

the 6:53

February 1993

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Issue #105

X2000 Train on Track!

by Stu Nicholson & Ken Wilt, *the 6:53 Co-editors*

As the X2000 demonstration project comes up to speed, many are beginning to realize that this special train may hold the key for bringing together the divergent rail interests: freight, conventional and high speed. If all goes well, we may see these types of trains in use all over the country by the turn of the century. Times are quickly changing, thanks to advancing technology, economic conditions, and an abrupt change in political winds. The time is now, and the X2000 is pulling into the station.

The X2000 demonstration is a joint venture between Amtrak, the Swedish State Railways, the US Federal Railroad Administration, and ABB Traction Inc. ABB Traction is part of Asea Brown Boveri, the designer and manufacturer of the train.

Amtrak hopes to have 150mph trains in use on Northeast Corridor routes by 1997. The new higher speed trains are part of a \$1.3 billion improvement project of the Northeast Corridor. The project also includes electrification of the New Haven to Boston line.

The train itself certainly lives up to its name - from its sleek shape and high-tech operation to its luxurious onboard amenities, the X2000 is indeed futuristic. The train has three major features that Amtrak is testing: radial steering bogies, carbody tilting, and electric propulsion. The steering bogies steer the wheels of the train around curves, so the train can go faster and wear is minimized. The train has an active tilting system to compensate for centrifugal force on curves, therefore it can take curves faster. Electric propulsion means that the train is cleaner, quieter, and more dependable.

The X2000 has other features which make it superior to US passenger trains now in use. Among them: push/pull operation, audio headsets, telephones, AC power, outgoing fax, computer hookups, and even conference rooms! The X2000 trainset consists of an electric locomotive, three coach cars, a bistro car, and a cab car. There are 203 seats onboard.

So far the X2000 has had very favorable reviews. It seems to have passed the technical tests in the Harrisburg Corridor with flying colors. According to *Railpace* magazine the train took a curve slated for a maximum of 55mph at 85mph... and a 70mph curve at 100mph! The train is now in use in regular revenue service between Washington D.C. and New York City.

Passengers are being polled, and the feedback so far has been very positive.

Several Ohio officials, including State representatives Bob Hagan and Patrick Sweeney, recently rode on the X2000 between Washington DC and Bowie, Md. We spoke with John Platt, ODOT's Assistant Director for Transportation Modes, just after he had returned from the trip. He seemed very excited about the experience and the possibility of having such trains in Ohio. He was very impressed with the comfort of the train and all the onboard amenities, as well as the fact that it can run on regular tracks. Mr. Platt also mentioned that the use of these trains would not only benefit Ohioans from a transportation standpoint, but would also provide jobs.

Will we see X2000's streaking across Ohio in the near future? Nobody will say for sure, but some things are happening that make it seem more likely. According to *Washington Post* and *Associated Press* stories, a press conference was held at Washington's Union Station on February 3rd at which Edwin L. Harper, President of the Association of American Railroads, and Amtrak President W. Graham Claytor Jr. jointly announced that an agreement had been reached regarding the sharing of trackage by freight and passenger trains.

Freight railroads have pledged cooperation in allowing passenger trains (of speeds up to 150mph!) to share the tracks with freight trains, provided the passenger rail carriers pay for improvements and release the freight carriers of all liability. The agreement also says projects are to be evaluated individually, and "accommodation may not be feasible in all cases". Nevertheless, this agreement represents a major attitude change on the part of freight railroads and should help open the door for high-speed passenger services.

Want to ride the X2000? Call Amtrak and reserve a seat! The train runs between Washington and New York until May 10th. On April 5th the run will be extended to New Haven. The schedule: Feb 15th thru April 2nd, weekdays: Trains 114 and 125 April 5th thru May 10th, weekdays: Trains 202 and 223 Saturdays Feb. 20th and March 20th only: Trains 108 and 125 Seats cost the same as a regular Metroliner coach, \$90 each way from Washington to New York and \$95 each way between Washington and New Haven.

President's Column

by J. Howard Harding, *OARP President*

W. Graham Claytor, Jr. has served Amtrak well for ten years. It is probably no exaggeration to assert that Claytor saved Amtrak from extinction during the Reagan-Bush years. But he has now announced his intention to retire, and the Amtrak Board of Directors has begun to search for a new president.

Mr. Claytor's departure offers an opportunity for major change in Amtrak's entire management style to deal with declining employee morale, deteriorating on-time performance, and the host of less obvious problems which increasingly jeopardize Amtrak's political viability.

Reproduced below are major excerpts from a recent commentary by Illinois Rail Vice-President Dave Randall, which calls for just such managerial changes. In future issues of the 6:53 space will be provided for other views on this issue, the effective resolution of which is essential to OARP's success in gaining broader support for state-funded Amtrak expansion in Ohio.

Amtrak's painful self-examination offers hope - if heeded

by Dave Randall

One of the first steps taken by Amtrak management in the implementation of a long overdue CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) program was to have an outside consultant conduct a study of the company's employee relations environment. The study results were grim news for Amtrak management as employees in large numbers expressed distrust of the company's managers and contempt for the way in which the company is being run.

In October, the results were made available to the employees, and Amtrak President Graham Claytor, in a cover letter attached to the report, said, "Needless to say, the study results were sobering but not altogether unexpected". Those of us who are regular users of Amtrak service were not surprised either.

Statements in the summary point out that employees have a serious lack of confidence in Amtrak's leadership, which is perceived as autocratic, isolated and fault-finding rather than visionary and supportive. In addition, the organization is perceived as slow to respond to problems, rigid, procedure-oriented and bureaucratic. Employees feel that quality of service

takes a back seat to cost cutting and on-time performance (which is still poor). Competence is not seen as something valued by management.

This report is a major indictment of present management at Amtrak and clearly points out the cause of the company's chronic service related problems: inadequate maintenance and too many surly, indifferent employees.

We must quit blaming the occupant of the White House, the Secretary of Transportation, the FDA and Congress for Amtrak's problems. The fact that the corporation has had inadequate capitalization for 22 years is no excuse for treating your most important asset (employees) [poorly].

...Unfortunately, it is the current management team that has, at worst created, or, at best, been unable to correct the dismal employee relations mess at Amtrak. The appointment of any member of the current management team as the next Amtrak president would send the wrong message to the company's 25,000 employees. That message would be: "business as usual".

There must be a complete replacement of top management at Amtrak with people who have vision and are not afraid to try out new ideas. Before any improvement in service quality can be realized, a crash program must be instituted to gain the respect of employees. Ideas must flow up and down, not just from top to bottom as now happens. Management must listen to on-board, maintenance, and station personnel - as they all have excellent ideas to improve the product.

Amtrak's Board of Directors should look outside of government bureaucracies and even outside of the railroad and transportation industry for a new president. Because Amtrak is a large, sprawling service organization, it might be wise to look for Graham Claytor's replacement in a corporation such as Marriott, Westin, Sheraton, or even a large tour company. No matter who is the next Amtrak president, he/she must have first hand experience with... the quality process.

Bill Clinton was elected because he tapped into the voters desire for "change" and seemed to understand that America could no longer afford "business as usual". Neither can Amtrak.

Dave Randall is Vice-President of Illinois Rail and lives in Alton, Illinois.

OARP Testifies on Access Ohio

by Bill Hutchison, OARP Vice-President

In late 1992, we were given an opportunity to present written testimony on the Ohio Department of Transportation's transportation plan, Access Ohio. This plan is the first comprehensive transportation plan attempted in this state and was begun before the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was passed. According to ODOT, there will be another series of public hearings this spring, with the final report due at the end of the year - after which legislation would be introduced to put the plan into effect.

Our testimony addressed several concerns, since like many other things, the Access Ohio plan has both good and bad points. On the positive side, a statewide network of conventional speed, state supported rail passenger services would be introduced, complimented by a feeder bus network. In addition, intermodal connections would be emphasized, and rail freight services and public transit would be improved.

Proposals such as added rural freeway capacity and "Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems" are two of the more questionable ideas to come from this study, since they will only make congestion and pollution worse. The concern is whether the intent of ISTEA and the Clean Air Act Amendments would be followed as closely as their authors had intended, should Access Ohio be carried out as presented in November. The possibility exists that an environmental or other organization might pursue legal action to compel compliance with the legislation, thereby forcing ODOT to change horses in mid-stream. We believe it would be better to address these concerns at the front end of the process, and do the job right the first time.

Overall, Access Ohio is a major step forward and represents a welcome shift in ODOT's thinking. Hopefully, as a result of the Access Ohio process we will soon have more choices about how we get from one place to another in Ohio.

Plan to Attend NARP's Spring Meeting

on March 13th, 1993 from 10 am to 4 pm

at the Sheraton Inn - Ann Arbor, Michigan

3200 Boardwalk (at I-94 & State Street)

Meeting arrangements are being made by the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers'(MARP) Clark Charnetski, John DeLora, and Alan Gebauer. John has invited the new U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Fredrico Pena, to speak to NARP members from Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

As reported in the January NARP News, state ARP meetings will begin at 10 am. The NARP Region 6 Meeting will begin at 1 pm, following lunch.

The morning OARP meeting will include reports on OARP's goals and objectives for the 1990's, Access Ohio rail service plans, the Pittsburgh ISTEA Conference, the upcoming Youngstown-Pittsburgh reroute of the BROADWAY LIMITED, and progress on the PENNSYLVANIAN Extension.

To reach the Ann Arbor Sheraton Inn from Ohio, first head for Toledo and the junction of US-23 and I-475. Follow US-23 north to I-94 (exit #35). Then follow I-94 west to State Street (exit #177). Take State Street north, the Sheraton will be on the right.

Ann Arbor is served by Amtrak's LAKE CITIES at 1:24pm FROM Toledo and 8:03pm TO Toledo. Amtrak's Thruway Buss Service from/to the CAPITOL LIMITED also serves Ann Arbor - 7:45am FROM Toledo and 7:40pm TO Toledo.

Please send in your registration, with a check or money order for \$20 per person, Payable to MARP, to Clark Charnetski, 2646 Traver Blvd, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Questions? Clark's # is 313/761-3814.

NAME _____

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Cleveland-Pittsburgh Update

by Kenneth Prendergast,
CLE-PITT Project Director

On January 27th, Amtrak's Board of Directors approved a \$2.6 million capital amount request to build the New Castle Connection. As a result and starting in late 1994, Amtrak's BROADWAY LIMITED on the segment between Youngstown and Pittsburgh will offer faster service for passengers.

While the Board's action is intended to benefit the BROADWAY, it gives a tremendous boost to the PENNSYLVANIAN Extension project. At present, the BROADWAY takes nearly three hours to cover the 74 miles from Youngstown to Pittsburgh. The slowest portion is east of New Castle. This CSXT owned route is known as the P&W... it's also known for its slow speed, tight curves, and single track.

The P&W's future has been threatened ever since last Summer, when a CSXT subsidiary named Three Rivers Railway Co. acquired parallel trackage of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie. All through freight traffic is to be routed over the former P&LE, which unfortunately doesn't have access to the Amtrak station in Pittsburgh. Thus, the BROADWAY would likely be the only train still using the P&W. This is further complicated by the coming expiration of Amtrak/freight railroad contracts in 1996. If the BROADWAY stayed on the P&W after 1996, Amtrak might be expected to assume all costs of maintaining the line. For these reasons, Amtrak will pay for the New Castle Connection.

Surveying, planning, new track construction, and renewal of old track may require two work

seasons. All work on the New Castle Connection is expected to be completed by Fall 1994. According to Amtrak spokeswoman Sue Martin, Amtrak estimates the new connection will save \$25,000 each year in train, engine, crew, and fuel costs. In addition, at least 20 minutes will be cut off the BROADWAY's schedule. More time savings may be realized once the train settles into its new route.

You may remember that the New Castle Connection was among five capital upgrading projects listed as necessary for the PENNSYLVANIAN Extension to reach Cleveland via Youngstown. "Clearly this removes one of the barriers to the PENNSYLVANIAN Extension," Martin noted in a conversation with OARP. However, don't expect Amtrak to dig into its own tight pockets to pay for any of the other projects.

Immediate action was taken on the New Castle Connection as an emergency measure - to keep the BROADWAY, an existing service, from getting stuck with the P&W predicament. Because of the New Castle Connection, the PENNSYLVANIAN could reach Ohio without funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, although station stops in the Keystone State would be difficult absent Commonwealth funds. The remaining track and signal upgrading projects are primarily in Ohio.

The ball is now in Ohio's court. Ohio's General Assembly and Governor should acknowledge this responsibility. It is an opportunity to draw the PENNSYLVANIAN into northeast Ohio and serve more than 3 million residents.

AMTRAK INFO...

@@@ Updated Amtrak timetables are now available! If you're planning on taking a train from Ohio, you should check the new schedules, as there have been some changes. The timetables will be available at the March 13th NARP Meeting in Ann Arbor, or send a SASE (with 98-cents postage on it) to: J. Howard Harding, 489 Overwood Rd, Akron, OH 44313-5327.

@@@ On January 27th, 1993 the Amtrak Board of Directors voted to convert the LAKE SHORE LIMITED, CRESCENT, and SUNSET LIMITED to china service in their dining cars. In early February they joined the CAPITOL LIMITED, COAST STARLIGHT, SOUTHWEST CHIEF, and AUTO TRAIN with the First Class dining service. China, glass, and silverware, once standard throughout the Amtrak system, was eliminated during the 1981 budget and service reductions.

@@@ The X2000 is not the only high-speed trainset Amtrak intends to test out. The German ICE may be tested as early as this coming summer... and other trains may be tested as well. Whichever trainset Amtrak eventually chooses, it will be manufactured here in the United States.

Station News From Around Ohio

Sandusky- The city of Sandusky has purchased the the Sandusky depot for \$36,000. Now decisions have to be made on what to do with the facility, which has been the target of vandals and general neglect for years. The site has been mentioned as an intermodal transportation center for the area, however, a recent article in the **Sandusky Register** suggested that private owners might be interested in buying the building from the city. That same article quotes Amtrak spokeswoman Debbie Hare as saying resale of the property would be okay, as long as Amtrak's right to use the facility is maintained. As of January 27th, the sale of the station had not been finalized, but the assistant to Sandusky City Manager Frank Link says a final draft sales contract was delivered to Amtrak, and they foresee a successful closing sometime in mid-February. The city manager's office also acknowledges that there is still considerable interest for development uses on and around the station property.

Toledo - Is Central Union Terminal a step closer to renovation? That's the word from the **Toledo Blade**, and from OARP Board Member Larry George. As recently as January 27th, Toledo Port Authority officials toured the 87,000 square foot facility, which has been completely vacated by Conrail, and now has Amtrak as its sole tenant. Federal funding cannot be secured for the planned renovation as long as Conrail holds legal title to the property. The good news is that Conrail has expressed a willingness to donate CUT to either the city or a government agency, such as the Port Authority or the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG). State Representative Marcy Kaptur has secured \$1 million in federal funds to clean up the area around CUT, including the demolition of several abandoned buildings. TMACOG has applied to ODOT for \$3.5 million to develop the building as an intermodal transportation center. Trains and buses would be located on the ground level. Possible uses for the upper level include a museum, a "railroad theme" restaurant, and retail shops.

Youngstown - Amtrak and the City of Youngstown formally dedicated new passenger train facilities at the B&O Station on December 5th, 1992. Funds for renovating the 88 year old station, which includes a restaurant and meeting rooms, came from city and federal sources, as well as from Amtrak and the National Restaurant Corp. Youngstown Mayor Patrick Ungaro welcomed the gathering, which included representatives from Amtrak, OARP, KARP, and the local media. Tom Anderson, John Ciccarella, Daryl Gordon, Doug Hudson, Ken Prendergast, and Jack Slanina attended on OARP's behalf, with Bob Abraham and Ed Heller from KARP.

Columbus Area Update

by Bob Boyce

A preliminary briefing session was held at the Red Door January 6th for volunteers who agreed to ask their suburban councils to pass pro-rail resolutions. The proposed resolutions would endorse state support of Ohio passenger trains and the construction of a central Ohio intermodal station. By the February 6th meeting a model resolution had been drawn up for each volunteer to use as a basis to work from.

Volunteers and their local councils are:

Doris Blaine	<i>Bexley</i>
Sue Gordon	<i>Bexley</i>
Mary Eckert	<i>Clintonville</i>
Tom Allen	<i>Delaware</i>
Bob Boyce	<i>Grandview</i>
Jim Shoemaker	<i>Newark</i>
Harold Zweifel	<i>Obetz</i>
Larry & Meg Grey	<i>Pickerington</i>
Bill Hutchison	<i>Worthington</i>

The January meeting was attended by 17 people, including two new faces. We welcome Douglas Smith and Bill Hysell and hope they will keep coming.

23 people attended the February meeting, with 2 first timers. Welcome Michael McKinney and Robert Robbins!

The January meeting included reports from OARP Vice-President Bill Hutchison on the macro phase of Access Ohio, Jack Schoby on the membership project, and Ken Wilt on the advantages of using the CompuServe computer network. Tony Flores suggested we set up an agenda of things we hope to accomplish during the rest of the year and discussion followed.

The February meeting consisted of discussions on a variety of topics from Access Ohio to the X2000!

The group has decided to hold Red Door meetings on the first Saturday of each month. By having a regular meeting time we can take advantage of free meeting announcements offered by many local newspapers and magazines. Any departure from the schedule will be announced.

The next Columbus area meeting will be Saturday, March 6th, 10a.m., at the Red Door Tavern, 1736 West 5th Avenue.



Travel Tips: Making the Train

by Ken Wilt



These tips apply to train riding in the U.S.:

Don't Let This Happen To You!

- 1) Be at the station extra early. Get there an hour or two before the train is supposed to, especially if the station is far away. Be sure and allow plenty of time for weather conditions, traffic, and road construction.
- 2) Expect the train to be late, but don't count on it. Never, ever assume that the train is always late and that therefore you can show up late. The time you do that, the train will be on time.
- 3) Call before going to the station. Call Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL to see if the train is running on time or how much of a delay to expect.
- 4) Call twice. Sometimes the information may come up to the Amtrak representative wrong, be read wrong, etc. Mistakes do happen.
- 5) Once you're on the train, stick close to it. If you get off the train while it's being serviced, listen very carefully to the announcements. Generally, don't leave the platform, especially if they tell you not to. You don't want to be left behind!

Ever wondered what it would be like to just barely miss the train? Can you picture yourself running down the platform, waving your arms in a futile attempt to get the train to stop? Well, that nightmarish scenario very nearly became my reality on a recent Amtrak trip out West.

We were taking the EMPIRE BUILDER from Seattle back to Chicago, and the train was behind schedule. Pulling in for a service stop in Havre, Montana they announced that to make up some time they were going to service the train as quickly as possible, and then pull out. They advised that anyone stepping off the train should stay on or near the platform.

Did I mention that while rolling into Havre we had seen a McDonalds right next to the tracks? And that I was having a major junk food attack? Well, my traveling companion checked the timetable and told me that the service stop usually took an hour. Plenty of time to run down to McDonalds, I thought, and off I went. My taste buds had taken over my brain...

I ran most of the way there, got the food, and started walking back alongside the tracks. The train was still there! I was in the clear. Not! Suddenly there was a flurry of activity on the platform and it was quickly cleared of people. At this point I was running faster than I ever had before! The train attendants were already boarding the train themselves. There I was - sprinting down the track, clutching a bag of food under one arm and waving my other arm frantically... when one of the train attendants saw me. It was a miracle! In a few more seconds I reached the train and sheepishly went up to my seat, where I huffed and puffed for the next half hour! I was too worn out to enjoy my food!

It turns out my companion had misread the timetable - the service stop was originally scheduled for 15 minutes, not an hour! It's a good thing I ran most of the way, or I would have been stranded there with nothing but a full stomach! Take my advice, if they say don't leave the platform - don't!

BAGGAGE & EXPRESS.....

@@@ An article in the *Columbus Dispatch* (2/5/93) reported on a Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) presentation before the Columbus City Council regarding the siting of an intermodal station in Columbus. MORPC Transportation Director Mohamed Ismail is urging quick action before prime sites are eliminated by development. The *Dispatch* states that ground could be broken on a new station by the turn of the century... let's hope it's sooner than that!

@@@ OARP is being well represented at events. In January, Howard Harding and Bill Hutchison attended a two day transportation conference in Pittsburgh, Pa. On February 24th OARP will have representatives at the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) sponsored lobby day at the statehouse. On March 20th OARP will be co-sponsoring another OEC event, a day long transportation conference entitled Ohio Cast 2000. For information on attending please contact OEC at 614/224-4900 (400 Dublin Ave, Columbus, OH 43215) or call Bill Hutchison.

@@@ We're still wishing OARP President Howard Harding a speedy recovery. He had to go back for a second round of surgery on his eye. Get well soon, Howard!

@@@ US Senate Bill #249 has been introduced by Senator Lautenberg of New Jersey. It calls for for \$320 million in Capital Funds for Amtrak! That could buy lots of equipment! Will the bill pass? Maybe, if enough people call or write...

@@@ The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio will soon begin a \$300,000 study of 1,200 railroad grade crossings in Northwest Ohio, according to an article in the *Toledo Blade* (12/24/92). Federal ISTEA funds will pay up to 80% of the cost, with PUCO kicking in up to \$60,000. The study is to determine how to either eliminate crossings, or at least make them safer. Methods to be explored include track relocations, grade separations (bridges & underpasses), and further improvements in crossing safety devices. Thanks to Dick Cartwright for the clipping!

@@@ Thanks to OARP Treasurer George Bayless, who recently spoke about OARP's goals at two service clubs: the Northwest Optimists in Englewood, Ohio, and the Sertoma Club in Dayton, Ohio.

@@@ Congratulations to OARP member Jolene Molitoris! Jolene is the newly elected Vice-President of the High Speed Rail/Maglev Association. She also may soon be the next Federal Railroad Administrator - word is that she's made it to the final cut. Best of luck, Jolene!

@@@ Congratulations also to Joe Vranich, who succeeds Bob Casey as President of the HSR/Maglev Association...

@@@ Thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue of the 6:53: Tom Allen, George Bayless, Bob Boyce, Mark Carlson, Dick Cartwright, Larry George, Howard Harding, Bill Hutchison, Ken Prendergast, Dave Randall, Jack Slanina, and Harold Zweifel.

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Updated: October 15, 1992

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Become a dues paying member of OARP and help us sustain our voice for rail passenger concerns! The first year costs only \$15, and includes a subscription to the 6:53. Membership dues are \$20/year thereafter. All contributions to OARP are tax-deductible. To join, simply fill out and mail this coupon, along with a check or money order payable to OARP to: George Bayless, Treasurer, 2422 S. Patterson Blvd, Dayton, OH 45409.

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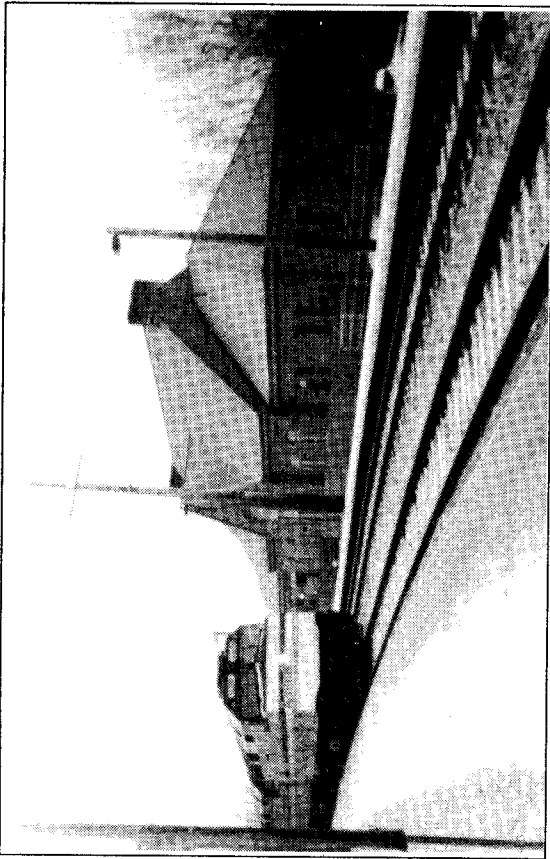
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OHIO NARP At-Large Director: James A. Dingus, Jr., 20600 Chagrin Blvd. #701, Cleveland, OH 44122-5398.....		(216) 561-9200
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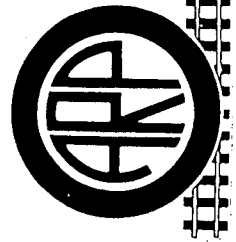
Updated: February 1, 1993

the 6:53



Not rain, not fog, not snow... not even an ice storm could stop the eastbound BROADWAY LIMITED as it pulled into Youngstown on January 10th, 1993.
Photo by Jack Slanina.

In This Issue...
X2000 Train on Track!
New Castle Connected!
OARP on Access Ohio!
...and lots more news!



February 1993

Issue #105

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OHIO ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Wanted: Photos, Clippings, Articles

We welcome contributions to the 6:53. We're looking for PHOTOS of trains and mass transit in action, NEWS CLIPPINGS, and EVENT/MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS.

If you have a special area of expertise or interest please consider writing an ARTICLE. We ask that articles be typed and kept to 350-400 words. We may edit articles for space, format, or content and we can't guarantee that every article will be printed.

Mail clippings and photos to Stu Nicholson at 276 E Tulane Rd, Columbus, OH 43202. Articles should be sent to Ken Wilt at 5315 Stonemeadow Ave #E, Columbus, OH 43220-6209. Articles may also be sent via E-Mail on CompuServe (to ID#71773,2544).

**Deadline for the April issue:
March 25, 1993**

All signed articles in the 6:53 represent the opinion of the writer only, and do not necessarily reflect the views or position of OARP or its officers.

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