



WASHINGTON RAIL NEWS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2007

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Publication of All Aboard Washington
A Not-for-profit Consumer Organization
"Moving forward...On Rail."

Update on the Amtrak *Cascades* and the Northwest Corridor from Ken Uznanski

Ken Uznanski, WSDOT Rail Office manager, spoke at the Aug. 11 All Aboard Washington picnic in Puyallup.

Everyone, of course, wanted to know about the Talgo trainsets being pulled from service on Thursday Aug. 2 when cracks were discovered in the upper parts of some of the suspension systems. These systems provide the ability for the trains to travel faster through curves than conventional passenger equipment.

During routine inspections, tiny cracks in suspension system welds were found in about half the fleet. Erring on the side of caution and safety the equipment was pulled from service. Though it was later determined the cracks were not a safety issue, WSDOT, Amtrak and Talgo decided to repair the cracks before returning the trainsets to service.

Ken said, "I cannot give enough credit to Amtrak, locally, in Washington, DC and in Los Angeles for finding backup equipment during the busiest travel time of the year. This demonstrates Amtrak's commitment to its state partnerships." Amtrak brought in Amfleet equipment from the Northeast Corridor used to provide additional frequencies on weekends. Horizon equipment was brought in from southern California, taken from the *Pacific Surfliner* equipment pool. These moves caused reduced capacity and more crowding in the Northeast and in California. Other issues also had to be addressed, such as bringing in wheelchair lifts for each station. They are needed with Amfleet and Horizon equipment.

Partial service between Seattle and Portland was restored on Monday Aug. 6 and modified full service (except for the Seattle-Bellingham trip covered by buses) resumed several days later. Because the conventional equipment cannot travel through curves as fast as the tilting Talgo equipment, the schedules had to be lengthened. They were subse-

quently adjusted two more times to provide more consistent operation. "Amtrak has done a tremendous job" restoring Northwest rail service, concluded Ken.

He recounted his trip to Spain in June as part of a trade mission. Also on the trip were Amtrak Pres. Alex Kummant and government affairs Vice Pres. Joe McHugh. They met with various government officials and with Renfre, the Spanish National Railways. Renfre is spending 1.2-1.6 bill. euros a years on just passenger equipment. Rail has received 50% of government transportation spending the last five years. Over the next ten years, \$120 bill. euros will be spent on rail. Renfre operates 5000 trains a day and on-time performance is 98.7%.

The trip allowed Ken to spend time with Kummant, planning for the future. Kummant is committed to a national rail

passenger system in the U.S. and continuing to develop state partnerships.

The Legislature has asked WSDOT for an updated midrange *Cascades* vision. The report is due Dec. 2008. Ken said we would be looking at 7-8 Seattle-Portland roundtrips a day. He noted that several key legislators are saying 2009 will be the rail session.

Ridership on the *Cascades* has been strong this year, up 11% through August. This despite the August drop due to the days of cancelled and reduced service. Even with the substitute equipment, ridership returned strongly as the month progressed.

On-time performance remains problematic. It was good through 2005. But with increased freight traffic, more infrastructure upgrades and routine maintenance it has been suffering. Another important issue is that the average dispatcher on BNSF's Seattle Subdivision has just 18 months experience and there is a large learning curve

for this complex section of track. BNSF is developing special training for dispatchers working our area. Gov. Gregoire has become involved, directing DOT to work with BNSF and Amtrak to improve on-time performance.

WSDOT, Amtrak and BNSF are currently negotiating a new contract. Right now a train can be as much as 28 minutes late and still considered on-time for purposes of paying BNSF its incentives. DOT wants to true-up with the public timetable. Ken stated DOT is firm that public investment money in BNSF's infrastructure is directly tied to proper operation of passenger trains using their tracks. The agency and Amtrak are willing to increase incentive payments for good on-time performance but there must also be penalties for poor performance.

Much to the delight of many at the meeting, Ken announced WSDOT will develop a Thruway bus program to provide greater access to our trains. A steering committee will help develop the Thruway plan.

A new marketing campaign is in development. It will begin appearing this winter and will include information on fares. The campaign will also move to capture more of the business travel market.



Substitute Amtrak *Cascades* train 1007 passes through Puyallup on Sept. 1. Oct 5 update on Talgo trainset repairs from Jeff Schultz, WSDOT Operations and Rolling Stock manager: The first repaired Talgo trainset returned to service on Sept. 29 and the second one on Oct. 6. The plan has all trainsets repaired by early to mid November, with full regular service, amenities and schedules back before Thanksgiving. The equipment has a ten year warranty and all repair costs are covered by manufacturer Talgo. Having the equipment out of service allowed repainting of the exteriors to be completed more quickly than planned. The cars now look really sharp. One set of equipment has been out of service for several month as WSDOT and Amtrak install new seats. Superliner equipment is covering the Seattle-Vancouver roundtrip during this work. The process for installing the new (and improved) seats has been finalized, including modifications to the car floors, and the process is proceeding. The trainsets will be cycled through the seat retrofit one at a time. This program will be completed sometime next summer.

Photo by Zack Willhoite



*From the desk of
the Government
Affairs Director
by
Lloyd H. Flem*

Passenger Train Safety? Of course, but...; Kudos to Ken, Jeff, Amtrak and Talgo!

As All Aboard Washington's Director of Government and Corporate Affairs, I take great personal and professional responsibility in representing train riders' interests at all levels. To do all reasonably possible to help ensure your safety and comfort on intercity, commuter and transit trains is part of my job. Rail safety is also a primary job of the Federal Railroad Administration. But FRA's concern with one aspect of rail safety can have, in my view, negative consequences for the safety of train riders and, importantly, the increasing numbers of our citizens and international visitors who would ride more trains if they were to exist!

A recent FRA proposal would double the current federal requirement for the physical strength of Forward Corner Posts of certain passenger rail equipment to 300,000 pounds, beginning in October of 2009. The ultra-respected RAILWAY AGE journal suggests that this is, in part, a political move to strengthen this federal regulatory agency's influence over even local and intra-state passenger trains.

I am not an engineer and cannot criticize this FRA proposal on engineering grounds. As one who rides intercity and local passenger rail more than most North-westerners, save the (happily!) growing number of regular Sounder patrons, and whose family and friends are encouraged to "take the train" as much as practical, I surely want our trains as safe as reasonable for the sake of crew and passengers. But, like another very costly and impractical proposal to make all passenger rail platforms physically identical nationwide (supposedly to benefit wheelchair-bound passengers, of which I am one at this time), the insistence on passenger safety being equated with sheer "crush strength" could indeed backfire.

How so? Current American rail passenger cars are overwhelmingly the safest form of surface transportation. We can bicker whether our trains are 10, 20 or 50 times safer than private motor vehicles per million passenger miles.

There is simply no doubt we are dramatically less likely to suffer injury or death in an intercity, commuter or transit train than in a private motor vehicle. If, to make

a train say 21 times rather than 20 times safer than driving, added costs of providing those "safer" rail cars inhibit their production and operation, and thus force potential rail passengers onto the highways because of lack of capacity or higher fares, the overall result is a less safe transportation environment.

Far-fetched reasoning? Not really. Our Talgo trains, originally though very passenger-safe due to several design innovations, did not achieve an arbitrary (in my view) 800,000 pound crush strength. A competing manufacturer, whose objective was really to discourage Talgo's entry into the North American market, lobbied the Feds to have the Talgo-built trains ruled "unsafe" and pushed out of service. Safety? For at least a time, we would have had no Amtrak *Cascades* trains, most of the potential passengers would have traveled by car on I-5, increasing congestion, pollution, and yes, the

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possibility of injury or death. Fortunately, that didn't happen. The then-current (and ultra-safe as well!) Talgo trains were granted a waiver. A beefier series of Talgos were later created for the U.S. at higher cost but we retained our valuable *Cascades* service.

To an analogous example: By most standards, I am "green," certainly an old-school conservationist at least. For many reasons, I believe suburban sprawl and ex-urban scatteration is not in our state's or country's interests. Neo-traditional urban development (coming back in some places) which is compact among other virtues and can usually be served by passenger rail, is environmentally and socially sound. But when environmental and development regulations become overly strict and/or costly in certain cities (even if the original intent is good), developers will build "way out in the country," with far more negative environmental (and social and economic) consequences to the larger community than would have been the case had the "green" regulations within the city been a bit more flexible, allowing the compact in-city development.

All of us want safe modes of transportation. But if marginal increases in the safety of our already very safe passenger trains impose costs which drive away public or even private investment (which is becoming a growing possibility) in more passenger trains, we have not only lost the opportunity

to enjoy this mode of travel, but we are forced into using far less pleasant and more dangerous roads and highways.

I cannot say whether the FRA's latest effort at equating safety with more heavy armor will raise costs sufficiently to discourage the production of more passenger rail cars. But please, as we all want safe trains reasonably accessible to all, let us as a country carefully consider whether "rules" made by non-elected public employees really do serve those purposes.

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Kudos to Amtrak, WSDOT Passenger Rail staff Ken Uznanski and Jeff Schultz, and Talgo for their rapid response to the August 2 discovery of small cracks in the welds of the Talgo coaches' unique suspension towers on our Amtrak *Cascades* trains.

As quickly as possible, Amtrak brought in Horizon and Amfleet equipment from Los Angeles and the Northeast Corridor. By

August 6, the substitute equipment was up and running in our Northwest Corridor, except for bus service between Seattle and Bellingham in place of Trains 513 and 516.

While FRA determined the suspension cracks to not be a safety issue, repairs are being instituted before the affected Talgo equipment is put back into service.

Ridership was not apparently

hurt by the presence of the Amfleet equipment. But as the Talgo trainsets began returning to service on Sept. 29, to quote the latest TRAINS magazine, passengers will begin to no longer have to trade "their big windows, onboard movies, checked baggage, bicycle racks, and snazzy café cars with star-studded ceilings for slit-windowed stainless steel tubes." And our Talgo trains allow for half-hour faster run times between Seattle and Portland, which will be fully reinstated, likely by mid-November. (Comment: I don't consider "onboard movies" an asset. Cannot we survive an hour or two **SOMEWHERE** without electronic entertainment!?)

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A last word on FRA rail safety: While skeptical over the "heavier is always better" mentality on passenger rail equipment, I applaud FRA Administrator Joseph Boardman's reasonable request to Congress for more flexibility in terms of time-on-duty rules for the hard-working onboard freight rail crews.

Boardman has several other safety ideas that appear to be reasonable also. But here too, if very marginal increases in safety come at so great a financial cost that freight is effectively forced onto the highways, the proposals should probably not be adopted.



The View Down the Tracks

=====
with Jim Cusick

YES on Prop 1

This November, a multi-billion dollar ballot measure will be in front of the voters. Proposition 1 is the combination of Sound Transit's next phase plans combined with a portion of the funding for the plans the three county Regional Transportation Improvement District has made for road improvements. Why should you vote yes on this?

Sound Transit has listened to all the public input and put forward a package that more than triples the amount of light rail that will be operating after the initial segment of Central Link is completed. This is truly a bold and necessary response that will bring us closer to the level of rail service that we could already be enjoying had the rail portion of Forward Thrust been approved decades ago.

ST2/RTID is heavy on rail. This is a good thing.

However, it would be constructive to start by looking first at the well-publicized objections and answering those criticisms first, and there's nothing better than starting with the billion dollars it will cost.

As the system gets built further from the more expensive core system being built now, it should be cheaper. Sound Transit could state the budget costs at far lower figure to make it more appealing to the voters.

For example, reading the plan reveals that the cost for the extension of Link to the north to Lynnwood is assumed as an elevated rail line running in the I-5 right-of-way. This doesn't mean that it will be exactly that. There has to be a starting point to plan from. Even though portions of the Interurban right-of-way exist, it has been severed and developed over in many places. Costs would be lower for an at-grade alignment on that ROW, but higher for property acquisitions. Costs are high to take light-rail across Lake Washington and through Bellevue to Redmond, but it is a critical east-west connection.

It is prudent for Sound Transit to use realistic cost estimates and make them higher, rather than lower. As the saying goes, "Promise Less, Deliver More!"

Using the opposite approach only serves to lower the credibility of those making them. This is something Sound Transit has already battled with, and an approach that doomed the Seattle Monorail Project.

You should also remember this: it won't

get any cheaper the longer we wait.

The objections to the combined package for many of those who like Sound Transit's plans is the proverbial "mother-in-law" that comes with the new spouse, the Roads portion of Proposition 1. I have as many issues as anyone about building more lane-miles, but there is a political reality at work here.

As you know, on the Eastside during the I-405 Corridor Program, the public survey revealed that people want more roads as much as they want more rail. This is not to say they want more roads than rail on the Eastside, as is planned now, however the public relies on our elected officials to champion the cause. All Aboard decided to be the champion for rail on the Eastside. It's not in Prop 1, but the groundwork has been laid. It's time for us to build on that.

However, there are portions of the RTID package that are valid for anyone, regardless.

The addition of two general purpose ex-

Learning from the negative results of the "Lesser Seattle" movement championed by the likes of Emmett Watson years ago, are we ready to doom our children to a completely unlivable region?

press lanes in each direction on I-405 will be the perfect place to institute tolls to regulate traffic flow. Even though they will receive capacity improvements, which we know are only temporary, other roads will get much needed safety improvements (SR-522 for instance). Many other road upgrades will include HOV lane additions, so voting "for roads" is not as onerous as it might seem, and to take an "all what I want or nothing at all" approach gets us nowhere.



To kick off the start of reverse commuter train service to Tacoma on Sept. 24 Sounder Engine 902 has been wrapped in a vintage design dubbed the "City of Destiny train," a moniker chosen to honor Tacoma's motto of more than 100 years. Photo by Warren

Remember that Sound Transit is the one multi-county regional agency where our elected officials are accomplishing much in transit. Having lived in the two-county city of Bothell, it was a major milestone event years ago when Community Transit and Metro began to even talk to each other. I was at the town hall meeting when that happened.

Learning from the negative results of the "Lesser Seattle" movement championed by the likes of Emmett Watson years ago, are we ready to doom our children to a completely unlivable region? No matter how bad we might think things are here transportation-wise, people from regions where things are worse will think it's better here.

It's time to move forward. Vote YES on Proposition 1. Moving forward is All Aboard Washington's slogan, after all. It's our job to see that Rail is the preferred choice.

There are successes that Sound Transit has accomplished that can be built upon.

Sounder Success

Getting a taste of rail wins converts, and that's what happened with Sounder when WSDOT had to close lanes on I-5 for emergency repairs. The only problem that occurred was the usually comfortable and predictable Sounder ride that regular patrons were used

to was upset by the newcomers. Now there's a switch, people who regularly ride Sounder are so used to the predictability of their commute it's not the daily anxiety of driving delays that upset most people, but that their routine on the train was upset. It seems that rail commuters know the secret of a pleasant commute and now they need to help the new riders learn the ropes.

Ridership jumped on the first few days, and settled in at a higher level even after all lanes were returned to service. It might not be the major disaster such as how the Northridge earthquake boosted Metrolink ridership, but it helped bump things up another notch.

Now Sounder has a reverse commute to Tacoma and it appears it is already popular. More success. And it proves that ridership potential is there with the right service. Once all trains are on the schedule we should see an even bigger ridership jump.

Rail Bus Tunnel

I was able to attend the celebration for opening the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel the week prior to being opened to the general public and returning buses. It really can't be called the Bus Tunnel any more since it now will have light rail running in it. Actually, the light rail vehicle that was towed into the tunnel for the celebration will be testing in the tunnel in the off hours, and apparently it might even be in the tunnel (See **Cusick**, page 4)

The roads and transit plan is the wrong way to go

By Warren Yee

This November, many residents of King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties will be voting on a roads and transit package (Proposition 1) with major ratifications. Construction will be going on for the next 20 years, funded with bonds, some of which won't be paid off until 30 years after construction ends.

The state Legislature tired of the roads vs. transit debate and forced these two issues into one ballot measure. Essentially, if you want roads, you have to accept transit, and vice versa. There is no separate ballot for each. Either you take it all or reject it all.

The two parts to Proposition 1 are Transit – Sound Transit 2 (ST2), and Roads – Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID). Both parts have flaws.

In the case of ST2, there is too much emphasis on Link light rail and really nothing else, which is good thing for those living along the proposed Link extensions.

For those in the Green and Puyallup River valleys, there is no additional Sounder service in ST2. They will build parking garages in Sumner and Puyallup, and put a permanent station and garage in Tukwila. So we are building parking garages to accommodate the nine roundtrips in the initial 1996 Sound Transit plan, but not providing the additional service riders asked for during the ST2 public process.

Some of the Link extensions are questionable. To the east, operating between Seattle and Overlake via Mercer Island is seen as a roundabout way to go. To the south, between Federal Way and Tacoma, there is not much of anything except Fife. The only logical proposal is to the north to Lynnwood, since there is no viable transit option between Seattle and Northgate except to extend Link.

Sound Transit is asking for a bigger sales tax increase (0.5%) than they did for phase one (0.4%) and light rail is not running yet (sorry, Tacoma Link does not count). In most cities, additional funding for light rail extensions is voted on **AFTER** the initial line is running. This is really asking for a leap of faith from voters. Also, the usual anti-rail opposition is muted once the rail line is operating and people come in droves to ride the system.

ST2 should have proposed a modest expansion of light rail, more Sounder service and a lesser sales tax increase.

In the case of RTID (roads), the biggest flaw is the RTID legislation itself. It was formed as part of SB 6140 in 2002 and its primary author was former State Sen. Jim Horn, who headed the Senate Transportation and Highway Committee at the time. The primary purpose of SB 6140 is to build more lanes, not for safety and preservation. Since the I-35W bridge collapse in Minneapolis on July 1st, priorities have changed everywhere. It is now about safety

and preservation.

There are some safety and preservation projects in this package, notably the SR 520 floating bridge (which will need to be tolled), the Spokane St. viaduct and the South Park bridge in Seattle. (The Alaskan Way viaduct is not funded by RTID, but wholly from state funds.) The RTID plan does fix many bottlenecks in the region.

The RTID board failed to push aggressively for more tolling of roads as part of their funding package. With completion of the new Tacoma Narrows bridge, users are paying a toll. I believe that any new freeway lanes or extensions should be tolled. These tolls could be used to help pay back the construction bonds and for continuing road maintenance after that.

Two projects deserve special scrutiny:

- The cross base highway (SR 704) between Lakewood and Spanaway (Pierce County)
- Interstate 405 between Bellevue and Renton (King County)

The cross base highway is currently funded at each end only, with the unfunded middle segment going to mediation. Why should this new facility be free? A new highway is easy to toll.

ST2 will fund a study of possible transit use of the BNSF Eastside corridor while RTID funds a bicycle/pedestrian trail on the BNSF right-of-way between Kennydale and the Wilburton tunnel as part of the I-405 project. All Aboard Washington has been actively working to keep the Eastside line from becoming strictly a bike path. We are not opposed to a bike path parallel to the BNSF line where there it space. However, if the rail line is lifted, it will be difficult to restore, contrary to what "rail to trails" advocates say.

The I-405 project as proposed does not include "express lanes" to facilitate so-called Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and possible HOT (High Occupancy Toll) lanes, though they may be added in the future. As long buses operate in mixed traffic in non-barrier separated HOV lanes, it is NOT BRT, but BST (Buses Stuck in Traffic). The I-405 project is one of the most expensive projects on the RTID list and no tolls are proposed for what is essentially general purpose lane freeway expansion.

This project needs to be revised to provide for two HOV/HOT lanes in each direction with barrier separation from the start. And no additional free general purpose lanes should be built.

All Aboard Washington is for balanced transportation. We know road improvements are part of the mix and that transit is not the total solution. However, Proposition 1 is not that plan. It is a rush job and a forced marriage. It is time to get a separation and divorce. Vote No on Proposition 1.

Warren is a member of the All Aboard Washington Directors Circle. He is a transit operator for King County Metro and drives ST Express bus route 564 between Overlake and South Hill/Puyallup (including on I-405 Bellevue- Renton).

Cusick, from page 3

during regular hours at some point.

If you ride a bus northbound through the tunnel all the way to Convention Place, keep your eyes peeled if you are on the platform side. You can see the stub tunnel for Link just as the bus makes the turn to the left to exit the tunnel just before Convention Place station. Buses should do just fine if they follow the instructions on the sign - "Buses Keep Left."

The Bus Tunnel needs a new popular name, since DSTT just doesn't roll off the tongue. Maybe the Third Avenue Subway?

Rail on the East Eastside

Also on the November ballot will be the Kittitas County measure to create a rail district there to explore creating their own cross-pass service to and from the Puget Sound region. Things are looking good, with the long-delayed acquisition of the Ellensburg train station by the city.

Just think, not only will daily commuters have the option of a stress free commute, you will be able to visit with your children if they attend Central Washington University. This will give you a chance make sure they are studying hard while you drop off that check they asked for the last time they called, regardless of pass conditions.

Rail on the West Eastside

While Proposition 1 doesn't build rail on the Woodinville Subdivision, it does have study money. What this means is what was once a neglected option has been recognized by Sound Transit. Now that All Aboard has championed the cause, it will be up to us to work to make it more of a reality, since we know it is the missing link for rail on the Eastside.

Our work is still cut out for us at All Aboard Washington and supporting Proposition 1 is a step in the right direction. After all, the Woodinville Subdivision is the rail solution that will pick up the slack when the road capacity improvements reach the end of their useful life around 2025. By that time, the Eastside Sounder service will have become the preferred alternative for commuters just like South Sounder is starting to now be.

Stations, from page 5

Visp, Switzerland, in the upper Rhone Valley, which will become the major regional station for the south end of the new Lotschberg tunnel, is getting a new train station and additional platforms. The Swiss Postal Bus station will move to the intermodal facility in December. Visp is served by SBB and the meter gauge Matterhorn-Gotthard railway that operates a portion of the Glacier Express service. (You haven't heard of the Swiss Postal Bus system? It is nationwide, and we took the bus (8 trips a day) on a half hour climb up to the village of Burchen where our friend Heidi hosted us at her chalet.)

Lessons learned: lots of them! I will be thinking much about what we saw as we move ahead with King Street Station.

Ron Sheck is WSDOT's project manager for the King Street Station project. He is also DOT liaison to Sound Transit for Link and Sounder, and provides the state's rail transit safety and security oversight.

Train Stations in Europe

By Ron Sheck

The focus of discussion on passenger rail in Europe is usually more on trains, high speeds and shorter travel times. Stations are often overlooked or downplayed when we talk about train travel overseas. Marilyn and I just completed a 3½ week vacation in Europe. We rode trains in Ireland, the UK, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Changes are taking place at European rail stations at whatever scale: large cities, medium sized cities, small cities and towns and even villages. Stations are so important. They are where the rail experience begins, the gateway to cities and towns, and they are the connecting points between trains and with other modes of transportation.

Some general observations:

- Tremendous growth in rail travel (intercity, regional, local, commuter) is driving the need for additional station capacity.
- There is a continually expanding demand for intermodal connections; while this has always been strong with local transit, now it is also linking to intercity bus and airports.
- The new alignments of high speed rail lines through the countryside are bringing a demand for regional stations in rural areas.
- Providing lots of amenities (restaurants, clothing stores, banks, dry cleaners, flower shops, barber shops and hair salons, news stands, travel agencies, information kiosks) is creating a new dynamic at many stations.
- Electronic information is everywhere, from the great station halls to the platforms to outside information kiosks.
- The focus is on the traveler and most everything is designed to be user friendly...including lockers where you can store your luggage.
- Safety and security are top priorities, but security is more subtle than obtrusive. The station examples below are

a smattering of what we saw during our trip where we rode almost every kind of train imaginable on trips that ranged from 7 minutes to 12 hours.

Older stations, and this includes many grand architectural monuments are being upgraded and expanded. Often this includes additional tracks and platforms, and better access through lobbies, waiting areas, tunnels and overhead bridges often lined with shops and travel information. So, let's look at some stations in various sized places.

Large cities: Dublin has two major intercity train stations (Connolly and Heuston). The two are connected by a new light rail line; the new Dublin intercity bus station (Busaras) is adjacent to Connolly. Heuston is an old building with a nicely rebuilt concourse and expanded stub tracks.

Brussels Midi/Suid (this is a bilingual country: French and Dutch) sports a very modern glass and steel station with escalators and elevators leading from a marvelous concourse and shopping arcade up to the platforms for the 21 through tracks.

Zurich's traditional 16 track stub terminal was inadequate to meet growth, so the Swiss added four through tracks for regional and suburban trains at a new underground level perpendicular to the main tracks. All levels are linked by escalators and elevators and there is extensive shopping. One of our favorite aspects of Zurich Hauptbahnhof is McClean. This is the franchised restroom facility (you pay to go in Europe at larger stations and at shopping malls) but you are guaranteed a spotless facility and can even take a shower.

London is totally realigning some of its stations on the rail network. We left on the Eurostar to Brussels from Waterloo Station boarding our 7:42 a.m. train which got us to Belgium in 2 hours 15 minutes...just time for a leisurely and fantastic breakfast. In December the Eurostar will move to a rebuilt St. Pancras Station and the London-Brussels running time will be cut to 1 hr. 55 minutes.

While Paris still retains its many great train stations, we were able to go from Switzerland directly to Charles de Gaulle Airport on the newest TGV line which

opened in June. Ease of access and use is a hallmark of all of these stations. Signs on the platform even tell you where every car on the train will be positioned.

Medium Sized Cities: Basel, Switzerland, where I lived for several months in 1979 has remodeled the 16 track through station with a new concourse elevated above the tracks with shopping and information. (245 trains a day in 1979, over 700 a day now.) The plaza in front of the station has been reconfigured to serve six tram lines with new signage including "next tram" info. This is the only place in Europe where the Swiss, German and French railway systems come together.

Strasbourg, France (newest station to be served by the TGV) is preserving the facade of its gorgeous 19th century station building, which faces an expanded public green space, by constructing a giant glass bubble which serves as a weather proof arcade to access the relatively new (1998) light rail underground station and parking.

Gent, Belgium (one of our favorite cities) is only a 27 minute train ride from Brussels with half hourly service. The station is an architectural classic, from about the same era as King Street Station. Local transit buses and trams meet the trains, there is extensive bicycle parking, and lots of shopping.

Smaller Cities: Lugano, Switzerland has a train station on a hillside overlooking the city center where a funicular leads down steep slopes to the town center. Even here a new platform track is being added to serve the growing number of regional trains in Switzerland's Italian speaking Ticino region and northern Italy's Lombardy region. These trains are owned and operated jointly by SBB (Swiss Federal Railways) and Trenitalia. No border problems here. Even the station platforms, as they do at many European stations, have shelters and snack bars.

Ennis, Ireland, at the end of a branch line from Limerick and served by 9 trains a day in each direction, has been refurbished with a new waiting room. BusEireaan, the Irish national bus system, has moved into an upgraded part of the station. (See **Stations**, page 4)

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All Aboard News

November 10: All Aboard Washington annual meeting in **Tacoma**. Location details still being worked on; we'll send postcards to members in Pierce, Thurston and King counties and email those on our distribution list. Other members can contact Lloyd Flem or Jim Hamre for details (see p. 5). We will honor Aubrey Davis for his lifetime of work in the cause of balanced transportation. WSDOT commissioner Ed Barnes will also be a guest. The meeting is scheduled between the arrival of trains 1000 and 1003 and the departure of trains 1002 and 1007.

December 8: All Aboard Washington meeting and silent auction at **11:45 a.m.** at **Centennial Station**, 6600 Yelm Hwy SE, **Lacey**. Meeting is timed between the arrival of trains 11 and 500 and the departure of trains 513 and 516. (The Talgos will be back in service before the meeting.) Cost is **\$15 cash or check** for subs, pizza, salads, desserts & beverages.

All Aboard Washington welcomed the following new members in July, August and September: Adron Ben Hall, Portland, OR; Eric Zeigler, Tacoma; John Mades, Burien; Steve O'Rear, Kirkland; Jim Jeffery, Puyallup; Discovery Institute; Leigh Anne Winters, Seattle.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include Bill Kelley, Ron Sheck, Jeff Schultz, Ken Uznanski, Jim Cusick, Warren Yee, Lloyd Flem, Loren Herrigstad, Hal Cooper and Tony Trifiletti.

Do you have items to donate to our third annual All Aboard Washington silent auction? It will be held at our Dec. 8 meeting at Olympia-Lacey's Centennial Station (see above). Your donations surely can but need not be railroad paraphernalia.

All Aboard Washington
P. O. Box 70381
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Return Service Requested

You can also donate services that you provide. Or go out and solicit items or gift certificates from your local merchants. And save your dollars to bid on all the great items. This is a good place to do your Christmas shopping!. Please call the All Aboard Washington donation line at 1-888-688-7246 or drop an email to AllAboardWashinton@gmail.com to let us know what you're donating. You can bring your items to the auction on Dec. 8 or we'll pick them up (please give us your phone number so we can make arrangements). We are also in need of items for the bake sale for our Holiday meeting. Thank you for your commitment and generosity!
Bill Kelley, Fund Raising Director



Photos by Jim Hamre

received our Tom Martin Award, including the hand-built steam whistle he is holding, in his hometown of Ephrata at our Sept. 8 meeting. Pictured with Jim are Chuck Mott, chairman, and Jim's wife Rita. The text of Jim's plaque reads: *The Tom Martin Award for 2007 is presented to Jim Otis Neal in recognition of over 30 years of service to the Washington Assoc. of Rail Passengers and All Aboard Washington. We heartily thank you for your faithful commitment and leadership, your pro-bono legal services and your tireless advocacy for all things rail at local, state, regional and national levels.*

Our speaker at the meeting was Dr. Hal Cooper, PhD, an All Aboard Washington member. Hal has a long career in engineer-

ing as a college professor and consultant. His major emphasis over the years has been on all things rail – passenger and freight. He's written five books and over 150 technical articles. He is currently working with an Indian tribe in North Dakota on oil exploration.

His talk and our following discussion revolved around oil. With the emergence of rapidly growing economies in countries such as India and China, world oil consumption has increase in recent years from 70 mill. barrels to 90 mill. barrels a day. It is projected to hit 120 mill. barrels a day by 2030. The price of oil is continuing upward; there is increasing congestion, even in rural areas as along the I-81 corridor in Virginia; climate change issues are continuing to emerge; population growth is accelerating. The nation needs to turn to rail – both passenger and freight – and reduce dependence on autos, trucks and planes. We also need to seriously consider a major rail electrification effort. We need a public/private partnership to expand our rail system as the railroads cannot justify the costs to eliminate bottlenecks and double and triple track many of our country's mainlines. Hal noted that 70,000 trucks a day traverse the New Jersey Turnpike and 100,000 trucks a day enter New York City.

Jim Neal, center, a founding member of All Aboard Washington and long-time director and vice president,



Loren Herrigstad, holding trophy, was named All Aboard Washington's

Worker of the Year for his broad swath of volunteer work during the last year. Joining Loren are, from left, Chuck Mott, Tony Trifiletti, Bill Kelley (who proposed the award) and Lloyd Flem.

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