Service Problems Linked to Funding Shortages
by J. Howard Harding, OARP President

Amtrak passenger complaints about service quality have recently increased at an alarming rate. If the reports we've been receiving are accurate, future ridership & funding, plus our efforts to build support for service expansion, are all endangered.

Amtrak has suffered from perpetual underfunding, political harassment and dysfunctional national transportation policy. But such things do not matter to passengers who encounter rude or invisible on-board crews, early dining and lounge car closings, late or dirty trains, and inexplicable service declines such as the rescheduling of the LAKE SHORE LIMITED (see Baggage & Express on page 6 for details).

This rescheduling is a result of twelve years of near zero capital funding and starvation level operating funding, which has destroyed Amtrak's capacity to adequately address the needs resulting from the popularity of both the LAKE SHORE and the ZEPHYR/PIONEER/DESERT WIND. Ridership demands compel operation of long, heavy trains on both routes. Maintaining schedules on long, multi-part trains is difficult at best and nearly impossible with existing car and locomotive supplies. Equipment shortages also prohibit operating separate trains on these routes.

Money alone cannot solve Amtrak's problems. Real solutions for Amtrak will also require management changes and the adoption of a comprehensive federal transportation policy. The President should recommend and Congress should approve amendment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) to:

1. permit all states to use Surface Transportation Program (STP) money for intercity rail passenger service capital investments;
2. permit all states to use Rural Transit (Section 18) funds to cover initial operating expenses for new intrastate rail passenger services;
3. finance Amtrak capital improvements (stations, equipment, track upgrades, etc.) with STP funds;
4. return revenue from the 2.5 cents/gallon gas tax used for deficit reduction to transportation funding;
5. revise federal transportation funding formulas to:
   a. limit states which do not provide dedicated funding for all modes at comparable percentages to no more than 50% federal funding for any transportation project;
   b. provide states which equalize funding levels for all forms of transportation with an 80% federal share for eligible projects.

These changes will thwart political harassment of Amtrak and integrate rail passenger service with other surface transportation modes. States will gain equal access to federal funds for rail passenger service and be rewarded for comprehensive programs. The resulting improvements in service quality and quantity should strongly reverse the ridership trends reported below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>city</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>10,146</td>
<td>9,248</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>2,894</td>
<td>2,759</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>5,238</td>
<td>5,860</td>
<td>+10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>19,289</td>
<td>19,355</td>
<td>+0.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>54,906</td>
<td>49,863</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elyria</td>
<td>6,556</td>
<td>6,492</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostoria</td>
<td>6,378</td>
<td>6,241</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>2,585</td>
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<td>-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandusky</td>
<td>3,036</td>
<td>2,749</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>94,117</td>
<td>94,492</td>
<td>+0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngstown</td>
<td>7,138</td>
<td>6,005</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Howard Robertson, Amtrak Public Affairs

Plan to attend OARP's 1993 Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 15th in Columbus. Details on page 3...
LETTES

InACCESSible OHIO

I recently had a frustrating experience with Ohio's "transportation system" when I tried to visit my parents in St. Louis. Since there are no trains from Columbus and I didn't feel like driving, I decided to fly. So, I booked an evening flight from Port Columbus. Arriving at the airport an hour prior to departure, the fun began...

As I stood in what seemed an unusually long line for a late flight, it became known that the flight had been canceled due to mechanical problems. We were given tickets on another airline for a flight to Chicago, with a connection to St. Louis. Of course, the arrival in St. Louis would be almost two hours later than the original flight. I then went to the departure gate, only to discover that the new flight was already delayed a half hour due to air traffic control problems! As I was waiting I had plenty of time to consider the woeful state of transportation in Ohio...

Here we are, the sixth most populous state in the nation, and yet we have no major air hub, nearly nonexistent passenger rail service, and declining bus service. It seems that in Ohio, it's the highway or no way! We deserve better, and I hope to ride Amtrak yet, though. He writes, "I hope to ride Amtrak many times again. But I shall be cautious about doing so until I learn that Amtrak is addressing its needs for public relations training for its crews and agents, and for sufficient standby equipment and an adequate maintenance schedule."

Al Wolf

Letters We've Seen

@@@ Ben McKay of Cincinnati wrote a letter to Amtrak in which he outlined some disturbing events that occurred during a rail trip he and his wife took from Toledo to Orlando, FL (via Washington DC) in early March. He wrote of late trains and poor customer relations by train crews. He apparently hasn't given up on Amtrak yet, though. He writes, "I hope to ride Amtrak many times again. But I shall be cautious about doing so until I learn that Amtrak is addressing its needs for public relations training for its crews and agents, and for sufficient standby equipment and an adequate maintenance schedule."

@@@ Karl Gelfer of Columbus wrote a letter to the editor of The Other Paper, commending them on their article, "Columbus is Talking Trains Again". Gelfer wrote that it is good to see positive articles on passenger rail and groups such as OARP. He also had another bit of advice pertaining to rail service for the capital city: "...Our governmental leaders should consider the area of the Columbus Convention Center as an area for a total intermodal center..."

@@@ Norman Burkhardt of Frazeysburg wrote a letter to the editor of the Newark Advocate in response to an article on a proposed recreational trail along an active rail right of way in Licking County. Mr. Burkhardt feels "It is never safe to attempt to use space next to tracks for any type of recreation". Please note that this is not OARP's official position. We are interested in how other OARP members feel about this issue. Please write a letter and let us know!
OARP Protests Highway Project

In a letter to Andy J. DiLoreto, Preliminary Development Manager for ODOT, OARP has protested the proposed widening of I-270 on the east side of Columbus to 12 lanes. This project, along with a new interchange and added local road capacity are part of an effort to build a new mall and expand the distribution facilities of The Limited clothing store chain.

OARP Vice-President Bill Hutchison stated OARP’s views: “the continuing over­dependence on the (auto) is alarming” and “failure to consider other forms of transportation as a part of this package is a glaring omission”. OARP suggests a spur from the proposed Columbus-Westerville light rail line as an alternative to this highway extravaganza.

It should be noted that OARP is not opposed to responsible development, only to building more and more roads without first considering other modes of transportation which offer less pollution, increased energy efficiency, and decreased congestion.

OARP ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

May 15th, 1993
9:30am to 4pm
Columbus, Ohio

Holiday Inn on the Lane
328 West Lane Avenue
614/294-4848

The tentative agenda includes:
Election of Officers
A Look at OARP’s Past
Lunch Speaker Bruce Mansfield of MORPC
A panel discussion on ACCESS OHIO
A panel discussion on the future of OARP
A viewing of the new CLE-PITT Project video
A presentation of the CompuServe information network

John Platt, Director of Modes at the Ohio Department of Transportation is scheduled to participate in a panel discussion on ACCESS OHIO. State Senators Cooper Snyder and Scott Oelslaeger and State Representatives Pat Sweeney, Bob Hagen, and Pat Tiberi have also been invited (not yet confirmed).

Luncheon Menu: Choice of Sliced Sirloin of Beef or Stuffed Breast of Chicken, Tossed Garden Salad, Fresh Steamed Vegetables, Walnut Layer Cake, Rolls, Butter, Beverage.

To Register: Please cut out the coupon(s) below and mail with a check for $15 per person, payable to OARP, to: Bill Hutchison, 5604 Forest Hills Blvd #A, Columbus, Ohio 43231. Registration Deadline is May 10th! ($18/person after deadline)

Questions? Call Bill at 614/898-9774
Cleveland-Pittsburgh Update
by Ken Prendergast, CLE-PITT Project Director

For the last two months, marketing activities have been the focus of the CLE-PITT Project. To help sell the idea of the Cleveland extension of the PENNSYLVANIAN to legislators, business leaders, and the general public, two marketing tools will be distributed to OARP coordinators and others by late April. These two tools are an informative brochure and a video portrait of the extension proposal.

A brief video depicting an image of the train extension (on its current route between Pittsburgh and New York) has been produced jointly by Revelation Audio-Visuals and OARP, with Dave Kanseg of WCPN-FM in Cleveland doing the narration.

The second tool, to be used independently or in combination with the video is a brochure describing the merits of the PENNSYLVANIAN Extension. Actually, there are two versions of the brochure: one is designed for area businesses and the public, while the other is intended for legislators and their staff.

Mark Carlson and I composed the brochure on his excellent Ami-Pro software, with Commercial Press of Kent doing the final printing.

I would like to thank Amtrak Public Affairs for providing photographs for the brochure and their permission to use Amtrak footage in our video.

Both the video and brochure are available to OARP members. The video is scheduled to be shown at the May 15th Annual Meeting, and brochures will be available at that time.

To request brochures by mail (limit of 5), please send a SASE #10 envelope to: CLE-PITT Project, 18964 River’s Edge Dr, Suite A, Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44023. For the video, please include a check for $7 to “OARP - CLE-PITT Project”. The $7 will cover the postage, videocassette, and mailer. A small, tax-deductible donation of $10 or $20 to help cover costs of ongoing CLE-PITT activities is appreciated. Extra donations are a major resource for CLE-PITT Project activities.

The brochures and video should have as widespread an audience as possible... these marketing tools shouldn't sit unused and collect dust! So, if you are aware of any potential audiences (meetings, forums, conferences, shows, public events, etc.) where we can get some good exposure, please give me a call at 216/543-8698. I need your help!

Pennsylvania Amtrak Service Threatened

If you think the highway and bus lobbies are going to lay down and play dead just because there's a more pro-transit climate these days, think again!

DVARP reports in it's latest newsletter:

"Bus and highway lobbyists are pressuring (Pennsylvania) Governor Casey to veto all Commonwealth funds for support of Amtrak trains. If 403-B funding is dropped, Keystone Corridor service between Philadelphia and Harrisburg will be slashed to near useless levels, while the proposed second PENNSYLVANIAN and new Amtrak service from New York to Harrisburg will die aborning...

...Amtrak has always considered the Harrisburg service an unwanted stepchild. However, Amtrak is unwilling to cut a reasonable deal to transfer the service to the Commonwealth or SEPTA, who are more logical operators of what is a commuter rather than an intercity service. Will a threat to end service cause the dispute to finally be resolved?"

Editor's Note: Keep in mind that the PENNSYLVANIAN service is key to the opening of the Cleveland-Pittsburgh Corridor! We can't allow the situation to end up in a service cut. We should also stay alert to opposition from the bus & highway lobbies within Ohio...
Dayton OARPers Testify
Dayton area Board Member Al Wolf and Regional Coordinator Linda Leas both testified on behalf of OARP at the March 24th meeting of the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission’s Council of Citizens. They were two of twenty people who commented on the draft plan for surface transportation improvements in the Dayton area through the year 2015. The final plan must be submitted to ODOT by October; please contact Al or Linda for further details.

Fax Network Established
OARP now has a fax network in place. Its purpose is to notify Board Members and Regional Coordinators of late breaking news which requires immediate action. They can then spread the word in their areas. Board Members and Coordinators who aren’t yet part of the network, please contact Bill Hutchison or Ken Wilt. FaxNet participants might also be on the lookout for a fax towards the end of April.

Position Paper Available
OARP’s new position paper, "Getting There", is now available in two versions:
- plastic bound $23 plus $2 shipping
- punched for 3 ring binders $21 plus $2 shipping
Please send your order with a check made out to OARP to: Bill Hutchison, 5604 Forest Hills Blvd #A, Columbus, OH 43231.

6:53 Available Worldwide
Selected excerpts from the 6:53 can now be found on TrainNet, an electronic forum on the CompuServe computer network. CompuServe is an interactive information service with over 1.2 million subscribers worldwide.

Only portions of the 6:53 will be available on TrainNet. Information about joining OARP is also included for those who want "the rest of the story".

If you’d like more information on CompuServe or TrainNet contact Ken Wilt, or come see the CompuServe demonstration at the May 15th Annual Meeting.

Columbus Area Update
by Robert Boyce,
Columbus Area Coordinator

Attendance at the March 6th meeting reached a record 31 people, including six new faces. We welcome Tom Eckert, Edmund Kagay, Tom & Nancy McNichols, Patricia Patterson, and Brian Shover. Please keep coming! Sincere thanks also to Lou Viereck for presenting flowers to the ladies in attendance.

Our two guest speakers at the March 6th meeting projected positive views on passenger rail service across Ohio. James Daley, Manager of Public Affairs for the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) presented a slide show and discussed COTA’s long-range expansion plans, which include light rail service.

William Fuehring, Vice-President of Golden Age Rail Equipment, outlined his proposal for re-establishing intercity passenger rail service in Ohio, saying that he could provide reconditioned trainsets at a far lower cost than the state has estimated. Fuehring proposes a test train assembled from five 1953 passenger cars and four former Norfolk Southern diesel locomotives. The cost would be around $1 million, with the largest expense being the installation of head end power.

The April 3rd meeting was both well attended and informative. 25 people were on hand, including newcomers Dolores Britt and Helen Rehn. Welcome Aboard!

We had several speakers - the first was Kerrie Marshall of the Accessible Travel Agency, who gave us pointers on making Amtrak reservations. OARP member Tom Allen then spoke about some newly available land in Delaware that would be a good location for a train station.

Finally, OARP member Michael McKinney discussed the benefits and features of the CompuServe information service.

The group also decided to move forward with some display booth opportunities which are coming up in the next couple months. Volunteers are needed for the Community Festival booth on June 25th, 26th and 27th. Please call Mary Shover at 614/846-1216 if you can help.

The May local meeting has been canceled due to the Annual Meeting.... The next Columbus area meeting will be Saturday, June 5th, 10am, at the Red Door Tavern, 1736 West 5th Avenue.

Who & Where To Write In Government

U.S. House Of Representatives: House Office Building, Washington DC 20515
House Appropriations Committee Chair = William G. Natcher, KY
Ohio Members = Marcy Kaptur, David L. Hobson, Ralph Regula, Louis Stokes
House Budget Committee Chair = Martin Olav Sabo, MN
Ohio Members = John R. Kasich, David L. Hobson, Martin R. Hoke
House Public Works & Transportation Committee Chair = Norman Mineta, CA
Ohio members = Douglas Applegate, James Trafant Jr.
House Energy & Commerce Committee Chair = John D. Dingell, MI
Ohio Members = Sherrod Brown, Michael G. Oxley, Paul E. Gillmor

U.S. Senate: Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510
Senators John Glenn & Howard Metzenbaum (Environment & Public Works Committee)

Ohio House: State House, Columbus, OH 43266-0603
Committee on Transportation & Urban Affairs Chair = Robert F. Hagan (D)
Vice-Chair = Greg L. DiDonato (D)
(R) Members = Sam Bateman, Priscilla Mead, J. Donald Mottley, Sally Perz, Pat Tiberi

Ohio Senate: State House, State Annex, Columbus, OH 43266-0604
Committee on Highways and Transportation Chair = W. Scott Oelslager (R)
Vice-Chair = Steven O. Williams (R)
(R) Members = Grace L. Drake, M. Ben Gaeth, Theodore M. Gray, Cooper Snyder

BAGGAGE & EXPRESS......

@@@ Hank Harvey reports in a March 22nd Toledo Blade article that a shortage of passenger cars means that as of May 2nd Amtrak will no longer guarantee same-day connections at Chicago for passengers of the LAKE SHORE LIMITED to the westbound CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR or the westbound EMPIRE BUILDER. Travelers will be forced to use the CAPITOL LIMITED to make those connections. Eastbound connections should improve, but in Boston the result will be poorer bus connections for those going on to numerous New England points. The car shortage should be eased when Amtrak takes delivery of new passenger cars in 1994. They plan to restore the connections at that time. The current problem is not only due to a shortage of cars, though. Harvey quotes Amtrak spokespeople as blaming the western railroads... specifically the Southern Pacific and Burlington Northern... for "poor train handling" along single track mainlines, and at times of increased freight traffic....

@@@ The US House transportation subcommittee seems to be staking out a course of "go slow" on high-speed. The chairman of the subcommittee is an opponent of maglev, favoring instead the "building block" approach of improving existing rail infrastructure. The General Accounting Office says the cost of high-speed infrastructure would run $20 million to $60 million per mile, compared to $2.7 million to $17 million per mile to upgrade existing track and equipment... (reported by The Toledo Blade)

@@@ Toledo area State Representative Sally Perz has joined the Ohio High Speed Rail Authority. She wants to make sure Toledo is included in any plans for high-speed rail. Perz is also a member of the House Transportation Committee...

@@@ OARP member Jolene Molitoris has been nominated for the position of Federal Railroad Administrator! Go, Jolene! One of Ohio's oldest rail routes has been suggested for the state's latest rails-to-trails conversion. The North Coast Inland Trail would use the 28.5 mile former New York Central roadbed from Millbury to Bellvue, Ohio. The line dates back to the 1850's, and was the first rail link into Toledo from the East. Funding has already been applied for by the Sandusky County Parks Department, to be administered by ODOT. The cost would be $416,192 for the entire right-of-way.

@@@ Several OARP members attended the OhioCAST 2000 meeting in Columbus on March 20th. The conference, organized by the Ohio Environmental Council, was an opportunity for members of environmental and transportation advocacy groups to network with one another and representatives from ODOT, PUCO, MORPC, and other government agencies. The event was informative, enjoyable, and well attended. Thanks OEC!

@@@ Our condolences to the the family and friends of NARP Director Don Hurst, who passed away in February...

@@@ Sincere thanks to the following people for their contributions to this issue of the 6:53: George Bayless, Bob Boyce, Norman Burkhardt, David Dawson, Karl Gelfer, Howard Harding, Bill Hutchison, Ben McKay, Ken Prendergast, Mike Weber, Al Wolf, Nick Wolf, and Harold Zweifel.
PLEASE PATRONIZE THESE AUTHORIZED TRAVEL AGENGS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS:

Akron
Parkside Travel U.S.A.
(216) 724-1600
Joel Brown
ALLIANCE
Alliance Alliance AAA Travel
(216) 821-2820
(810) 465-6315
Cleveland
Cleveland Ohio Motorists Association/AAA Travel
(216) 361-6960
Cleveland Travel Service
(216) 996-9429
(216) 475-8747
Robert Beck
Columbus
Columbus Accessible Travel Agency
(216) 937-2622
(614) 726-3555
Jude Cuddy
Columbus Ohio The Automobile Club/AAA Travel
(614) 431-7823
Perrysburg
Hayes Travel Agency
(800) 294-8077
(419) 374-2271
Piqua
Sheehan Travel Service
(513) 773-3753
Frank Nett
Sandusky
Sandusky Travel Service, Inc.
(419) 625-4635
Roberta Syker
Solon
Solon Travel Service
(216) 756-7404
(216) 248-7740
Amtrak At-Machine
Tipp City
The Miami County Auto Club/AAA Travel
(513) 667-5333
Richard Hardyson
Troy
The Miami County Auto Club/AAA Travel
(513) 339-0112

Authorized Amtrak travel agents who wish to join OARP, maintain current membership status, and be listed in this DIRECTORY, should send a $40 check, made payable to OARP, to the 6:53 Editor, 270 East Tulane Road, Columbus OH 43202. The PROM annual listing fees of $40 will entitle you to list your NAME, the NAME OF YOUR AGENCY, your LOCAL PHONE NUMBER, and the name of one salesperson at the agency. RENEWALS will be billed by the Treasurer.

Updated: October 15, 1992

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HAMILTON
DAVID DAWSON, 2120 Eileen Dr, Cincinnati 45239

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LINDA LEAS, 2678 N Main St, 45405

SPRINGFIELD
STEPHEN KUPEL, 823 S Tecumseh Rd, Springfield 45506

Area 614: COLUMBUS
ROBERT BOYCE, 1080 Lincoln, Columbus 43212

DELTAWARE
TOM ALLEN, 752 Braumiller Road, Delaware 43015

Area 606: OHIO VALLEY
DON MAXWELL, P. O. Box 1252, Ashland, KY 41105

National Association of Railroad Passengers / NARP PASSENGER RAILNEWS HOTLINE (24 HOURS)
(900) 988-RAIL
NARP OFFICE PHONE (regular hours)
(202) 408-8362

JOIN US!

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.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE #

I picked up this 6:53 at/from:

Authorized Amtrak travel agents who wish to join OARP, maintain current membership status, and be listed in this DIRECTORY, should send a $40 check, made payable to OARP, to the 6:53 Editor, 270 East Tulane Road, Columbus OH 43202. The PROM annual listing fees of $40 will entitle you to list your NAME, the NAME OF YOUR AGENCY, your LOCAL PHONE NUMBER, and the name of one salesperson at the agency. RENEWALS will be billed by the Treasurer.

Updated: October 15, 1992

Please note:

- The directory contains information about various travel agencies that are members of the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers (OARP).
- The directory is updated on October 15, 1992.
- JOIN US! section invites individuals to become dues-paying members of OARP.
- Addresses and contact information are provided for various travel agencies across Ohio.
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 71773.2544.

Deadline for the June issue: May 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.