

## Up-to-the-Minute Holiday Equipment Info With TIDA, New Res Control System

Combining holiday reservations with available equipment should be easier this Christmas season thanks to a recent advancement in Amtrak's Reservations Control System. TIDA (Train Instance Data Adjustment) will allow controllers at Amtrak headquarters Washington, D.C. to make immediate adjustments in the "on-line" (operating) computer's equipment inventory.

For example, if there is a last minute change in the type of equipment in a train's consist, a headquarters controller can immediately make the information available to the Central Reservations Offices (CROs). If a scheduled 52-seat coach is replaced with a 44-seat coach,

the computer now will be able to instantly pinpoint those passengers affected by the change, reaccommodate them, and send a list of adjustments to the appropriate CRO.

Before TIDA, all changes to the scheduled inventory had to be made "off-line" 4-5 weeks in advance. Adjustments were made manually on a daily basis to reflect consist and schedule deviations and changes occurring after the "data base" loading. These intricate manual steps permitted selling of the true inventory through a series of alternate methods and procedures.



*(Continued on page 2)*

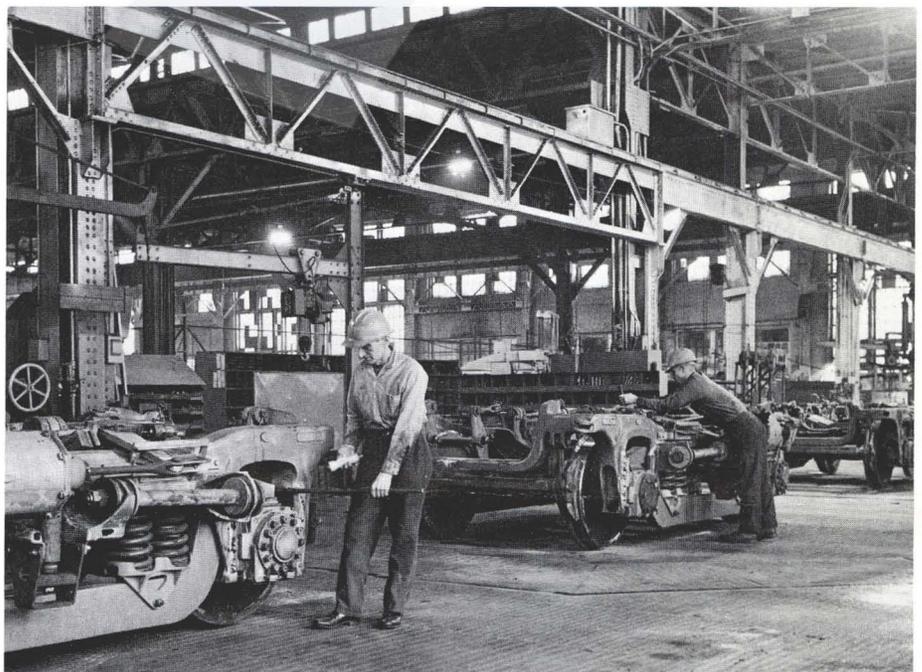


## Possible Purchase Beech Grove, Ind. Maintenance Shop

Amtrak is negotiating with Penn Central for purchase of their Beech Grove maintenance facility located outside of Indianapolis, Ind. The decision to pursue its acquisition was made in late November by Amtrak's Board of Directors.

Purchase of Beech Grove would be in line with Amtrak's long range goal, stated in the 1973 annual report, of assuming full responsibility for general maintenance, servicing, cleaning and testing of its entire fleet of passenger

*(Continued on page 2)*



Workers at Beech Grove overhaul truck frames.

# New Florida Menus With Regional Flavor

This winter, Florida travelers from both Chicago and New York City can enjoy new Amtrak menus featuring regional favorites like Pensacola red snapper and southern style hominy grits.

Breakfasts range from \$1.45 to \$3.75 with the top price buying an interesting combination of two eggs and a small filet mignon. Hominy grits and Kadota figs also are available for the first time on all Florida-train breakfast menus.

New lunch and dinner appetizers include a Florida fruit cup of pineapple,

oranges and grapefruit; chicken gumbo creole, and double consomme vermicelli. (Bismark herring in sour cream and a freshly made antipasto also are new to dinner menus.) Corned beef has been added to the standard Amtrak club sandwich and luncheon choices now include a hero sandwich and a "thin person's plate" of broiled beef, cottage cheese and chilled fruits, for only \$1.75. Veal cutlet is now on the lunch menu plus Brunswick stew, an authentic combination of lamb, chicken, niblet corn and tomatoes.

There are several good buys on the new dinner menu including Pensacola red snapper for \$3.50; a Florida fruit platter for only \$1.30, and an incredibly low-priced filet of beef/lobster tail and herb butter combination for \$7.75. New desserts are pecan pie, key lime pie and peach ice cream. (Dinner prices include appetizer, salad, beverage and dessert.)

According to Fred Hendee in Amtrak's Service Department, Southwest Limited menus will be revised January 15 with the Broadway Limited next to receive new menus. Breakfast choices on the Southwest Limited will include oatmeal and roast beef hash topped with a poached egg and tomato slice. Eggs Benedict make their Amtrak debut January 15, on the Southwest Limited's luncheon menu. Baked ham with raisin sauce will be a new dinner entre.

## UP-TO-THE-MINUTE (Continued from page 1)

In the past, Reservations Control prepared for last minute equipment additions by programming in advance extra cars into a train's consist and blocking them from sale until required. Last minute substitution of non-standard equipment and deletion of cars presented greater problems. For example, when a car was deleted, the PNRs (Passenger Name Records) of everyone holding reservations on that train had to be compared against the actual consist

to determine which passengers were affected. TIDA eliminates this time-consuming process. TIDA automatically updates the affected leg of space in the PNR and a reaccommodation notice is sent by teletype to the CRO, if there is time, or to the passengers' point of origin, showing space previously held and adjusted accommodations.

"TIDA can make almost any change imaginable to a given train or multiple trains," Al Mess, Senior Analyst-Reservation Systems, said. "The system was partially installed before Thanksgiving and should be in full operation for the Christmas holiday."



Manager of Reservations Control Phil Held (standing) and Al Walls, Senior Reservations Controls Specialist for the South Central Region.

## PURCHASE (Continued from page 1)

cars and locomotives. Also, in the Amtrak Improvement Act of 1974, Congress revised Section 305 of the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 to endorse the Amtrak-announced policy of seeking direct control "to the maximum extent practicable."

Beech Grove has been performing Amtrak heavy overhauls since February

1972. Between 15 and 20 cars currently are overhauled each month.

The 64-acres of Penn Central property include approximately 556 thousand square feet of building and 53 thousand feet of track and sidings. Because of its size, location and large number of personnel, Beech Grove would make an exceptionally suitable Amtrak permanent overhaul facility. It also has expansion capability and could serve as a central warehouse for heavy materials

and a base for engineering, procurement and other administrative aspects of passenger car heavy maintenance.

If an agreement is reached between Amtrak and Penn Central, purchase would still have to be approved by the Federal Court overseeing Penn Central bankrupt proceedings.

Amtrak's continuing requirement for two and four-year overhauls will be a minimum of 65 per month.

# Inside Track



## Downing Succeeds Menk

Robert W. Downing, Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer of the Burlington Northern, will succeed Louis Menk as a member of Amtrak's Board of Directors. Mr. Menk, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Burlington Northern, submitted his resignation to the Amtrak Board at the November meeting. Mr. Menk was elected to the Board in May 1971, by the four railroads who hold common stock in the national rail corporation.

Mr. Downing has served with the Burlington Northern and, before the merger, the Great Northern since 1938. He has held various positions including trainmaster, assistant to the president and executive vice president.

**Amtrak Appoints Leon F. Jackson as Manger—Market Research.** He is responsible for reviewing ridership patterns to determine impact of marketing programs. He also evaluates new markets to be served by Amtrak. Jackson came to Amtrak from Pan American World Airways where he was Director of Planning and Analysis. He has many years of experience in computer systems analysis and design with Veda Inc., Bendix Systems and Chance Vought Aircraft.

## Chicago Connections

Chicago's Union Station is still the "hub" of rail passenger service. A survey by Amtrak's reservations control department found that at least 19,073 passengers made train connections out of Chicago last July and August. The largest number of connections (5,363 or almost 100 per day) were made from the eastbound Southwest Limited, Los Angeles-Chicago train. Southwest Limited passengers were transferring primarily to the Broadway Limited, Chicago-Washington, DC-New York train (31%);

the St. Clair, Chicago-Detroit train (26%) and the Empire Builder, Chicago-Seattle train (21%). The second largest number of passengers during July and August (4,569) were making connections from the eastbound Empire Builder, almost half of them to the Broadway Limited. A total of 2,156 passengers transferred at Chicago from the westbound Broadway Limited and 2,023 from the eastbound Lone Star, Houston-Chicago train. All of which proves the wisdom of current efforts to enlarge Chicago Union Station's lounge and baggage facilities.

## Sales Trainees

Seven new Amtrak employees have completed formalized study and on-the-job training in the company's Marketing Trainee Program. The following participants, after completing the program on Nov. 24, have received their initial assignments to field sales locations: Gregory Conville and Erick Nygard, New York; Alan Napleton and Dennis Hamilton, Chicago; Dick Flint, Phoenix; Ted Fitter, Denver; and Ed Wolfford, Washington, D.C. Under the program, extensive training is given in all aspects of Amtrak's functional areas. (See Amtrak News, June 1, page 1.) Primary emphasis is in sales and service programs.

## Ski Baggage

Amtrak carries passenger ski equipment free of charge, allowing the skis and ski poles (which must be securely tied together) as one of three pieces of baggage which may be checked through to destination without charge. Total weight limit for the three pieces is 150 pounds.

Amtrak regulations specify that skis must be transported in baggage cars and not in regular passenger coaches. Ski shoes, however, should be carried with the passenger unless they are in a

checked suitcase or other container. If shoes are hand-carried, Amtrak recommends they be tied securely together. Lost individual ski shoes have been a problem on some trains.

Amtrak will not accept a greater liability than \$25 per passenger for ski equipment and recommends that passengers include such equipment as part of their own "floater" insurance on personal property.

## LRC Train

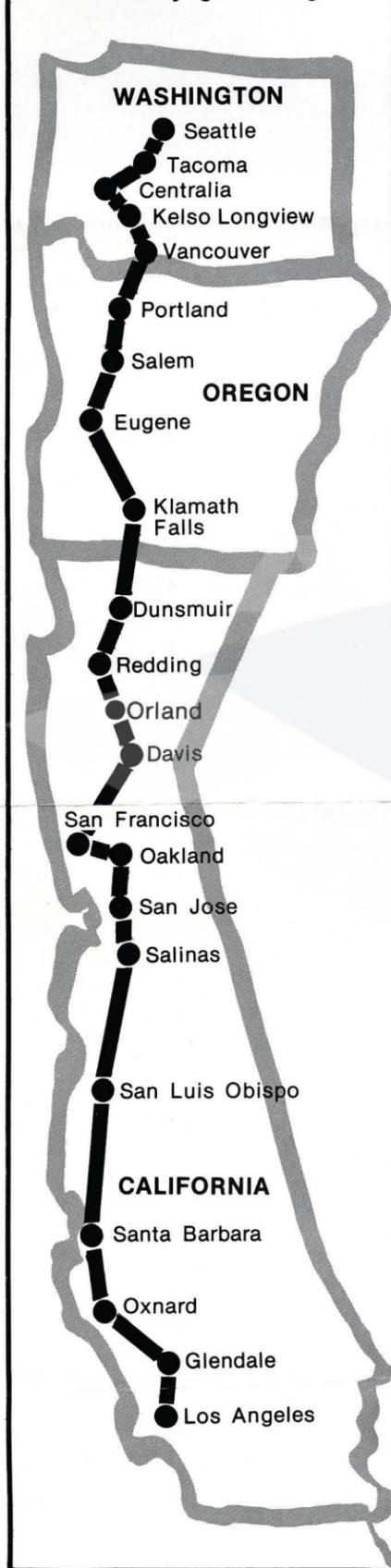
November was test month for the Canadian-built LRC train at FRA's Pueblo, Col. test facility. Amtrak observers were present for part of the tests which compared ride quality, noise levels and component reliability of the LRC Coach with a bi-level coach from Amtrak's Southwest Limited. (The Southwest Limited bi-level coach was the standard of comparison used in testing the United Aircraft and French-built turbo trains.)

The LRC Coach bi-level car and an instrument car were run together at various speeds for direct comparison. The LRC train ran approximately 1,000 miles each day for 40 days, averaging 95 mph on the 9-mile test oval.

There was particular interest in the LRC's new active tilting suspension system. The LRC has a low center of gravity and a suspension system that uses electronic sensors and hydraulic cylinders to bank the car on curves. Its hydraulic banking system permits tilting of cars as much as 10 degrees from the perpendicular and is activated by sensors so as to nullify the effect of centrifugal forces which would push passengers toward the sides of the train. Although test results will not be tabulated for some time, from his observations, Director of Planning & Development for Equipment & Facilities Joe Schmidt is "encouraged about the tilting concept." "The tilting mechanism

*(Continued on page 8, col. 1)*

**Coast Daylight-Starlight**



# Amtrak's Coast Starlight

It's a typical morning in Seattle's King Street Station. Ticket Agent Dan Engstrom clicks on the public address system and makes this announcement:

"Your attention please. At this time we wish to welcome you aboard Amtrak's Coast Starlight now loading at door number two. This train departs for . . . Thank you for riding Amtrak."

What is unmistakable is that Engstrom, speaking so crisply, clearly and confidently, has a way of telling all passengers that he is proud of the Starlight.

It's almost as if Engstrom's real message is: "Ladies and gentlemen, you will now experience the best train ride of your life."

If he had actually said so, he wouldn't be wrong. The Starlight is now considered by most Amtrak personnel and passengers to be one of the corporation's "top" trains.

"In relative terms, it's the one train in our system with the greatest improvement in service," said Western Regional Director Arthur L. Lloyd.

### Ridership

The confidence of Amtrak officials in the train is well placed. Ridership figures indicate the train is thriving on its run between Seattle, Wash., and Los Angeles, Cal.

For the first ten months of 1974 ridership was up on the Starlight by 23 percent compared to the identical period a year earlier.

This increase in January-October figures, from 261,862 riders in 1973 to

321,948 in 1974, is primarily the result of the shift from tri-weekly operation prior to June 10, 1973 to daily operation thereafter.

"At the present rate," said Harold L. Graham, Vice President-Marketing, "the Starlight is carrying more passengers annually than the Chicago-Los Angeles Southwest Limited."

"The business is always there," said Ken Clauson, Seattle Station Manager. "There are days even in the slack season, such as a Tuesday in October, when ridership history indicates it should be running light but there will be upwards of 150 out of Seattle. It's really a joy to see."

### Booming College Market

"Most noticeable Starlight riders are the young college students. Many rely on the Starlight because the train serves so many university communities. It's a ready market for us," remarked Bill Rittenhouse, Seattle District Sales Manager.

In the Northwest, colleges are found in Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia, Wash., and Portland, Salem, Eugene and Klamath Falls, Ore.

Bob Sorrels, Manager of Stations-Southern California, pointed out that schools of varying sizes exist in the California communities of Davis, Oakland, San Francisco, Berkeley, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles.

"We cannot underestimate this market," said Frank Tankersley, Los Angeles District Sales Manager.

"Because tuition is generally lower in the West, students have greater amounts of money available for travel and leisure activities. Consequently, they tend to travel more than college students elsewhere. A large majority of those without cars depend on Amtrak," declared Tankersley.

### Connections North & South

Another favorable marketing aspect of the Starlight is that its schedule allows its passengers to easily transfer to other Amtrak trains.

In a September study done by Clauson's Seattle station staff, it was determined that 23.6 percent of the travelers arriving at Seattle aboard the Starlight transferred to the Pacific International.

"We also have a lot of connecting traffic from the North Coast Hiawatha and the westbound Empire Builder," continued Clauson.

The train also has good connections in California. The schedule for Amtrak's San Joaquin train is arranged to allow passengers to transfer in Oakland's terminal to and from California's Central Valley to Northwest points.

Further south, many Starlight riders connect with the San Diegans. "In the summer, it would not be unusual to have 65 out of 170 people on the San Diegan transferring to the Starlight," said Gerald E. Jones, Los Angeles Station Manager.

"Many also continue from the Southwest Limited and Sunset Limited to the Starlight," added Jones.

Train #11 southbound and #14 northbound  
Seattle-Los Angeles route, 1346 miles  
Lv. Seattle 11:30 a.m., Ar. Los Angeles 6:25 p.m. (next day)  
Lv. Los Angeles 10:00 a.m., Ar. Seattle 5:20 p.m. (next day)  
One diner, one lounge, coaches & sleepers entire distance  
Extra diner (counter-diner) during summers and holidays  
All refurbished equipment  
Home maintenance base—Los Angeles  
Also serviced at Oakland and Seattle  
Excellent connections in Seattle and Los Angeles to the east  
Connection in San Jose with SP Peninsula commute trains  
Burlington Northern track, Seattle-Portland  
Southern Pacific track, Portland-Los Angeles  
Baggage checked to each stop except Orland, Cal.  
Package Express Service between major cities  
Powered by new 3,000 horsepower locomotives



### Good Crew Spirit

The Starlight also has an excellent reputation for its service and its scenery.

Oakland's new Station Manager, Fred Timms, said "There seems to be a real *esprit de corps* among crewmen—that includes the conductors and trainmen along with the porters, waiters and attendants. They know what the train is about and what their jobs are."

Another salable feature is the scenery. The journey from Seattle to Los Angeles brings a constantly changing panorama of mountains, valleys, lakes, rivers, and most of all, the breathtaking 113-mile run along the surf from Pismo, a point south of San Luis Obispo, to Santa Barbara.

What do the passengers think of the scenery? "It's fantastic," said Karen Helmersen on her Seattle to Los Angeles trek. Normally an airline passenger, she said she enjoyed the Starlight and will be "taking the train back home."

### Good Operations

Seattle Sales Manager Rittenhouse rides the Starlight to meetings in Los Angeles. He said:

"Everytime I ride I find that the Service and Operations departments carry the ball. The train is clean and usually on time. The operating people reporting to John Piet (Western Region Operating Superintendent) do a great job in maintaining the train.

"It makes our sales job easier because we have confidence in its operation," Rittenhouse declared.

The train's on-time performance is good because of excellent cooperation between the railroads and Amtrak and the new 3,000 horsepower SDP40F locomotives assigned to the service.

### Through Train

West Coast rail service was not always such a success story. In recent years before Amtrak, passengers had to change trains to make the Seattle to Los Angeles trip.

Amtrak's no-change-of-train service, instituted May 1, 1971, immediately caught on with the public and is a major reason for Amtrak's success with the train.

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## Runs Daily

Amtrak's Starlight first operated on a tri-weekly basis north of Oakland. As word spread of the through route, and as Amtrak's marketing program began to take effect (e.g., restoration of dining cars with full meal service), the train's ridership dramatically and continually increased.

According to Harold Graham, "The train was made daily over its entire route for the 1973 summer season, and in spite of 16-car consists every day, sellouts were more the rule than exception. This demand convinced us to retain full daily operation on a year-round basis."

## Railroad Participation

Two railroads operate the Starlight in conjunction with Amtrak—the Burlington Northern for 186 miles between Seattle and Portland and the Southern Pacific on a 1178-mile Portland-Los Angeles run.

On Oct. 28 and 29, the Starlight originated and terminated at Oxnard,



Above: Sleeping Car Porter Joe Thompson. Top right: Attendant Dolphos Mayes in Starlight Lounge. Below: Coach Attendant H.L. Parker



J. Vranich photos

Cal. because tunnel floors were being lowered by Southern Pacific. Buses were substituted between Oxnard and Los Angeles.

"We should give the SP credit," said Art Lloyd, "for minimizing inconvenience to Amtrak and its passengers while undertaking roadway improvements.

"The SP paid all costs of buses, and costs for turning, cleaning and stocking the train at Oxnard. The SP did a bang-up job," continued Lloyd.

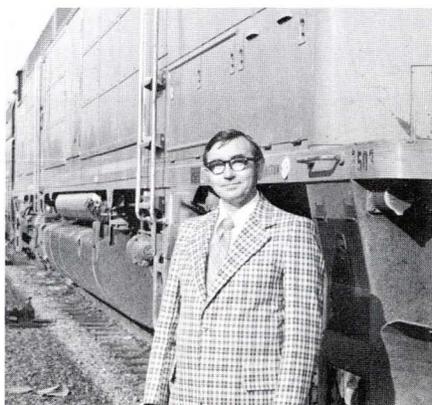
## Looking Ahead

Further improvements are on the horizon for the Starlight and its vital connections.

If Amtrak's five-year track and roadway improvement plan is approved by the U.S. Congress, more dramatic progress will be made.



Amtrak Station Managers: Ken Clauson-Seattle (top left), Fred Timms-Oakland (bottom left), and Gerry Jones-Los Angeles.



The plan calls for future upgrading of the Seattle-Portland route to allow maximum passenger train speeds of 75 mph instead of the present 50. The project will allow some speedup of the Coast Starlight in addition to faster Seattle-Portland local service.

The important Los Angeles-San Diego connection may be improved to permit maximum passenger train speeds of 90 mph instead of the present 50 mph.

## Meanwhile

While track and roadbed modernization programs are under study, several hundred passengers riding the Starlight each day are voting with their travel dollar that the long-distance passenger train has a bright future.

The train has provided the most positive proof that the long-distance rail travel can be a growing institution.

Since the Starlight operates as far from the burgeoning Northeast Corridor as possible, it has probably done more to reverse traditional thinking toward long-haul passenger service than any other post-Amtrak event.

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# Keeping Track of Amtrak

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## Attention Employees

Whether you are an experienced skier or someone who has always wanted to try the sport, you will not be able to resist the economics of Amtrak's first employee ski outing. Five days at fantastic Snowmass-at-Aspen, Col., from January 7-11, for the incredibly low rate of \$10.50 per person, per night. (Based on double occupancy; meals not included.) Accommodations are at Stonebridge Inn, located at the base of the mountain and a walk or a ski from the lifts. Extra activities planned for Amtrak employees are so numerous that a non-skier should consider the trip, according to Denver DSM Larry Mitchell, one of the trip's organizers. There are free cocktail parties at night, a barbecue, an intriguing on-the-slopes wine and cheese party one afternoon, sled rides, skating, and swimming and saunas at the inn. Races for all grades of skiers with prizes including a new pair of skis. Six buses operate daily between Denver and Glenwood Springs with transportation provided at Glenwood Springs to and from the inn. Mitchell, Phoenix DSM Wayne Lambert or Seattle Senior Sales Representative Gene Fox should be contacted **immediately** for reservations.

## Harvard-Yale Game

Amtrak revived an old tradition November 23 when a special train carried 450 Yale students from New Haven to Boston for the Yale-Harvard game. Trains, first used in 1875 to transport 150 Harvard students to New Haven, were for many years the preferred means of transportation to the season's big game. Amtrak provided six coaches and a lounge for the New Haven-Boston roundtrip. The bar was stocked compliments of 21 Distributors, owner of Ballantine Scotch whose nostalgic ads

refer to the Harvard-Yale games of the '30s. (A current Ballantine ad also features the famous 20th Century Limited, New York-Chicago train.)

Robert Meidell, member of the student committee which planned the trip, said "the enthusiasm was unbelievable. All 450 tickets were sold out within minutes and 700 students had to be turned away." He credits Hartford Sales Representative Tim Salveson with organizing the successful special train.

Hartford Manager of Sales Tom Sabo said that the special train received excellent press coverage and that Harvard has already contacted Amtrak to plan a special train for next year's game.

## School Train Trip

Battle Creek Ticket Agent Doug Deaton recently helped convert the first grade class at LaMora Park Elementary School to train travel. Thanks to Deaton's arrangements, the class was able to ride the Blue Water from Battle Creek to Kalamazoo, returning on the Wolverine. Their teacher writes: "Thank you for making our train trip so enjoyable. The first graders were thrilled to have a train car to themselves and meet the trainmen. I'm sure this ride will be long remembered and there will be many future train travelers among them."

## "Instant Call"

Passengers at four Amtrak Stations can push a button for direct telephone access to local hotel and rental car information. "Instant call" is renting telephone board space at Richmond, Va.; Orlando, Fla.; Savannah, Ga.; and Poinciana, Fla. Carroll Hines, Manager of Mail, Baggage and Express, advises that the convenience will be extended soon to other major stations.



## Santa's "Sleigh"

Conductor and engineer on the west-bound Wolverine, Detroit-Chicago train, received this message November 30: "Stop at Superior Street Albion to allow Santa Claus to detrain." According to Detroit District Sales Manager Dave DeVries, Santa was tired of arriving at the annual Albion Christmas parade via fire truck. Also disembarking at Albion were two elves wearing "Tracks Are Back" buttons and Mrs. Claus.

## "Amtrak Night"

"Amtrak Night" in Port Huron, Mich. December 6 had an unusual setting, the local hockey arena. The Port Huron Flags and the Ft. Wayne Komets, International Hockey League teams, battled under signs welcoming Amtrak's recently inaugurated Chicago-Port Huron train, the Blue Water Limited. David DeVries, Amtrak's Detroit District Sales Manager, had arranged for \$1.00 adult and \$.50 children's discounts for all Amtrak and railroad employees and anyone holding an Amtrak ticket or ticket receipt.

## Senior Citizens

Nearly 300 residents of Seattle area nursing homes enjoyed a four hour Christmas train ride, Sunday, December 8. The annual event was sponsored by Amtrak, Burlington Northern Railroad and Seafair, a Seattle civic organization. Seattle's King Street Station also was decorated for a surprise after-party.

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## KEEPING (Continued from page 7)

Ninety-six Gray Top Taxi Cabs and more than 50 private vehicles and drivers from the "Seattle Spikes", BN Railroad employee union, transported residents from nearly 70 nursing homes to the King Street and returned them to their homes following the day's activities.

With continuous entertainment onboard, the train headed south to Renton, Bellevue, Woodinville, Everett, Edmonds and returned to Seattle, giving

passengers a scenic view of Lakes Washington and Sammamish. There were Christmas gifts, donated by local firms, for everyone at the station party afterwards.

### Clean Windows on Zephyr

Every morning, weather permitting, windows are washed in Denver on the westbound San Francisco Zephyr. Richard W. Nichols, Amtrak's Resident Representative of Locomotive Maintenance in Denver arranged for an un-

used Union Pacific portable window washing machine to be disassembled, repaired and painted. The work was done by UP shop forces in Cheyenne, Wyo. Denver Station Manager John Yant said, "I went up there and saw it. They had it torn down bolt-by-bolt and had parts scattered all over one section of the roundhouse. When I looked at that I said, 'They'll never get it back together again!' But they did, and it works fine." The Zephyr's windows are also washed when equipment is serviced in Chicago and Oakland.

## LRC (Continued from page 3)

worked very well and doesn't interfere with normal operations of the car or require an excessive amount of power. Passengers had no awareness of curves at high speeds," Schmidt said. "My own observations were that the LRC is generally a slightly quieter car than the bi-level. Ride quality at speeds up to 80 mph was about the same. At speeds up to 118 mph, however, the LRC's ride quality was excellent." Tests did indicate, Schmidt said, that improvements were needed in the design of minor parts. The tilting mechanism operated noisily and modifications would be

necessary to the locomotive control system to improve acceleration.

The LRC (for "Lightweight, Rapid, Comfortable") is being built by a consortium of several Canadian companies (Alcan, Dofasco and MLW) and has yet to be purchased for passenger service. It also has been demonstrated to the Canadian government and railways.

### West Coast Study

In a move with potential long-range consequences to the West Coast, the U.S. Congress recently passed legislation that authorizes an \$8 million study "of the most practical and energy-efficient method of ground transportation" in

the corridor from Tijuana, Mexico, to Vancouver, Canada. The law specifies that the research must center on a route via San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland and Seattle. All forms of transportation, including rail passenger service and air-cushion vehicles, will be evaluated in the far-reaching study. A preliminary report on the massive project will not be completed by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) until Jan. 30, 1976. Consequently, no immediate results should be expected. Amtrak and several government agencies will cooperate with DOT officials undertaking the study.



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