

Amtrak NEWS

FOR AMTRAK EMPLOYEES

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September-October 1980

Record Crowds Jam Station For Los Angeles Family Days

Nearly 45,000 persons came to Los Angeles Union Station on Saturday and Sunday, September 13-14, to help local Amtrak employees celebrate Family Days, a festive gathering of employees and the general public to inspect the latest equipment Amtrak has to offer the traveling public.

Some 900 area employees and their families attended the employee-only preview session on Saturday morning. Two special excursion train rides aboard Superliner-equipped trains were offered free to the employees. The trains—operated push-pull fashion to Glendale and back with an F40PH locomotive on one end and an SDP40F on the other—were made available to the general public later in the day and on Sunday. Four public rides were offered on Saturday afternoon, five on Sunday. All were sold out. Two extra Superliner cars even had to be added to the last two Sunday trains because of the excessive demand.

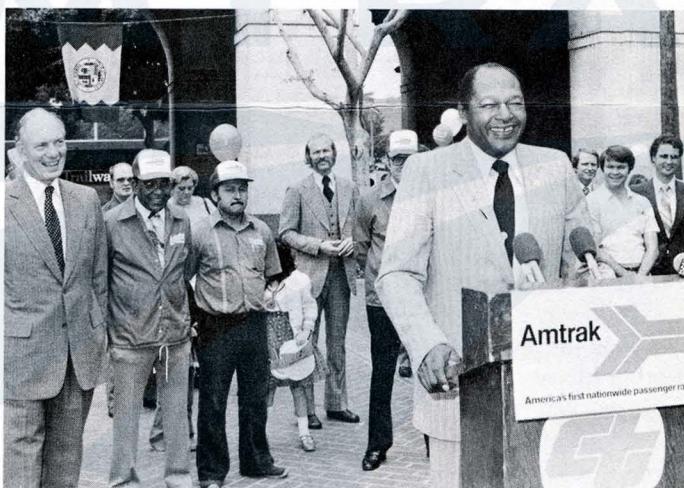
Adults paid \$3 to ride the train, but were allowed to bring one child along free. Extra and unescorted children paid \$2.

Following the official ceremonies, which began at noon on Saturday, the doors of the station were opened to the general public.

Speaking at the ceremonies were Amtrak President Alan Boyd; Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley; Bill Toohey, president, Travel Industry Association of America, which was holding a trade show in the city; Heinz Heckeroth, representing California's Department of Transportation; and Ed Bosley, regional vice president, Trailways Bus Lines, which shares space with Amtrak in Union Station.

George Falcon, regional director of the National Association of Railroad

Photos By Susan Dole, Kevin Martin



(Above) Lines of crowds were long virtually the entire two days. By mid-afternoon Sunday, waits of up to an hour were common. (Left) Mayor Tom Bradley participates in the opening ceremonies. At left is Amtrak President Alan Boyd.

Passengers, presented the terminal with a Golden Spike award for its long history of accommodating the traveling public. Mayor Bradley accepted the plaque.

The station virtually sparkled as a result of a major pre-party cleanup. Headed by Bruce Gaughan, ticket clerk, Glendale, and Lowell Majors, a temporarily unassigned employee, the cleanup crew worked, literally, day and night to get the station ready for the weekend event. The engineering department, on its part, painted the restrooms completely and arranged for a thorough sanitization of

the facility before the first visitor would come through the doors.

Before getting to the trackside equipment display, visitors first passed through the main waiting room where special exhibits were set up. Included in the array were displays from the National Association of Railroad Passengers; Citizens for Rail California; California's Department of Transportation; and the San Diego Metropolitan Transit District, which featured its upcoming "Tijuana Trolley" transit line to the Mexican border town.

Of particular note was a display set



(Upper Left) Crowds peaked at mid-Sunday afternoon. (Above) The Superliners, entered through a high-level transition car, were the highlight for visitors. (Far Left) A steady stream of people went through the F40PH locomotive's cab. (Left) CRO personnel manned their booth answering questions and making reservations for passengers.

up by personnel from the Los Angeles Reservations office. Spearheaded by Bob Hibbard, R&I agent, and Roy Nyquist, CRO manager, the reservations personnel assembled an eye-catching booth in just one day using large display boards that were decorated with posters, signs and promotional materials.

The booth was stocked with a tariff, timetables and other literature. At least three persons worked the booth answering visitors' questions. Personnel on duty even took train reservations which were later shuttled to the CRO for insertion into the computer.

Nearby was the marketing department's display where sales personnel distributed travel literature, engineers' hats to children and answered questions about Amtrak service.

Trailways had a large booth in which its employees distributed shopping bags, frisbees, travel literature and balloons. The Amtrak and Trailways balloons and engineers' caps distributed by the Santa Fe led to a friendly rivalry between all three as to

which had the best exposure in the crowd.

Amtrak's safety department displayed work equipment and safety devices used on the railroad. Children had an opportunity to try on safety glasses, hard hats and linemen's heavy work gloves.

While waiting, visitors could watch a safety film or a videotape presentation of Amtrak highlights, including pieces on Los Angeles Eighth Street yard, Beech Grove and Superliner trains.

Live entertainment—Dixieland bands, drill teams, drum corps, strolling musicians, other bands and an art exhibition—were presented throughout the two days in the courtyard immediately south of the main waiting room. The entertainment was arranged and coordinated by Darrell Brewer, a professional music coordinator and long-time Amtrak friend.

Once past the exhibits and entertainment, visitors followed a well-marked trail through the outdoor exhibits. At the entry to the station tunnel, they first registered for door prizes and received a program detail-

ing what they were about to see.

At trackside, they first viewed a lineup of non-Amtrak equipment that included a modern Trailways bus, a double-deck 1929 Gray Lines sightseeing bus, a new Grumman Flxible transit bus, a Los Angeles Regional Transit District articulated city bus, and an old interurban car that now rides on rubber tires and is equipped with a gasoline engine for movement to such special exhibits.

Visitors then moved to two parallel tracks where they inspected, on the first track, an ex-Santa Fe railroad cafe-lounge-observation car now owned by the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum of San Diego; an old and well-worn steam heated Amtrak coach that provided a contrast to what was to come; an Amdinette and a head-end-powered coach, diner and sleeping car. At the end was an SDP40F locomotive.

Across the platform, people were guided to the Santa Fe railway's exhibit car which was crammed with historical railroad equipment, model trains and a large collection of railroadersiana.

Next Month

What happens to Amtrak's trains when they arrive in Los Angeles?

Cars are moved to Eighth Street yard and locomotives to Redondo Junction roundhouse for servicing for their outbound trips.

The next issue of *Amtrak News* will tell the full story about the two facilities and the people who make them work.

Lined up behind the display car was a Santa Fe-converted hi-level transition coach-dormitory car, followed by a Superliner coach, diner and sleeping car. An F40PH locomotive, open for display so people could walk through the cab, brought up the end of the line.

The lines of people to view the cars grew as the days wore on. At mid-Sunday afternoon, waits of up to an hour were not uncommon.

Helping swell the attendance was a Mexican Independence Day celebration directly across the street from the station. The Los Angeles sales office had distributed posters through the area, printed in Spanish, inviting participants there to join the Amtrak party.

Radio, television and the printed press covered the Amtrak gala thoroughly. A special contingent of travel writers was hosted to breakfast aboard the Superliner diner on Sunday morning after they had toured the equipment display.

Other Family Days visitors included people attending the TIA show which was being held at the same time. Trailways operated complimentary shuttle bus service for the TIA participants between the major hotels, the convention center and Union Station.

The trackside display of equipment was "held over" to Monday and Tuesday so agents from the reservations center could come to the station and see the various cars. Shuttle buses transported people between the two locations.

Board Approves Diesel Shop For Beech Grove Facility

Construction of a one million dollar diesel overhaul shop at Beech Grove was approved by Amtrak's board of directors at its regular monthly meeting in Washington on Wednesday, August 27.

The project, which should save as much as \$25,000 per unit for the 10-plus locomotives it will overhaul annually, will be financed through a reallocation of existing uncommitted funds.

Actual construction of the facility could start as early as October, with completion slated for July 1981. The facility will employ 36 persons.

At the present time, Amtrak relies on outside contract shops to perform about 25 percent of its heavy diesel overhauls with the remaining 75 percent being done at its own shops in New Haven, which are at full capacity.

Construction of an entirely new facility would cost about \$12 million. Development of the shop at Beech Grove can be done for less than 10 percent of that figure because of the availability of a building which had once been used by the New York Central for locomotive repair work. Also

present are the many in-place support facilities as well as an overhead crane.

Other projects acted on by the board include:

New Orleans: Approval to spend \$150,000 to modernize and rehabilitate the car washer. Included in the project will be new brushes and equipment buildings for pumps, tanks and controls.

Hialeah/St. Petersburg: Approval for \$340,000 to install 480 volt standby power in yards at both locations to service and maintain head-end-powered equipment which will be assigned to both New York-Florida trains beginning next spring.

Chicago: Approval to buy Conrail's half interest in joint track between Union Station and the South Branch bridge for a cost of \$200,000.

The tracks provide access to Union Station from the 12th Street yards and to all mainline routes except those used by trains operating from the north side of the station.

Wilmington: Approval to retire and sell five GG1 locomotives. The five are inoperable, average 39 years of age and would require \$750,000 to upgrade and repair.

Air-Rail Station To Open

Operations at the new Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) passenger station will begin on October 26.

The station, the first of its kind in the country, is located on the Northeast Corridor, near Baltimore and just one mile from the BWI passenger terminal. Shuttle bus service will be provided by the Maryland Department of Transportation.

Construction of the 3,000-square-foot station began last October and the facility includes a 392-car parking lot.

Maryland Senator Charles McC. Mathias, Jr., (R-Md.) led the drive for Congressional approval of the in-

termodal station concept and, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, helped secure passage of legislation that provided construction funds.

Said Mathias, "This unique station adds a totally new dimension to intercity travel. People will now be able to transfer easily between the various modes of transportation."

A preliminary schedule of service for the station includes stops by Amtrak's intercity trains and Conrail's commuter trains. Final schedules will be announced prior to the station's opening.

Formal dedication of the station will take place on October 23.

Preview Run Heralds New Willamette Valley Trains

New Amtrak service between Portland and Eugene, Oregon, was inaugurated on Saturday, August 2, with the special preview run of the new train, the *Willamette Valley*. The train stopped at all stations it was going to serve to greet people who had come out to see it.

Prior to the official ceremonies at Portland, the train, consisting of five Superliner coaches, a transition car, an Amdinette and the Southern Pacific railroad's business car, the *Airsie*, was open for inspection by visitors to the station and participants in the ceremony.

Master of ceremonies for the inaugural was Keith Burbridge, state senator from Salem. Speakers included Frank Invancie, mayor, Portland; Benjamin F. Biaggini, chairman, Southern Pacific; and Victor Atiyeh, governor of Oregon. Music was provided by the *Transtroopers*, the Oregon Department of Transportation's band.

After the ceremony was completed, Dolores Atiyeh, wife of the governor, cracked the traditional bottle of champagne on the rear car's coupler and the train moved forward to smash through a large banner hailing the start of the service that was stretched across the tracks.

Whistlestops were made at Milwaukie, Woodburn, Salem and Albany to respond to civic officials and the public that came out to see the new train. The *Transtroopers* entertained at each stop when the speeches were completed.

At Salem, Jackie Winters, ombudsman for the state, presented the governor with a large brass belt buckle engraved with a locomotive. At Eugene, the final destination, the train was again opened up for display.

Some 532 persons rode the inaugural train with up to 400 persons attending each of the station ceremonies along the way.

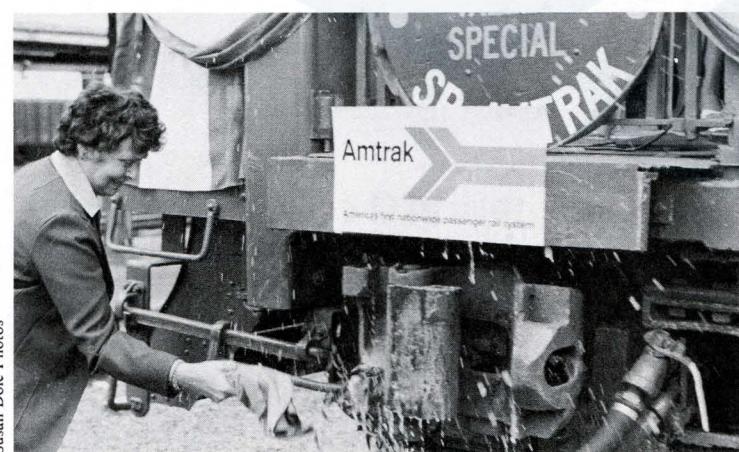
Normal revenue service began the next day. Two daily southbound and two daily northbound trains comprise the *Willamette Valley*. Fares range from a 30-day, round-trip excursion of \$22, between Portland and Eugene, to a one-way \$14.50 regular fare.

The *Willamette Valley* service connects with the *Pioneer* for points east of Portland. The *Coast Starlight* operates between Portland and Eugene but does not serve Milwaukie or Woodburn.

The new trains are experimental and will be rated at the end of 12 months. They are a 403(b) service with the state of Oregon paying for a portion of the losses sustained in the operation.

Although the present service consists of Superliner equipment, the train will be converted to Amfleet at a future date.

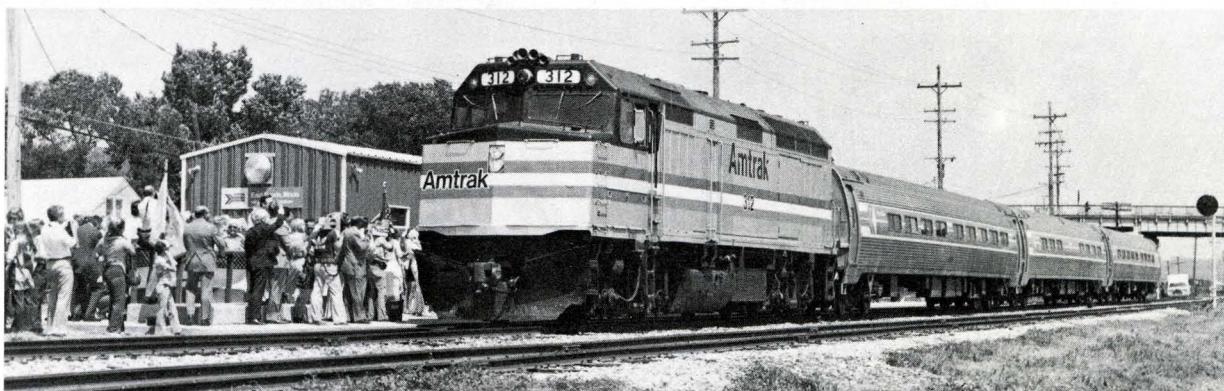
(Left) Dolores Atiyeh, the governor's wife, cracks a bottle of champagne to christen the train. (Below) The new train smashes through a paper barrier to officially begin Willamette Valley service.



(Above) Keith Burbridge, state senator, Salem, greets the crowd at Albany. (Right) Music was provided by the *Transtroopers*.



(Above) Despite an extremely hot weekend, many Peorians came out to see the Prairie State's equipment. (Right) The special inaugural train arrives in East Peoria.



Peoria Service Begins With First Run Of Prairie Marksman

Train service to and from Peoria, Illinois, began on Sunday, August 10, with the first run of the *Prairie Marksman*.

The train operates with two 84-seat Amcoachess and an Amcafe pulled by an F40PH locomotive. The train makes only one intermediate stop at Joliet.

The actual station is located in East Peoria, across the Illinois river from Peoria. The new train operates 48 miles over the Toledo, Peoria and Western railroad to Chenoa, where it switches to the Illinois Central Gulf line currently used by Amtrak's Chicago-St. Louis trains for the remaining miles to Union Station, Chicago.

Passengers from the Peoria area can now make one-day round trips to Chicago to conduct business or shop. The northbound train leaves East Peoria at 6:15 a.m., arriving at Chicago at 9:55 a.m. The *Prairie Marksman* is Illinois' fifth 403(b) train. The cost to Illinois for the first fiscal year of operation is estimated at \$295,000.

The new train's name is steeped in TP&W history which was long promoted as the "Route of the Prairie Marksman."

In a speech made to Peoria's Rotary club in July, Amtrak President Alan Boyd told the group, "We are going to provide you with the best trains we can and I hope many of you will take advantage of this service, not only to travel to Chicago but to other destinations all over the country."

Peoria has been without passenger

train service since December 31, 1978, when the bankrupt Rock Island terminated its last two trains, the *Peoria* and *Quad Cities Rockets*.

A special inaugural train was operated on Friday, August 8, carrying civic and railroad officials to East Peoria. The equipment was on public display on Saturday and was visited by nearly 2,000 persons.

Facilities at East Peoria include a small metal station building, a three-car platform and parking for passengers.

Safety Council Award To Amtrak

Amtrak was one of 18 railroads in the United States and Canada cited by the National Safety Council and presented with a Golden Spike award for its public safety activities in 1979.

Wrote Vincent L. Tofany, president, NSC, to Bob Herman, vice president, operations, "Your company, by participating in a variety of public service programs, has contributed toward the cause of safety by preventing accidents and avoiding

needless suffering."

Tofany pointed out that, while deaths in all modes of transportation increased by one percent in 1979 over the previous year, grade crossing fatalities had decreased by 17.5 percent.

"It is obvious," wrote Tofany, "that the management and employees of your company have played leading roles in promoting public safety in your communities."

Sightless Pair Works Competently In Los Angeles Reservations Center

Being a full time reservations agent at a CRO can be demanding, but those demands are even more extenuating if one is blind.

Yet, two young persons, Nancy Ungar, 26, and Randy Carter, 22, come to work at Los Angeles' reservations office on south Figueroa



Nancy Ungar requests information from her video terminal.

street five days a week and do their jobs competently right alongside fully sighted coworkers.

The secret to their ability to do the job is a machine, called an Optacon, which transcribes type into tactile impressions that can be "read" with a fingertip.

The Optacon uses a scanning lens that is guided across the face of the CRT. The left hand, in the meantime, is inserted into a device that transcribes the visual letter being scanned into a raised impression that is "read" by the operator's index finger, much in the way one would read braille.

The raised impression, however, is not the normal series of dots that characterizes braille, but is in the shape of the letter being scanned. One can identify the dot above an i, the crossed serif of a t.

The key to operating the Optacon is to be able to (1) track the lines on

the face of the scope, (2) identify the individual raised impressions, and (3) most importantly, unify the letters into words and the words into phrases or sentences. One must learn to read, for example, the word "train" as "train" and not as "t-r-a-i-n," exactly as a sighted person would assemble a collection of letters into a word.

The two agents were hired by Amtrak in early April and began their training, alongside sighted new hires, on April 14. The training period ended on May 18 and the two, along with the rest of their class, were placed on probation until June 12. At that point, they became permanent employees, although their seniority goes back to their hiring date.

Both were introduced to Amtrak by Telesensory Systems, Inc., a company located in Palo Alto, California, which manufactures electronic devices for the blind.

Ungar was introduced to TSI by Adept, Inc., an agency that helps handicapped persons find jobs. Carter already had an Optacon of his own and contacts with TSI.

TSI approached Amtrak to see if the company was interested in purchasing Optacon units and thus open

employment opportunities for visually handicapped persons. Amtrak said yes and TSI proceeded to recruit Ungar and Carter.

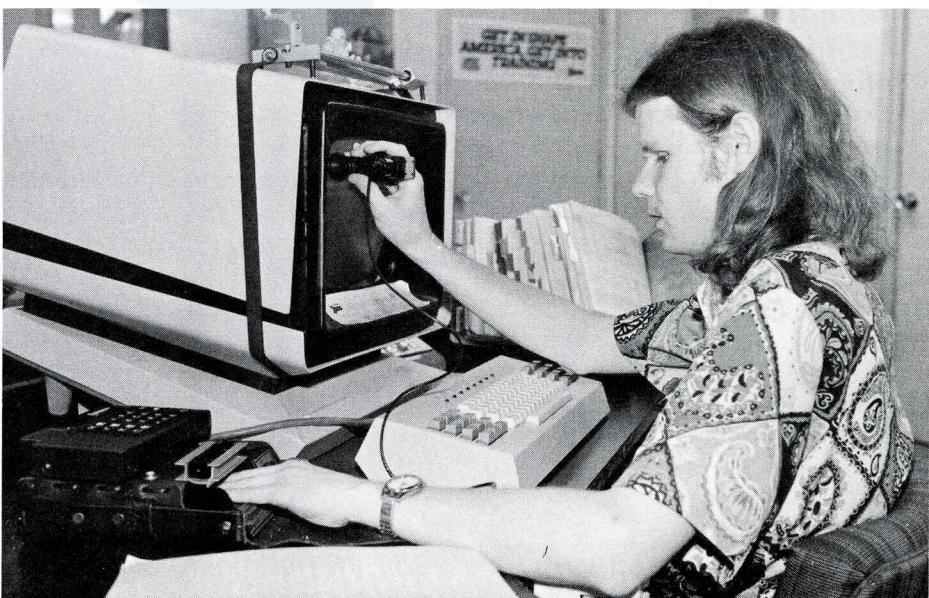
Both first had to be evaluated by TSI to see if they were capable of adapting to the Optacon. Carter already had been using a unit for several years and Ungar's tests proved positive.

Amtrak then interviewed the two and hired them.

Ungar, a native of Cincinnati, has been blind since birth. After receiving a degree in psychology from the University of Cincinnati, she worked for nearly four years for the social security agency as a teleservices representative.

"But, I wanted a better career," she says. "I wanted a better social life, better climate and more career opportunities. So, I decided to move to Los Angeles, to what you might call the land of opportunity."

Her mother supported the move while her father was neutral. However, her mind was made up, and a friend moved her west, where she arrived last December 7. She does have a twin brother and a younger sister living in southern California.



Randy Carter scans the face of his video terminal with the special lens. The Optacon transforms the visual image into a tactile signal that is "read" with his index finger.

"I just love my job," she says. "It's challenging and I feel like a pioneer leading the way for others. I always had fantasies about getting into the travel business and here I am."

Her ambition is to become more proficient in her job so she can eventually work on special services or the tour desk.

Ungar lives about 25 minutes away from the office. She usually rides city buses to and from work and gets rides when she can. If she misses the bus and can't get a ride, she takes a cab.

It took Ungar two weeks to learn to use the Optacon. She keeps improving her skills but her biggest challenge is when the computer goes down and she has to resort to the reservations manual and timetables. To read those, she must use a different lens. In reading the scope, the letters are self-illuminated. In reading books, the reading lens must also have a built-in light to illuminate the line of type.

Before coming to Amtrak, Carter worked for several hospitals in the Los Angeles area as a medical transcriber. He had an Optacon of his own and some of his work included experience with a CRT.

A native of St. Louis, he simply packed a suitcase and headed for the airport to catch a flight to Los An-

geles after he graduated from high school five years ago. "My parents weren't too happy about my decision," he says, "but they accepted it."

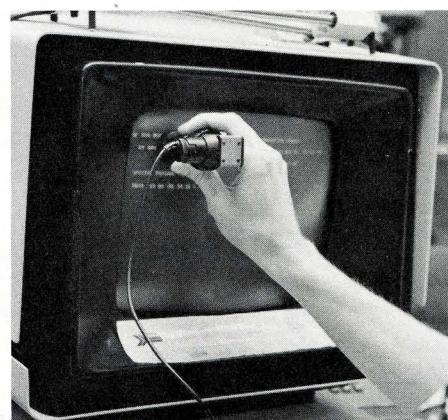
Carter has some health problems, which have resulted in a spotty attendance record. However, he fully expects to be treated as any other employee.

"I enjoy the work," he says. "The only problem is my frustration because of the limited reading speed. I scan at about 40 words per minute, but would like to be able to read faster."

Carter lives at Santa Monica Beach and gets to work using the local bus system, taking about 40-60 minutes to make the 16 miles from home to office.

To help the two do their jobs, Amtrak has also purchased two other pieces of equipment, a VersaBraille microprocessor braille machine that allows them to read and write braille on regular tape cassettes, and a Speech Plus calculator that gives voice verification of entries.

Phil Held, director of reservations, points out that Amtrak had wanted to employ blind persons as telephone sales agents for several years but that necessary technology had not been available until recently.



The scanning lens is moved horizontally along the line of type.

"Business, both private and government," he says, "has an obligation to present job opportunities for handicapped persons such as the blind."

Held also notes that the results of Ungar's and Carter's work will be fully evaluated to see if the program should be expanded to other CROs.

Both Ungar and Carter take pride in the fact that no phone caller has yet guessed that they are blind.

Ungar has been questioned once or twice about the "insects" that seem to be plaguing her desk. The Optacon emits a droning sound as the letters are being formed in the unit.

Carter puts it more casually. "I just like to keep them in the dark," he says.

Over Two Million Riders Carried in July

Amtrak trains carried over two million passengers in July, a record equalled only during energy-short June, July and August 1979.

Ridership for the month is particularly significant because even though fuel supplies are much more plentiful this summer, Amtrak continues to attract record numbers of riders.

Both long and short distance routes showed increases compared to the same period last year.

The *Empire Builder*, now equipped with Superliners, showed the best improvement in the long-distance category with an 81.1 percent increase. The *San Francisco Zephyr-Desert*

Wind combination registered an 80.2 percent increase over July 1979 when the *Desert Wind* section did not operate.

The *Shenandoah* continued to lead the short-distance category with a 63.7 percent increase over July 1979.

Fiscal-year-to-date ridership indicates a steadily increasing trend on both short and long distance routes.

However, because of delays caused by the on-going Northeast Corridor Improvement Project, corridor trains showed a slight drop in ridership.

San Diegan Ridership Stays Up

Ridership on the *San Diegans* set a new record in August with a total of 150,260 passenger carried aboard the six daily round-trip trains, an increase of five percent over August 1979.

The previous high of 149,230 passengers was reached in May 1979 during the peak of the gasoline crisis

when long lines at service stations were the rule.

Several factors are responsible for the continued surge in rail travel on the *San Diegans* including the high cost of gasoline, the reduction of short distance air service and the comfort of rail travel.

Amtrak People

Trio Works Lake Shore Limited

For years the on-board services attendant in the railroad industry, whether he was a Pullman car porter, waiter or chair car attendant was traditionally a black male.

With the arrival of Amtrak and current trends in equal employment opportunities, that attendant now can be a white male, or even a female, black or white.

What are the odds of having three adjacent cars on a train served by three females? Quite high, but that's exactly what happened on the *Lake Shore Limited* that left Chicago on Sunday, August 3.

Working the sleeping car, slumbercoach and a coach on the New York section of the train were Anne Marie Martin, Margaret Matheson and Erin Devine.

Two were summer workers earning money to pay for their college education, while the third is making Amtrak a full time career.

Anne Marie Martin, 25 years old, and working the sleeping car this particular trip has been with Amtrak for four years. She began in the Bensalem reservations center and worked there for 11 months before transferring to 30th Street Station as a redcap. She then held an usher's job for about a year before coming to New York and beginning as an on-board services attendant.

Born in New York, she moved to California in 1965, then spent alternate years living in New York and California. Before coming to Amtrak she was a teacher's assistant for preschoolers and kindergarten children in New York City. She has an associate's degree in music from Los Angeles City College.

On the job, her favorite Amtrak equipment are the refurbished head-end-power cars. "Before we had these cars," she said, "whenever they asked me to work the train to

Chicago, I just hated it.

"You could always be sure that the old cars would get hot in one direction and making up 38 beds in a hot

working the trains. And, most importantly, it's good pay for summer work.

"My favorite is the 10-6 sleeper" she says. "People are nicer there since they're traveling first class. They're usually up early so you can get your work done fast."



Lake Shore Limited Attendants Anne Marie Martin, Margaret Matheson and Erin Devine.

slumbercoach is very hard work. The head-end-power cars are much appreciated."

At 130 pounds, she normally doesn't have problems handling passenger luggage. "But," she says, "about two weeks ago, when I was working the slumbercoach, a woman came aboard with a trunk that was as big as me. And she also had a big suitcase.

"Thank goodness there was a strong attendant working in the next car who helped me."

Her plans for the future? "I'd like to get into advertising at Amtrak."

Twenty-four year old Margaret Matheson, who was working the slumbercoach on this trip, came to Amtrak last year when her sister, Mary Stanley, a lead service attendant working out of New York, suggested it as a good place for a summer job.

She was attending Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, majoring in economics where she will be a senior this coming fall term.

This was Matheson's second summer with Amtrak.

"This is a good job," she says. "I love to travel and it's a lot of fun

"In the slumbercoach there's always somebody who wants to sleep until the train gets to New York so then you have to really hurry the last few minutes to get your work done."

After graduation from high school, Matheson worked for four years, three of them in Hawaii and one in New Orleans as a waitress. After graduation next June, she hopes to come back and work for Amtrak again, go to Europe for a short time and then find herself a job in the purchasing field, putting her economics degree to good use.

At 20, Erin Devine is the youngest of the three and was working the coaches. She, too, has worked for Amtrak the past two summers, while she attends Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She is majoring in psychology and English.

Devine also followed her sister's advice in coming to Amtrak for work. Sister Mara also works summers.

"I love the job," she says. "I like to travel and work with people. Psychology is one of my college majors and here I get to work with all kinds of people. It's good experience."

Devine also filled in last Christmas

season, working two and a half weeks in the Grand Central commissary.

She hopes to continue working summers for Amtrak while she moves toward her Ph.D.

Lomia Porche, Lady Trainman

There aren't too many lady trainmen around so passengers on the *Desert Wind* that left Barstow for Los Angeles on Wednesday, August 27, were pleasantly surprised to see the Santa Fe's Lomia Porche climb aboard the rear coach with her red flag and case of torpedoes and fusees.

Porche, an attractive 28-year-old, has been working for the Santa Fe for the past three years. Most of her time is spent in Hobart yard, Los Angeles, switching freight cars, but occasionally she draws an assignment to work one of the *San Diegans*. This was her first trip on the *Desert Wind*.

Before starting her job on the railroad, Porche attended Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama, then worked as a teacher's assistant at Markham Junior High School, Los Angeles.

"But, I don't like being confined in an office," she says. "I just don't like a desk job."

Both her husband and sister had been working for the Southern Pacific so she decided to sample some railroading on her own. She applied to the Santa Fe for a job and was hired. Her husband now is an engineer on a road switching job out of San Pedro,

while her sister is also an engineer, working out of Taylor yard, Los Angeles.

Which does she prefer? Freight or passenger work? "Both," she replies. "But I enjoy talking to people so the Amtrak runs are a little more fun."

As a yard switchman she remembers one bad experience. "I threw a switch before the engine was completely over it and derailed the locomotive.

"You can bet I never did that again."

Porche plans to stay in the railroad business as a career. "Where else can I get all of this fresh air and exercise? It's good for a lady's figure."

Structural Engineer For NECIP Program

A key member of Amtrak's engineering department in Philadelphia is Nenita Santos Sunderland, structural engineer in charge of in-house bridge design for the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project.

Sunderland is supervisor of three draftsmen and is responsible for field inspection of program bridges. She also conducts engineering analysis, determines requirements for repair work and supervises development of the detailed plans.

In addition, she assists in conducting reviews of designs and design plans provided Amtrak by Federal Railroad Administration engineering consultants.

Sunderland also executes special

engineering studies under the direction of her supervisor, Paul M. Henry, engineer, bridge and tunnel design.

Born in Manila, Sunderland earned



Photo By Julian Kokonudz

Nenita Santos Sunderland, NECIP Structural Engineer

her bachelor of science degree in civil engineering at the University of Santo Tomas in 1968. She came to the United States two years later and then joined Amtrak, in 1977, as a structural design engineer. Prior to that she had worked six years as a structural designer for an engineering consulting firm working on highway and railroad bridges.

Sunderland sees herself as a career person. "I like the challenge that Amtrak provides," she says. "I look forward to continuing professional growth in both engineering and management." She sees her contribution to Amtrak both as a woman in a traditionally male profession as well as someone with the perspective of another culture and environment.

"I have to like the work I'm doing," she says. She likes her job so well, that she hopes to stay on with Amtrak when the NECIP program officially ends in 1985.

W.P. Houwen, director of engineer, NECIP, thinks highly of the woman engineer. "She's definitely a contributing member of the organization," he says. "She does her job efficiently and she does it with a whimsical sense of humor and a quiet way."



Trainman Lomia Porche, First Desert Wind Run

Hot Line To President Boyd

Question: Why have stripes on cars and locomotives been changed from the old wide red and blue to the equal-sized red, white and blue?

Answer: For safety, graphic aid and saving money. The new markings are reflective with white area rated at 90 percent, so the cars are more visible at night at crossing.

The white area also gives us a perfect location to apply the car designation and number. And, finally, the old stripes came in four different widths because of varied window sizes on Amtrak equipment. The new ones are 24 inches wide which reduces our inventory. The manufacturer's raw material comes in 48 inch widths so we have no waste. The old sizes did have waste for which we had to pay.

The new stripes are being applied to conventional equipment as it is modified as well as to all new cars and locomotives.

Q: I am a new reservations clerk and sometimes get calls about items that have been left on the train. What procedure should I follow?

A: R&I agents should get the passenger's train, date of travel, origin and destination, what specifically was left behind, name, address and phone number. A telephone call to the destination baggage room or lost and found should then be made giving all details. Phone numbers are on CTY (City Code) interaction page 5.

If the item is found it will be returned to the passenger. If not, the passenger will be so notified. Please remember, Amtrak is not responsible for carry-on items.

Q: When was the activity for the North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia 403(b) train started? And will the service go through Suffolk or Elizabeth City?

A: It's hard to say when it started but it formalized this past July when we were asked to estimate the potential for such service which would go through Suffolk and Elizabeth City.

We've completed our marketing es-

timate and the outlook isn't very promising.

At this point the matter rests with the states involved to see if they are willing to contribute the necessary funding. Even so, we'd still have to decide whether the operation would be in our best interests, both economically and in equipment utilization.

Q: What's happened to the 800-series telephone line that told about Northeast Corridor tie-ups and delays?

A: It has been disconnected and we don't offer this service anymore because it wasn't as effective as we had hoped it might be. We are working on other alternatives to keep the public informed of delays.

Q: I work at Bensalem. We've been hearing that we're going to move to either Fort Washington or a location in downtown Philadelphia.

I'm handicapped and Fort Washington doesn't bother me, but downtown would be a problem because there isn't any parking there.

A: The increase in calls has made several reservations offices reach the point where there is no room for expansion. Bensalem is one of these and we are looking for new locations.

The two sites you mention are only two of several being looked at.

It must be stressed that whichever site is chosen, it must be accessible to the handicapped.

Q: Will the laid-off employees at the commissary in South Station, Boston, ever be rehired? Are there any other options there?

A: Five extra-board commissary workers were furloughed last January. As of August 20, four have been recalled.

Under the clerk's (BRAC) union agreement, employees are eligible for recall to a position that is advertised by bulletin but gets no bids. When such a position, for which an em-

Call No. 2,500

The Hot Line to President Boyd received its 2,500th call on Thursday, September 11. Since going into operation on May 16, 1979, the Hot Line has received from employees many worthwhile suggestions on service improvements that have since been implemented.

Amtrak appreciates employees' continued interest in the program and hopes they keep their good suggestion ideas coming in.

ployee qualifies goes without bid, recalls are made in seniority order.

Employees who wish to be considered for positions covered under other union agreements should send a written transfer request to their nearest personnel office.

Q: Why don't we put our logo on the many bridges we use so motorists can see it?

A: Not a bad idea. We'll consider it as part of the NECIP program. Amtrak-owned bridges in the Northeast Corridor require annual maintenance, including painting. The cost of this sometimes is offset by leasing sign space on the bridge to advertisers. We may as well advertise ourselves.

Q: When we received the July *Amtrak News*, we also received a record and two round stickers. Are those for parking purposes? We've been told our cars would be towed away and wonder if these stickers are to identify us so we won't be towed.

A: No, they are not parking stickers. They are advertising stickers distributed by the marketing department and we thought you'd like to have them. I can't respond to your parking problem because your phone call was anonymous.

Q: I like the record that was enclosed with *Amtrak News*. I'd like to have another one, this time with the "We've been working on the rail-

road" jingle.

A: Sorry but there is no such second record. The record that was mailed to employees was specially produced for that purpose.

Q: How much did it cost to mail us that record? I think the money might have been put to a better purpose.

A: The cost of the mailing was free because the record piggybacked on the regular mailing of *Amtrak News*. However, there was a cost for envelopes and the labor for stuffing. That amounted to slightly over \$2,000—or about 10 cents per employee—and was paid for by the market department.

Your comment on money spent for "a better purpose" is often asked about any public relations or sales promotion activity. I should point out that many employees were quite happy to receive the record.

Q: Now that you've sent us a record, how about decent wages so that we can afford a record player?

A: My initial reaction to this question was to ignore it, but I think a statement should be made.

Accepting the premise that we all would like to make more money, I can't believe that there is any Amtrak employee who isn't making a "decent" wage.

Q: Some time back I bought, through Western Folder, a necktie decorated with the Amtrak logo. It's gotten a little ratty and I'd like to buy a new one. Are they still available?

A: No. It's out of stock. The tie was considered for future promotions but, because it didn't sell and had limited appeal, we did not reorder it.

Our marketing department is finalizing a new merchandising program for the immediate future. We'll pass on the information when it's available. We may even include the brochure, or catalog, in a future *Amtrak News* mailing.

Q: I work in a baggage room in New England and have been looking for no less than seven pieces of lug-

gage that are long overdue. One thing we should do quickly is to have some blanket policy regarding luggage that is transferred enroute. People who may be holding those bags should rush them on to destination.

A: A checked bagged connection policy has been written and will be included in the new tariff.

Q: A lot of the baggage that comes to me doesn't have the origin point stamped on it. It makes it hard for us to track down missing bags.

Also, baggage coming from Pennsylvania Station, New York, often still has the station record portion of the check attached. They obviously are not keeping a record of the bags they forward.

A: We've sent out a baggage and express advisory to all field locations emphasizing the need for having the origin station codes on all checked bags.

Pennsylvania Station, however, is working on a special survey that records check numbers, destination, train and date of dispatch, as well as initialing all pieces on a separate

manifest. So, the fact that the station record stub might still be attached does not mean they don't have a record.

Depending on the results of this survey, the new system, or an adaptation of it, may be incorporated systemwide in the near future.

Q: I work in a ticket office and we just received some rubber stamps that say "Good For Seat Only-Additional Charge Must Be Paid If Bed Is Used." I assume that's for day service in a sleeping car room.

What we could really use is a rubber stamp to endorse family plan ARTS computer-issued tickets with a "Not Valid Friday or Sunday" imprint.

A: The stamp for sleeping car use resulted from a field request. We've arranged for all family plan ARTS tickets to be preprinted with "Family Plan Disc. Not Valid Fri./Sun." This should be done by mid-September. We think this is more feasible than using a rubber stamp.

A stamp for use on hand-written

Job Opportunity Posting Explained

Question: I wish you would print in *Amtrak News* how the posting of job opportunities works.

No one seems to know the story on what Amtrak procedures are.

Answer: Our policy is to announce job openings, together with the required qualifications, to ensure that all employees have equal access to job opportunities, as well as providing a way employees can express their desires and interests in changing positions and for self-development to provide better career mobility.

Job notices are posted for five calendar days and can be found at the following locations.

1. Corporate Headquarters: On all company bulletin boards.

2. Field Personnel Offices: On bulletin boards at the personnel office.

3. Field Locations Without Personnel Offices: Notices are inserted into the ARTS computer system net-

work. Locations with printout capability can provide copies of the notice to employees.

In addition, employees can call the "Dial-A-Job," toll-free, seven-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day Hot Line for information on opportunities. The number—outside of Washington—is 800-424-5196. The number is listed in every issue of *Amtrak News* along with other Hot Line numbers.

If an employee wants to be considered for a particular opening, he or she should:

1. Notify their supervisor of their interest.

2. Complete and submit a "Transfer Application" form to the local personnel office within the five-day posting period. Please note, a separate application must be completed for each job.

Contact your local personnel office if you have additional questions.

book tickets is available. Contact your district supervisor for one.

Q: Why did they only air condition half of the Baltimore station? The stationmaster used to wire the doors open so we could get some cool air, but this has been stopped. Why?

A: The area presently air conditioned was done in 1979 so passengers could have some temporary relief until NECIP could start completely renovating the station. Contract signing for that is set for October 9 and work should begin shortly after that.

Keeping those doors open is not feasible because the units cannot cool the entire station without being strained beyond their capacity.

The good side of the situation is that, at present, we at least can have a small area for passengers to escape the heat and humidity.

Why TOPS Disruptions?

Comment: As a member of the TOPS (the new network support system) development team, some past Hot Line comments have been brought to my attention regarding the ARTS system's reliability. TOPS has entered its final testing and agents are having more frequent service interruptions because of ARTS failures and TOPS testing.

Since we cannot duplicate a live, full network, we try to test live at a time of minimum disruption of service for our users. When completed, TOPS will increase customer service by making scopes and ticket printers communicate faster and more reliably.

Another function of TOPS is to locate and isolate problems with the equipment out in the field. Machine problems that weren't detected before by ARTS are now quickly found by TOPS . . . which is why some users are having difficulties when TOPS is operating.

Because problems are expected during TOPS testing and because of the opportunity for the field to comment, TOPS is blamed for many net-

Q: I work at Chicago's Union Station and we have a continual problem with the *Panama Limited*, specifically the Amfleet toilets. It seems that a lot of the toilets not only don't work enroute, but in many cases, are missing and the toilets aren't even locked off. The train has heavy ridership and I'd like to see the situation corrected.

A: Present Amfleet equipment was never intended for long distance service but has been pressed into such use because of failures of conventional cars and shortage of cars. All Superliner and future Amfleet cars designed for long distance travel are being equipped with proper retention toilets. Present equipment that will continue in long distance use will also be converted.

Interim measures to offset the problem have been taken and the mechanical department is continuously

work problems that have actually been present for years. Incidentally, we do appreciate feedback from the people in the field.

The six members of the TOPS team have had a tough job. Not only do they have to develop and implement a new system, but they have to correct longstanding problems of the existing system. They are in the crossfire of disgruntled agents and anxious bosses.

I hope this statement will make our field people aware of just what we are trying to do. The service will be much improved in the future because of our efforts now. I hope the field people will be patient when they know TOPS is running. We're working hard to fix the problems.

Answer: You have a valid point and I hope this helps explain the work you are doing.

Please keep in mind, however, as you progress with TOPS that any ARTS outage—even a few minutes—causes reservations and ticketing agents serious problems in dealing with customers who are waiting in lines or on the phones, or trying to catch trains.

working to alleviate the situation until adequate long-distance equipment is in service.

Q: I work on the *San Francisco Zephyr* which now has two Superliner sets running. We often have the conventional cars bad ordered with no replacements for them. Also, we are constantly oversold and don't have enough space for passengers, especially west of Denver. Can you please tell me:

1. What's happened to the old cars that Superliners replaced?

2. Why don't we have extra coaches at Denver so we can accommodate our passengers?

3. What happened to the two lounge cars from the trains the Superliners replaced?

4. Why don't we keep a lounge car on the west coast so it can protect bad ordered cars?

5. Also a dining car?

A: First, cars replaced by Superliners have been sent to Beech Grove for conversion to head-end-power operation or been assigned to other trains replacing cars that are unrepairable.

2. We aren't aware that there is any over-selling or standee problem because we have had no reports by station or crew personnel regarding this. Because of passenger demand throughout our system, it isn't feasible to keep Superliner or conventional coaches idle in Denver just in case they're needed.

3. The two cars are still in service operating and protecting other conventional train sets.

4 & 5. We do keep protection equipment stored and use it when needed. However, reliability of much of the remaining conventional equipment isn't very good so we have a higher bad order ratio in those assigned pools. This makes it very difficult to protect every individual need for substitute cars.

Q: What's being done regarding the bad performance of the *Niagara Rainbow/Adirondack*? Since the timetable changes of August 3,

they're hardly ever on time. Any talk with the state about operating the trains again as separate units?

A: Mechanical personnel have been assigned to the Montreal portion to eliminate Amtrak-caused delays. We're continuing to press Conrail and the Delaware and Hudson railroads for improvements in their operations.

We're also talking to New York state's DOT but it's unlikely that they will subsidize the service south of Albany negating any possible separation of the two trains.

President's Hot Line

U.S.A. 800-424-5191
D.C. only 383-2027

Personnel Hot Line

U.S.A. 800-424-5190
D.C. only 383-3636

Payroll Hot Line

U.S.A. 800-424-5067
D.C. only 383-3517

Payroll personnel will answer calls live during day shift hours, Monday through Friday. At all other times calls will be handled by an answering machine.

Jobs Hot Line

U.S.A. only 800-424-5196

All Hot Lines are in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Callers to the President's Hot Line can either identify themselves or remain anonymous. Personnel Hot Line callers, obviously, must identify themselves if they wish a reply to their questions.

Employees also have the option of writing instead of calling. Write the specific Hot Line you want, c/o Amtrak, 400 N. Capitol St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Birch Bayh Breaks Ground For Beech Grove Building

Ground was broken for the new Beech Grove administration building on Friday, August 8, with the first shovel of dirt being turned over by Senator Birch Bayh (D-Ind).

Also participating in the ceremony near the main gate were Elton Geshwiler, mayor, Beech Grove; and Walter Barrick, general manager of the maintenance base.

The new administration building will be a one-story, cinder block, brick veneer structure, 190-by-66 feet in size, and topped with a mansard roof. Work is expected to be completed by next summer.

The new building will replace the complex of mobile structures being used currently to house the various administrative offices.

When completed, the new administration center will provide offices for the general manager and his staff, including labor relations, personnel, finance, accounting and a data processing center.

Also housed in the building will be the rules and safety officer, claims department, an estimator, material coordinator and procurement personnel.

Bayh, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, pledged to attending employees that as long as he is in a position to influence decisions at Amtrak, that the Beech Grove facility will continue to play a major role in maintaining Amtrak's car fleet.

"This facility is contributing in a significant way toward making the taxpayers' investment in Amtrak a good one," he stressed.

Bayh was successful in earmarking \$13 million in fiscal year 1978 appropriations to upgrade the Beech Grove shops. The facility now employs between 1,250 and 1,300 persons and has added about 50 since the beginning of the year.

"There is no recession at Beech Grove," said Bayh. "And, as long as I am in a position to have an influ-



Photo By Anne Bednar

Senator Birch Bayh digs out the first shovel of earth. At left is Beech Grove Mayor Elton Geshwiler.

ence, Beech Grove will continue to grow."

Bayh was also instrumental in initiating daily train service between Chicago and Indianapolis. That train began service on October 1.

Gates Promoted

H. Peter Gates has been named assistant controller, accounting and contract audit, effective August 1. Gates has been employed at Amtrak since August 1971 serving most recently as director, contract and joint facility audit. He holds a CPA certificate in the District of Columbia.

At the same time, Charles E. Mosby was named director, contract and joint facility audit. Mosby has been an Amtrak employee since February 1974 and most recently served as manager, property taxes. He holds a CPA certificate in the state of Maryland.

Keeping Track Of Amtrak

Depew Station Opens

Amtrak's new suburban Buffalo, New York, station at Depew opened for business on Friday, August 29.

The new facility serves all three Amtrak trains operating to and from the Buffalo/Niagara Falls area, namely the *Lake Shore Limited*, the *Niagara Rainbow* and the *Empire State Express*.

The air-conditioned station features a ticket counter and 50-passenger waiting lounge plus office space. The station has been designed to allow handicapped passengers direct access to trains without any barriers. It can also be easily expanded, if necessary, in the future to accommodate increased ridership.

The state of New York funded the \$565,000 one-story modular station

in its entirety as well as providing a 139-car parking lot that includes spaces for both handicapped and buses.

Safety Standings

The Southern division led the other eight in the July ratings of the President's Safety Contest with a 5.9 ratio. Philadelphia and St. Louis followed closely behind with figures of 6.8 and 6.9, respectively.

Wilmington led the other three shops with a 6.5 ratio, while eight mechanical facilities went through July with no injuries, thus earning zero ratios. The eight were Minneapolis, Detroit, Kansas City, St. Louis, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, New Orleans and Niagara Falls.

The overall picture, however, is not

Quarterly On-Board Winners Named

Winners have been named in the second quarter of Amtrak's On-Board Services Incentive Program. The quarter included April, May and June of this year.

Category I

Winners in Category I, employees who deal directly with the public, are:

Eastern Region: A tie between Linda Duffany, Boston, and Arthur Richardson, Jacksonville.

Western Region: A tie between Deborah May and Charles F. Walker, both of Los Angeles.

First runners-up in the Western region were Edward Lemons, Seattle, and Sigbjorn Askvik, Los Angeles.

No winners were declared in the Central region and there were no other runners-up in any region.

Category II

Winners in Category II, employees who do not deal directly with the public such as chefs or pantry personnel, are:

Eastern Region: Winner is Jack L. Bell. First runner-up is Randolph

Hursey, with second runners-up Robert Martin and James Jordan. All are based in Jacksonville.

Central Region: A tie between Charles Nicholson and Hiawatha Allen. First runner-up is Abraham Reeves, with William Cochrane named second runner-up. All are based in Chicago.

Western Region: Winner is Ronald Harris, Oakland. First runners-up are John Henderson, Oakland, and Lindberg Talley and Harvey Williams, both of Los Angeles.

Second runners-up are Joseph Guillory, Oakland, and Clarence Whiting, Los Angeles.

Top regional winners will each be treated to a dinner for two at a quality restaurant at their location, while all, including runners-up, will have commendatory letters placed in their personal files.

Category I winners are "elected" by the number of unsolicited letters received from passengers praising their service. Category II winners are picked by their supervisors.

bright because the injury rate for the entire company rose for the second consecutive month to a high of 11.9. (July 1979's figure was 12.6.) Ratios for every department also increased with the single exception of maintenance of way.

For July, all non-Northeast Corridor divisions reported higher employee injury ratios than they did in July of last year.

Albany/Rensselaer and New Haven shops reported increased injury ratios compared to last year, while Beech Grove and Wilmington had fewer injuries causing the shop overall total to decline to an 8.9 figure compared to 13.0 for July 1979.

The Corridor divisions, while improving from July of last year and with the exception of Philadelphia, continue to have the highest ratio of reportable injuries on the system.

Off To Las Vegas

Some 52 Los Angeles employees from the mechanical, claim and passenger services departments, plus personnel from the central reservations and division offices went to Las Vegas for a weekend of fun on August 18-20.

About half of the group went up Friday, the other half on Saturday, but all returned on Sunday occupying one car on the *Desert Wind*. Rooms, at a special rate, were reserved at the Union Plaza hotel, which is the site of the Amtrak station.

The trip came about as a result of a casual conversation between Dave Simpson, lead timekeeper, and Ann Ramirez, timekeeper, in the division offices. Words progressed to action and the two, along with Juanita Jones, claims department, organized the weekend venture. Fliers were printed and pinned on bulletin boards at all facilities in Los Angeles.

Says Simpson, "We had a fine time. In Las Vegas, some of the people had parties in their rooms before going to dinner and the shows. It was a good way for us to get together and get to know each other a little bit better. We hope to do it again."

Friends of employees were allowed

to come along, paying for their own train fare.

Simpson was highly complimentary to Las Vegas station personnel. "They really gave us the red carpet treatment when we arrived," he noted.

New Carrollton Station

Amtrak has received assurance of matching local funds for parking facilities at a proposed intermodal passenger station in suburban Maryland and is proceeding with plans that will lead to construction of a station at New Carrollton.

Without ample parking space for its passengers, Amtrak had been reluctant to build the new facility.

The new station will be next to New Carrollton's Metro transit rail station and will replace Amtrak's present Capitol Beltway station at Lanham. The project is part of the \$2.5 billion Northeast Corridor Improvement Project.

Federal Railroad Administrator John Sullivan said, "The commitment by Prince Georges county to contribute funds for the parking facility will now permit Amtrak to proceed on station-related track work without interruption." The FRA is responsible for the NECIP program.

On August 21, Amtrak awarded an \$11.2 million contract to Peter Kiewit Sons' Co., of Omaha, to begin station-related track, platform and pedestrian tunnel work for the project.

Work on the initial contract is expected to begin this fall.

Amtrak's "World Series"

Philadelphia's combined CRO-30th Street Station team won Amtrak's third annual eastern softball tournament on Saturday, September 13, by beating, first, the Jacksonville CRO, 11-4, and then Washington corporate headquarters, 13-10, in the final game.

Washington had beaten New York's CRO, 10-9, in the preliminary game to gain the championship game.

The softball event is an annual affair that brings together employees

from the four locations for a day of sport and socializing.

Over 100 persons—players and spectators—attended the tournament at West Potomac Park, Washington.

Letters

To the Editor:

I'm writing regarding your review in the July issue of *Amtrak News* about Fred Westing's book, *Penn Station, Its Tunnels and Side Rodders*.

It was a long time after Pennsylvania Station, New York, opened until the day came when the Pennsylvania Railroad abandoned all of its trans-Hudson ferries. True, the Pennsylvania abandoned its Brooklyn and 23rd Street ferry services immediately or soon after the opening of Pennsylvania Station. The Desbrosses St. ferry service, though, lasted into the '20s or '30s. And the original ferry service between Cortlandt Street, in New York, and Exchange Place, in Jersey City, was not abandoned until 1950.

Even after this, old Penn Station, at the foot of Exchange Place in Jersey City, continued in use with trans-Hudson connections via the Hudson tubes. About half of the Pennsylvania's rush-hour commuter trains used Exchange Place until it closed in November 1961.

The closing of Exchange Place and abandonment of the Pennsylvania ferries, along with the great increase of commuter train travel in recent years and the parallel increase in number of trains operated, plus the closing of the Jersey Central's Jersey City terminal and its ferries to New York, are a major factor in the congestion and delays that beset Pennsylvania Station in New York; Penn Station, Newark; and the "high line" between them every rush hour.

I don't know if the error was yours or Westing's, as I have no copy of his book. Regardless, it cannot be stressed too strongly that Pennsylvania Station was designed and built as a terminal (and way station)

The tournament was invitational with all persons paying their own way to Washington. Out of towners used Amtrak service for their trip to the nation's capital.

for long-distance trains, with only minimal provisions for commuter trains which were to be handled in other terminals.

Though as delay clerk, I must write up our dreadful rush hours day after day, I am actually surprised that Pennsylvania Station manages so well in handling the floods of commuter trains that it was never meant to serve.

I hope that future material in *Amtrak News* about Pennsylvania Station will clearly and accurately indicate how different the station's present function is from its original purpose as a long-distance travelers' and mail depot.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Mott

Editor's Note: Thanks to reader Mott for his update on Pennsylvania Station's past. It looks like New York Amtrak employees are doing a superb job in moving trains despite some substantial problems.

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Super Bath For Detroit Station

Before Detroit's Family Days opened for business, the station got a thorough bath, courtesy of some friends of Amtrak.

It all began when John De Lora, head of the Michigan Passenger Service Aide program and a regional director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, approached Bill Duggan, director, passenger services, Detroit, and suggested that the old building could use a washing.

Duggan agreed but noted there was no money in his budget for such a job.

De Lora asked if Amtrak would object if he could get the job done at no cost. Duggan said no and De Lora went to work.

De Lora, who works as a full-time public safety officer in a Detroit suburb, began scouring various fire departments to see if he could borrow a pumper. Red tape snarls kept him from acquiring an official truck.

He did, however, know a friend, Fred Noland, of West Bloomfield, who was a fire buff and owned three restored fire engines. Noland agreed

to the use of one of his engines and even called some friends, including a Highland Park fire lieutenant and a Hamtramck fire captain, to help.

One week before Family Days, the group of seven rolled up to the station in Noland's 1948 American La France pumper and went to work. Using an eductor—a device normally used to add fire-fighting agents into the hoses but for this occasion used to inject a special soap solution—the

fire fighters proceeded to scour down the station facade and driveway. Three hours after they began, the station, cleansed of years of grime, looked as trim as when it was completed in 1913.

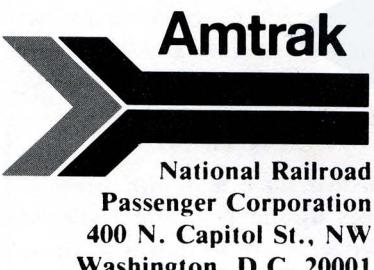
Volunteers from the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers arrived later to wash windows, carry away accumulated trash and weed the flower garden they had planted earlier in the spring.

On Saturday, in time for the opening of the festivities, the station gleamed brighter than it had in years.



Photo From John De Lora

Amtrak's Detroit station gets a thorough bath just one week prior to its hosting of Family Days.



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