(Apologies to Jim Hamre for this very brief capsulized version of two very good papers on the Problems with the Pioneer and the Mt. Rainier and possible solutions.) Editor

From CONNECTIONS - TAC-SEA CONNECTIONS

Selection of the preferred alternative for possible transit scenarios is scheduled for October 1986. Two of these include light rail.

1.) **LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT** - A LRT system in Pierce County would connect into a regional system running from Everett to Tacoma. The rail system would provide all-day express service to major destinations and connect up with local bus service. LRT can accommodate more passengers than buses.

2.) **BASELINE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT** - Express buses would connect with an LRT station in Federal Way, the southernmost station of the anticipated King County LRT system. There would be no LRT service within Pierce County, but riders could drive or bus to the Federal Way Station.

For more information, call or write to:
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216 First Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98104 or
PHONE: (206) 464-6661 SCAN 576-6172

Coming issues of CONNECTIONS will discuss transit alignments and financing options.

Barbara Hilton, Editor
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