

TRAINRIDER

The Newsletter of TrainRiders/Northeast



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(The following is a reprint of the chairman Wayne E. Davis's report delivered at the TrainRiders/Northeast Annual Meeting.)

I'm sure all of you still have copies of TrainRiders' Goals and Objectives - they were part of your first Membership Kit and we distributed them at last year's meeting and listed them again in last summer's TrainRider.

In the four years since we organized in 1989, TrainRiders has worked on each of these items. Until now, however, TrainRiders' strongest efforts have been directed to reaching Goal #1, the return of passenger rail service between Portland and Boston, with intermediate stops in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Though we have moved along rapidly towards our first goal, we're not there yet. The various state and federal agencies which are still processing the mountains of paper work need constant monitoring to prevent any further delays. Remember that TrainRiders/Northeast didn't create the original time schedule for the Portland/Boston service. The time frame was set by state, federal and Amtrak senior officials who were most experienced in forecasting passenger rail startup projects. The original date called for operating passenger trains by June of this year (1993). That date softened late last year and suddenly we were looking at "fall or early winter". This spring we began to hear "spring or early summer of 1994". There is still much for this organization to do to assure that delays are legitimate and not merely the result of insufficient staff, inept management, or worse - attempts to delay this project until the next election. It is vital that TrainRiders remain active in ensuring that the final steps

for the return of this service take place, that a passenger rail connection between South Station and North Station in Boston be included in the huge Central Artery Project, that electrification of the line be extended from Haverhill, Massachusetts to at least Portland, and that once service is operating that the service on the Boston to Portland line is maintained at an acceptable level.

In addition, in keeping with our original Goals and Objectives, the expansion of passenger rail service throughout Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont will need to become the primary focus of this organization within the near future. We must concentrate on the next steps necessary to ensure that passenger rail service takes and retains its proper place

in a balanced transportation system throughout northern New England. Working closely with the National Association of Railroad Passengers in Washington, D. C., I'm sure that we will ultimately be able to carry out our Goals and Objectives.

Second, it is critical that we establish a broader membership base. Though we are now over 900 strong, I would like to see a membership level of 3,600 by the time of our annual meeting next year. Attracting this additional membership is the responsibility of all of us, since it is only through members that TrainRiders, as a truly grass roots citizens' organization, will be able to continue the pattern of success which we have already

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Intermodal conference sponsors pose with the nation's first Intermodal Chief at The New England Center conference "The Challenge of Multimodal Transportation" June 1-2 1993. Left to Right - Eileen Rogers, Director, Kellogg Program Office; Dennis Meadows, Director, Institute for Policy and Social Science Research; Wayne Davis, Chairman, TrainRiders/Northeast; Jane Kilcoyne, President, New Hampshire Technical College; Michael Huerta, Associate Deputy Secretary U.S. Department of Transportation

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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achieved. Thus, I would challenge every single member sitting in the audience today to find at least four more dues paying members before our next annual meeting.

In addition to members, we need financial support, both from individuals and from the business community. We need to emphasize the financial, environmental and safety benefits of enhanced passenger rail service, not only to our friends, but also to every business person with whom we deal. We must each use every opportunity that arises to present our case.

Third, we need to be much more vocal in our support of passenger rail service. I cannot count the times that I have seen an anti-rail letter or article in newspapers and magazines with no response from any of our membership. We need to be perceived for what we are, not an organization run with volunteer help out of one office in Portland, Maine but, instead, as an organization which is everywhere in New England and which is paying attention to what is being done on the local as well as the state, regional and national levels.

Please, write early and often to your local newspapers. Furthermore, take the opportunity to write or speak to your elected representatives at all levels of government about your concerns regarding passenger rail service.

Only if we speak up will we be heard.

TrainRiders/Northeast 1993 Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting was held on April 3, 1993. The meeting was opened by Chairman, Wayne Davis (his statement is printed above), after which Bob Hall and Bill Hunt updated us on rail happenings in New Hampshire. Commissioner Dana Connors of the Maine DOT gave a detailed summary of progress and expected scheduling of the needed improvements to the railroad infrastructure between the Massachusetts-New Hampshire state line and Portland. Commissioner Connors nominated Wayne Davis, Mike Murray and Senator George Mitchell (D-ME) for "Most Valuable Player" awards for their help in bringing the restoration of rail passenger service as far as it has come. He and Mike Murray, MDOT Special Projects Engineer overseeing the Boston-Portland passenger rail restoration project, then answered questions from the audience.

The bridges on the route, some 46 or 47, will need some upgrading for high speed operation of passenger trains, and can be replaced or reinforced over three to five years while the passenger service is operating. At

the beginning of the passenger service, now estimated to be in mid 1994, about three to four minutes will be added to the running time until two bridges near Portland can be improved. Fares are currently estimated to be about 17¢ per mile, or about \$19.50, one way, for the 114 mile trip from Portland to Boston. At present, a starting schedule of four trains and three buses daily is anticipated, with a running time of about two hours, including intermediate stops. Feeder bus service is also anticipated from Portsmouth and Rochester to the combined train and bus station at Dover, New Hampshire.

Officers elected were:

Chairman	Wayne Davis
Vice Chairman	Cindy Garfield
Secretary	Andrew Hyland
Treasurer	Peter Verrill
Clerk	Bruce Sleeper, Esq.

Also elected to the Board:

Cythia Garfield
Andrew Hyland
Valarie Lamont

Our luncheon speaker was Jack R. Martin, President, National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP). He filled us in on the national picture, where money to keep Beech Grove, Amtrak's main passenger car maintenance facility, open at a staffing level adequate to maintain the equipment, had just been lost to a Republican filibuster of President Clinton's Economic Stimulus Package. [Money for this Amtrak activity was included in recently passed legislation. Ed.]

Mr. Martin also indicated that some other states have not agreed on their rail passenger needs, and have not been able to work with Amtrak to be included in the national network. He noted, with regret, that Atlanta, where he resides, has not yet voted for an intermodal terminal to serve Amtrak, future commuter rail services and MARTA, the Atlanta area's rail and bus service provider. Atlanta wants to have this facility in place before upcoming Olympic Games.

He also offered us some advice. Once the trains are running in Maine, we must assist in making sure the service is of a quality sufficient to attract passengers. Amtrak, with its recent mistaken emphasis on "self-sufficiency", has seen declines in the quality of on-board service, equipment maintenance, and on-time operation of its trains.

He hopes that he can travel by train to attend a fall 1994 NARP Board Meeting, scheduled to be held in Maine.

At the meeting, a questionnaire was distributed to enable TrainRiders members and guests to indicate their preferences for

train times between 5 AM and Midnight to and from Portland, based on four round trips daily and a travel time of about two hours. Forty-six questionnaires were returned. The numbers indicating the seven most popular times (to account for train and bus trips) are shown for each category.

Portland to Boston (Monday through Friday)

6 AM (22), 10 AM (21), 7 AM (19), 8 AM (17), 6 PM (16), and a three-way tie for NOON, 2 PM and 4 PM (10).

Boston to Portland (Monday through Friday)

5 PM (17), 6 PM (14), 7 PM (13), 7 AM and 10 AM (12), and 8 AM and NOON (10). Portland to Boston (Saturday)

8 AM (22), 10 AM (15), 11 AM (13), 7 AM (12), 4 PM (11), NOON (10) and 2 PM (10).

Boston to Portland (Saturday)

8 AM (15), 10 AM (13), 11 PM (12), 4 PM (9), 8 PM (9), and a three-way tie for 7 AM, 11 AM and 7 PM (8).

Portland to Boston (Sunday)

10 AM (18), 8 AM (17), NOON (14), 4 PM (13), 11 AM and 2 PM (9), and 5 PM (8).

Boston to Portland (Sunday)

NOON (14), 8 AM (13), 10 AM (12), a three-way tie for 4 PM, 6 PM and 7 PM (10) and 11 PM (9).

Preferences were indicated for weekday service oriented to spending a day, or half day, in Boston or having the maximum ability to make connections in Boston to travel to other destinations. Northbound trips were desired in the early morning to permit a full day's activities in Portland or to make connections to other destinations, with a return to Boston at 6 PM. Return trips from Boston to Portland were desired after the end of the business day.

Saturday services were very similar to weekday services, with southbound trips peaking in the morning and the last big departure at 4 PM, but with a broader range of afternoon trips returning to Portland until late evening.

Sunday services were similar to Saturday, with morning peaks, 8 AM, 10 AM and Noon, in both directions and heavy travel demand for the late evening, 11 PM, northbound trip.

While actual trip times and schedules will depend on available equipment, the turnaround time of the equipment and needs of other trains on the line, it is clear that potential users desire a variety of travel options to meet their varied needs. TrainRiders will have to be vigilant in monitoring the service to make sure it meets Maine's needs.

TrainRider Activities

New Hampshire Members Report

Efforts have grown statewide to preserve rail lines for future passenger use. An April meeting in Grafton, New Hampshire found a supportive and enthusiastic group eager to see the Northern Railroad (Concord to White River Jct.) preserved. The Northern is the centerpiece for any direct Boston to Montreal service. TrainRiders/Northeast member Joan Cobb represented our organization at this meeting.

The Seacoast has been busy with activity in preparation for the startup of Boston-Portland service. On the evening of March 14 Exeter became the first community to vote local funds to construct a station. The 388 to 26 vote was an overwhelming victory for the restoration of rail passenger service to New Hampshire. The city of Dover has set up a station committee. The committee is looking into the potential effects a downtown station will have on the city. TrainRiders member Bill Hunt, a committee member, will keep us informed.

On May 3-5, Rep. Dick Swett lead a trip via the Amtrak *Montrealer* from White River Jct. to Washington, D. C. for New Hampshire rail supporters. Highlights of the trip included a ride on the X2000 high speed tilt train from New York to Washington and a visit to the proposed new Penn Station site in New York City. Forty-five people were on the trip.

Both Portsmouth and Dover have been sites for hearings on the state ten-year Highway Plan. At both meetings questions were asked regarding comprehensive transportation planning and why, if the federal government is talking and funding all modes of transportation, does New Hampshire limit itself to just highways? Also, does New Hampshire plan to request any flexible funding as provided in the federal Surface Transportation Act of 1992?

June 3rd saw Portsmouth the site of a hearing on the transportation needs of local communities. Many people spoke of the lack of public transportation in general. In most small towns and many large towns, if you don't have a car you don't go! Strong support was raised for Boston-Portland rail passenger service and a connecting feeder bus service.

Governor Steve Merrill has appointed Steve Foss of Foss Manufacturing, Hampton, N. H., as the new Director of the Pease Development Agency. He is a strong supporter of rail. His Hampton-based industry has been chiefly responsible for keeping the former Eastern Mainline from Portsmouth to Hampton open for freight service. Already,

Mr. Foss has called for a connector between Pease/Portsmouth and the soon to be Boston-Portland passenger rail service.

The Annual Meeting of the Rockingham Planning Commission was held June 9th in Hampstead, N. H. Mr. Mike Murray of the Maine DOT was the guest speaker. Mr. Murray gave an overview of the Boston-Portland service and updated us on where we are now. The Rockingham Planning Commission remains strongly in favor of this service and the positive impacts it will have on the communities of Rockingham County.

Bob Hall, Exeter, N. H.

The New Northeast Corridor & the Economic Revival of New England & the Northeast

Wayne Davis Chairman of TrainRiders/Northeast, who serves on the board of the NCI, and the Editor, along with Mike Murray of Maine DOT, attended this conference, sponsored in part by TrainRiders/Northeast, in Warwick, Rhode Island. The date, May 10th, was the 124th anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory, Utah which marked completion of the first Transcontinental rail route in 1869. Perhaps this conference may be seen in the future as marking the beginning of a north-south "transnational" high speed rail route, since their introductory material re-defined the Northeast Corridor (NEC) as, "stretching from the Northeastern United States through Eastern Canada."

The conference was dominated by politicians from New England, Quebec and Atlantic Canada - a good sign that, at last, some politicians are realizing the importance of railroads to the Northeast. Citations were read from President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Robert Bourassa, Premier of Quebec. Among the panel presenters were Rep. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Senator John H. Chafee (R-R.I.) and Rep. Ronald K. Machtley (R-R.I.). Peter Meade, President and CEO, the New England Council, presented Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) with an award which recognized his long time support of high speed rail for the Northeast Corridor (NEC). In 1960, Pell wrote *Megalopolis Unbound*, a book advocating high speed rail transportation in what is now the U.S. portion of the Northeast Corridor. Presentations were made concerning paying for the NEC improvements; the need to

provide Rhode Island with adequate rail freight service to Davisville, a deep-water port, while accommodating high speed passenger service; and the effects of the proposed North-South Station rail link in Boston.

Perhaps most important for Maine was the announcement of the formation of The Northeast Corridor Initiative/Canada. This recently formed organization will spearhead high speed rail links between New York, New England and eastern Canada. A route via Portland and Bangor to St. John, New Brunswick and Halifax, Nova Scotia was among those mentioned, in addition to various corridors within Canada and high speed links between Boston and Albany and Albany and Montreal. It was emphasized throughout the conference that completion of the electrification of the NEC is crucial to the success of these extensions of high speed rail beyond the New Haven to Boston line, on which construction is now under way. The conference received extensive, and favorable, coverage from the *Warwick Beacon* and the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*.

Senator Mitchell Honored at National Association of Railroad Passengers Annual Board Meeting

At their annual Washington, D. C. reception on April 22, NARP presented Senator George J. Mitchell, (D-ME) the "Golden Spike Award" for, "his strong support of rail services generally and especially of construction of a rail link between Boston's North and South Stations and establishment of Amtrak service to Maine." NARP Vice President, Eugene K. Skoropowski and NARP Region I Director Wayne Davis made the presentation to Senator Mitchell.

NARP reported that, at an April 29th hearing of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee, chaired by Al Swift (D-WA), Representative Swift's statements included the following:

"I am extremely pleased that this Administration recognizes the value of high-speed rail and is willing to put its money where its mouth is. No, \$1.3 billion will not bring us high-speed rail systems throughout the country, but if carefully invested it can greatly increase train speeds on the selected corridors with the most high-speed potential.

In the spirit of the incrementalism emphasized in the Administration's proposal,

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Senator Mitchell honored at NARP Annual Meeting. Left to Right - Eugene Skorpowski, NARP Vice President; Senator George Mitchell; Wayne Davis, NARP Region 1 Director and TrainRiders Chairman

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we will use this program as a building block for our high-speed systems of the future. Among the subsequent steps that should be taken is the establishment of a dedicated trust fund solely for passenger rail use. I intend to pursue that goal vigorously again this Congress." *NARP News*

US DOT First Intermodal Chief Speaks At International Conference

TrainRiders joined by The New England Council, The Kellogg Program Office at UNH, The E.S. Muskie Institute for Public Affairs at The University of Southern Maine, The Institute for Public Policy and Social Science Research at the University of New Hampshire and the Greater Seacoast Economic Summit Corporation cooperatively sponsor International Transportation Conference. A follow-up to the successful 1992 conference "Building Regional Rail, The Key To Economic Development" was held at the University of New Hampshire's New England Center in Durham on June 1-2, 1993. This year's conference "Connections: The Challenge of Multimodal Transportation" was wide-ranging and fascinating in its variety. While most sessions focused on connecting rail to other modes, including pedestrians and bicycles, we also learned a little about

Vermont's plan to transport tourists by rail around much of the state, using existing railroad lines. They also are planning on a light rail line to serve the Burlington area.

The first day's keynote speaker, Doctor Professor Hermann Knoflachner from the Technical University, Vienna, Austria, presented the notion that, despite the mode of travel, we humans tend to travel about the same amount of time daily, as part of our human need for motion. He noted that, with faster transportation, bicycles, trolleys and automobiles, we travel farther but have not saved time. In Vienna, it was found that a level of mobility was achievable with trolleys which could not be accommodated in automobiles due to the limits of their street system. Now that Vienna's trolleys and buses are fully integrated, auto traffic has declined to levels found 20 years ago. For the shopkeepers, he noted that sales are related to pedestrians, not their automobiles. Reduced speed of travel helps keep customers in the city instead of dispersing them to the outlying shopping areas (yes, they have them in Austria, also!). He proposed a system of bicycle "tracks" in Vienna, which, at the time, had relatively few bicyclists. The system now has many users and is an important element in the mobility of Vienna's citizens.

Guy Rosmarin, Chairman of Governor Welds Central Artery-Rail Link Task force, presented the details on the recommended North-South Station Rail Link in Boston, showing how it is to be constructed beneath the depressed Central Artery highway.

The second day's keynote speaker, Shinya Kikuchi, Professor of Transportation

Engineering, University of Delaware, gave (Continued from page 4e) us a detailed look, complete with many slides, of Japan's multimodal local transportation. The mix included pedestrians, people movers, monorails, light rail and heavy rail.

The final keynote speaker, Michael Huerta, Associate Deputy Secretary and Director, Office of Intermodalism, USDOT, spoke on intermodalism. He noted that intermodalism was difficult to explain to people, that it was primarily better coordination of existing modes rather than a big construction program to create something new. All of our previous transportation "revolutions" were building programs, involved new technology, had obvious public benefits (more speed, lower costs, etc.) and represented "progress". Our current challenge is to manage and better integrate what we have to gain the most public benefits from relatively limited public investments. Whatever difficulties intermodalism may experience in being accepted elsewhere, it may have its best chance of success in New England, where making the most of what we have has been a way of life for many for generations.

Following the adjournment of the conference, Michael Huerta, who serves not only as Deputy Secretary of Transportation, but is also the nation's First Director of Intermodalism, met with the members of the National Commission on Intermodal Transportation. This was the first meeting held by the Commission since early January when members met with the then-Secretary of Transportation, Andrew Card. The conference setting provided an unusual opportunity for the Intermodal Chief to meet and work with members of "his commission" away from the capitol. It also allowed the Commission to set up its calendar for public hearings and meetings for the next year. [TrainRiders Chairman, Wayne E. Davis was appointed to the Commission late last year by U.S. Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell. Ed.]

North-South Station Rail Link Gets Green Light

The Weld Administration has decided to build the rail link between North and South Stations, thereby completing a dream once held by the New Haven Railroad prior to World War One. The walls for the rail tunnel

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will support some of the paving of the roadways above them, while the roadways will form the top of the rail tunnel. The line will initially have two tracks, eventually to be expanded to four. It will be electrified, initially as far north as Haverhill, Massachusetts. Because of the rail tunnel, and its greater usability by Boston-area commuters, an estimated 20,000 automobiles daily are estimated to be removed from the Central Artery by the year 2010. The cost of the rail link, phase one @ \$2 billion and phase two @ \$3 billion, has been seen by some as a reason for not doing it. But, by beginning shortly, it will not delay any of the highway part of the project and adds only a small increment to the total cost of the project, one of the most expensive public works projects in the Nation's history. *The Boston Globe*

Swedish X2000 Train Attracts Favorable Comments

Amtrak, which has leased a Swedish X2000 high speed tilting train, has operated it in revenue service along the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The train has attracted favorable comments from riders and the media. While mostly limited to the New York - Washington service, in which it held down a normal Metroliner schedule, it also operated east of New Haven to Boston using turbine power. It has completed its NEC testing and will now run in many states, using its turbine powered locomotives. A German ICE (Inter-City Express) Train is expected to arrive in the U.S. this summer for testing on the NEC. Although capable of higher top speed, the ICE lacks the tilting ability on curves, and may be more limited in its U.S. testing due to our lack of electrified high speed rail lines outside the NEC.

Rhode Island Beginning Plans for Future Electric Rail Lines

Rhode Island has completed the initial phase of a study of potential commuter lines. Nine routes, most of which radiate from Providence, were evaluated for three travel modes used by commuters: commuter trains, light rail and exclusive bus lanes. Five routes were thought to have potential for future rail

lines, either commuter rail or light rail. None were proposed for exclusive bus lanes.

Commuter rail is being looked at for the line from Westerly, at the Connecticut state line, to the Massachusetts state line now used by Amtrak and scheduled to be electrified as part of the NEC electrification between New Haven and Boston. This could serve many Rhode Island towns and the T. F. Green State Airport in Warwick. A line connecting Newport to Fall River, Massachusetts is also under consideration as a commuter rail route, to connect with an expected future MBTA extension of commuter rail to Fall River from Boston. Another existing freight line in East Providence and Pawtucket may also be used for commuter rail.

The track on both routes found feasible for future light rail use has been torn up, but the rights of way are state-owned. One now serves as a bicycle and hiking path from Providence to the town of Bristol. The other, proposed for reuse as far as Coventry, was



AMTRAK'S X2000 test train from Sweden pauses in its New York to Washington Shuttle

once part of a through route from Providence to New York. A sixth route still under consideration, to connect Providence with Woonsocket, is part of the Providence & Worcester's line to Worcester, Massachusetts.

Aside from its freight use, there is relatively low population density along much of this route, lower than is thought necessary to support a light rail line. However, those in northern Rhode Island are urging its future consideration for passenger service to assist the economy of their part of the state.

At present, Rhode Island is served by Amtrak with three stations on the Boston-New York main line. Rail commuter service operates from Providence to Boston, South Station, in cooperation with the MBTA. The Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority operates bus service in many areas of the state, in addition to that provided by private carriers. *The Providence Journal-Bulletin*

Commuter Rail Developments

Florida's Tri-Rail Commuter Rail Authority, operating between West Palm Beach and Miami, ended 1992 with a schedule of 30 weekday trains, 18 Saturday trains and 10 Sunday trains, all of which connect directly with Miami's peplemover system. [This has happened in a state which never had any commuter rail services. One has to wonder how many extra trains will be needed on the Portland-Boston run once people find out how useful it is!] *Railfan & Railroad*

Maine Coast Railroad Passenger Service

The Maine Coast Railroad has begun its 1993 summer tourist trains from Wiscasset to Newcastle. It has also run excursion trains from Gardiner to Richmond on the line from Brunswick to Augusta. Passenger cars are now being rebuilt in Rockland to provide additional passenger carrying capacity. At present, Maine DOT plans for commuter operation along the Rockland Branch, primarily to serve Bath, are awaiting funding to purchase equipment suitable for that purpose.

Dover-Foxcroft Branch Pulled Up

Following the defeat of the railroad bond issue by Maine voters on November 3rd, 1992 the former Maine Central Railroad branch line from Newport Jct. to Dover-Foxcroft has been dismantled. The work was completed during the second week of February, 1993. The Belfast & Moosehead Lake, the other railroad proposed for state

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Along The Tracks

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acquisition in the defeated bond issue, continues to operate tourist trains from its terminal in Belfast. *The 470*

Mountain Division May Be Abandoned

The Maine Central Railroad Company filed Notice of Intent to abandon their Mountain Branch with the Maine DOT during the week ending June 19, 1993. The actual Notice must be filed within 60 days.

This includes the line between South Windham, Maine and Whitefield, New Hampshire. The line, once part of a through route to the U. S. and Canadian west, has been unused west of South Windham in recent years. When the Maine Central and Boston and Maine were independent railroads, before their acquisition by Guilford Transportation, Inc., the "Mountain Division", through its connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, provided Maine shippers with another route to and from the west. Now, most Guilford traffic is routed via the Boston and Maine, with much traffic making a connection to Conrail at Worcester, Massachusetts.

Canadian Pacific Abandonment Hearings Held

Hearings on the C P Rail System petition to abandon Canadian portions of its money losing line from Sherbrooke, Quebec to the port of St. John, New Brunswick closed on June 23rd. The Maine DOT opposed the proposed abandonment and its statement was read into the hearing record. Ironically, Dana Connors, MDOT Commissioner, intended to testify in person at the hearing in St. John, but was unable to fly since the airport at St. John had "zero visibility" when he was scheduled to fly in!

TrainRiders/Northeast was also an intervenor and opposed the abandonment, which would eliminate the most logical and direct connection between New England and Eastern Canada. In reply to our written statement, we received a letter from Elsie E. Wayne, Ltd, Mayor of St. John, New Brunswick, thanking us for our support in intervening. It stated, in part:

"The quantity and calibre of submissions sends a strong signal to the National Rail Agency that our rail infrastructure plays an integral part in the economic well being of the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Northern Maine and Southwestern New Brunswick.

North of The Boarder

Thank you for being a partner in this critical issue."

Among branch lines within New Brunswick are proposed for abandonment is the line between St. Stephen and McAdam, N. B., the only presently operating rail connection between the Georgia-Pacific Corporation paper mill at Woodland, Maine and its markets. Georgia-Pacific has estimated that its rail traffic, if switched to trucks across Maine, would add 11,000 truckloads annually to our highways.

If the former Canadian Pacific line across Maine is abandoned, and not purchased for operation by another railroad, Maine will be denied any direct rail connection for passengers or freight to Maritime Canada. The Bangor & Aroostook, which interchanges freight at Brownville Jct. will no longer have any access to the outside world except their port at Searsport and their connection with Guilford Transportation at Northern Maine Jct. near Bangor. Traffic to and from Bangor & Aroostook shippers and the West will have to rely on Guilford, even if the St. Lawrence & Atlantic is used from Danville Jct., near Auburn, to Montreal. In terms of rail freight competition, the abandonment would place most of Maine in the position of being served almost exclusively by Guilford.

If the line across Maine is abandoned, this would eliminate a possible future connection between Amtrak passenger service via Bangor and Brownville Jct. or Mattawamkeag and VIA Rail Canada service between Montreal and the Maritimes, an unfortunate loss in a state whose economic future seems more dependent upon tourism.

Bangor Daily News

Train Rides

With this issue, we introduce a new feature, concentrating on actually riding trains. We invite our members to submit articles on their train rides, here or abroad, to share their experiences with others. Remember, there are many who have never ridden a train, other than as a tourist attraction or dinner train, who have little idea what it is like to travel by train.

The "Media Train"

In the early morning hours of March 3, 1993, your Editor joined Wayne Davis and a number of Maine media personnel at the commuter parking lot at Exit 6A in South Portland to board a V.I.P. Charter Coach for South Station, Boston. The trip had been arranged by TrainRiders/Northeast, in cooperation with Amtrak, to introduce members of Northern New England's media to modern rail passenger service. After a brief

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stop at a mall in Newington, New Hampshire to pick up additional members of the media, we arrived at Boston's newly refurbished South Station in time for Amtrak's New England Express, Train 155, bound for New York (Penn Station).

Raymond Penfold, Manager of V.I.P. Charter Coaches, joined us for the train trip. He sees a great future for train service in Maine and looks forward to the additional business it is likely to bring. We were met at South Station by David Carol, who rode the train with us. He is Director of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Improvement Project, which will result in electrification and other improvements along Amtrak's former New Haven Railroad "Shore Line" between Boston and New Haven.

The New England Express, an all reserved-seat train, is New England's closest approximation of Metroliner service, as found on the Washington- New York City portion of the Northeast Corridor. It covers the 231 miles between Boston and New York City in 3:59, including four stops (Back Bay, Route 128, Providence, R. I., and New Haven, CT). At New Haven, the diesel locomotive which pulled us from Boston was replaced by an electric locomotive, or "motor" as the train crews call them.

During the ride, personnel from Maine Public Broadcasting Network's television program, "Maine Watch", were filming interviews with passengers and train crew members which aired on March 11th. Members of the press also conducted interviews, some of which resulted in an article by James Saunders, Jr. in *The Forecaster*, a local newspaper serving Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Yarmouth and Freeport, Maine.

Following an on-time arrival, we gathered at the first class lounge in Penn Station to plan our stay, which was to include a brief tour of the Swedish X2000 high speed train which was then running between Washington and New York. We also walked around the vicinity of Penn Station and saw the old Post Office building which has been proposed as a replacement for the present Penn Station (the tracks run under both buildings). In common with Portland, New York City saw an historic railroad station, the original Pennsylvania Station, demolished to make room for new development. In New York, Madison Square Garden was built on top of the station, where passengers now come up from the trackside platforms to enter a crowded, low ceiling space with no attractiveness whatever. In Portland, a shopping center replaced Union Station, and no station now exists alongside tracks which carry only freight trains.

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After a variety of lunches, we returned to the station to tour the X2000 high speed train which, even sitting in the station, was a very impressive piece of equipment.

The return trip, begun at dusk, offered a fine view of New York's skyline over the East River from Hell Gate Bridge shortly after emerging from the tunnels under the East River. We munched on snacks available in the food service car (First Class passengers received complimentary meals from the same facility) and relaxed while the Connecticut shore and rural Rhode Island rolled past. Less than an hour after departing Providence, our arrival at South Station was followed by a rapid search for additional snack food to sustain us for the bus trip back to New Hampshire and Maine. The variety of foods available in the station was most welcome.

The bus and trains were comfortable and modern, and allowed completion of a trip which, if done entirely by automobile, would have been extremely tiring. On returning to South Portland, I discovered I had left my pickup truck's lights on! A push to a gas station by James Saunders was greatly appreciated and allowed me to reach home in Rockland with only a slight delay.

Riding the X2000

Back on January 14, 1993, Wayne Davis and Henry Ferne of TrainRiders/Northeast had ridden the X2000 between Boston and New London, CT on a special press trip to introduce the train to New England. I went to Rhode Island to photograph the train. When the train was placed in revenue service on the Northeast Corridor, it operated between New Haven, CT and Washington, D. C. Finally, the announcement was made by Amtrak that there would be short trips between Boston and Providence on Sunday, May 9th. Since it was Mother's Day, my wife Shirley and I went down to Massachusetts and Rhode Island to visit our mothers and were able to ride the X2000 between Route 128 and Providence.

We joined TrainRiders members Charlie Brown, Arthur Mary, and Marcia Anderson on the train and, refreshed by cold drinks and snacks from the Bistro Car, enjoyed our ride. Wide windows through which we viewed the early spring greenery and very quiet operation were notable.

While the continuous welded rail, concrete ties and modern signalling made for a smooth ride, the route was originally laid down in the 1830s by the Boston & Providence, one of America's pioneer railroads and included some relatively sharp curves, particularly in the vicinity of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. I found it to be very easy to stand even on the sharpest

curves. South of Mansfield, Massachusetts, the announcement was made over the public address system that we were now doing 100 miles per hour. Only the slight blurring of objects close to the track made it seem believable!

The train operated around the curves at somewhat lower speeds, but, with its fast acceleration (particularly when under electric power instead of the gas turbine units which were providing our power) the X2000 can maintain faster schedules over existing track. This is its great advantage, one which we in Northern New England may someday experience if Amtrak chooses to obtain similar equipment.

After a short stop at Providence's modern, covered station, we hurried back to Route 128. I enjoyed the view from the operator's cab (there are cabs at both ends to allow the train to reverse direction simply by having the engineer walk to the other end of the train), and watched Canton Viaduct, a stone arch bridge over which passenger trains first rolled on July 28, 1835, rapidly disappear in the distance. Our speed would have been unimaginable to those who built the bridge.

If the X2000 operates near you, take the time to ride on it. I think you'll enjoy it as much as we did. And yes, people still wave at trains, even fast ones.

Travel by Amtrak - Boston to San Francisco

How can one see something of the United States with the least amount of effort? We live on a Maine island and particularly wanted to see the Rockies and the desert Southwest. Amtrak is the answer! Flying over this continent gives one only a glimpse and driving can be tedious.

We traveled a circular route, Boston to Boston via San Francisco, going out north to Chicago and returning from the South. One can purchase a 45 day pass with three stops which is good for the coach and then buy the desired level of accommodations. In our view, first class is the only way to go on a lengthy trip. If you get off the train more than three times, you then pay point to point. If there is no train departing at a reasonable time, then you may spend a night which is not considered a stop.

Some random notes and hints:

1. Route 128 is the closest Amtrak station with a parking lot; it costs a dollar a day and you pay ahead. In our experience, the lot is safe. The lot fills with commuters and we

recommend getting there early in the morning or you may miss your train as you drive round and round seeking a parking spot. You go from there to South Station to board Amtrak [if you are heading for Chicago; trains to Providence and points south stop at Route 128. Ed.].

2. The bedrooms are comfortable but not spacious. Put what you need in a small overnight bag and leave your travel bag with the attendant. The western trains (west of Chicago and New Orleans) have larger rooms with a chair and bench-couch. They also boast "showers", a hand held one minute, renewable spray of warm water which wets one as you stand over a drain hole in front of the toilet.

3. The western trains have observation cars but they are above the lounge and apt to be quite smoky. Food and drink can be purchased in the lounge. [Smoking policy is undergoing rapid change on Amtrak, but its enforcement may be dependent on individual crews. Ed.]

4. Meals, for better or worse, are included with the first class fare; coach passengers pay by the price of the entrée. The food is the same on all western trains but it varies, with the chefs, from uninteresting to occasionally good. The chefs are now being sent to the American Culinary Institute to hone their skills. Food on the eastern trains is of the microwave variety and not too bad. We would rate it above an airline repast and below any restaurant in which we would choose to dine. Breakfast and lunch are on a first come, first served basis. Dinner is at set times by reservation. Tables seat four and people double up.

5. You can go to the lounge for beverages but we preferred our room. Attendants bring ice for cocktails or whatever.

6. Read the timetable as you plan your trip. Decide what you want to see and try to pass that way by day. If you are going to California, go there through Denver. Don't return that way or you will go through the Rockies at night.

7. The trains have guides. Passengers are given a sort of tour guide and a "cruise director" uses the train's loud speaker system to point out places of interest. A volunteer from the railroad museum in Sacramento boarded the train in Denver and gave us a wonderful historical tour of the Rockies and the building of the railroad through these mountains.

8. Book your trip through a travel agent who knows Amtrak. You get lower rates in selected motels and various tourist packages at your destination stops. *Agatha Cabaniss, Islesboro, Maine.*

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TrainRiders/Northeast is a organization of current and potential train users, interested citizens, associations and businesses who are committed to bring modern and efficient passenger trains back to Northern New England