

# Washington Rail News

www.trainweb.com/washarp e-mail: washarp@scn.org  
Executive Director e-mail: washarp@olywa.net

December 2002/January 2003

Publication of the Washington Association of Rail Passengers  
A Not-for-profit Consumer Organization  
"...getting the Pacific Northwest on the right track."

## Congressman Larsen supports passenger rail service at October WashARP meeting

Congressman Rick Larsen (D-Arlington) took time in his busy schedule to speak to 35 WashARP members at our Oct. 12 meeting at Cookie's Restaurant in Everett.

Larsen is a member of the House Appropriations subcommittee on transportation. He noted that he and his family ride Amtrak often in the Northeast Corridor. Rail is a key component of our transportation system and must be treated accordingly, he stated. He noted the huge highway and air subsidies as compared to Amtrak's modest funding request. Larsen thanked Chuck Mott and Lloyd Flem for educating him on rail. He noted that passenger rail politics is more a regional issue than a partisan issue.

The congressman urged that funding be equalized among the states. The Northeast, which has half of Amtrak's service and the only higher speed service, must be required to start putting more money into the NEC. Larsen is pleased that Senator Patty Murray (D-Shoreline) has taken on the issue of equity among the states during the past year. He praised Washington state rail efforts and feels we are being "punished" for our initiative in expanding

and improving our Northwest Corridor because the federal government has been an absent partner.

Larsen also stated his opposition to privatization of passenger rail service. Privatization in Great Britain has been a disaster from a safety, maintenance, service and reliability standpoint. Rail-track, the company set up to operate and maintain the infrastructure had too little financial backing and cut back on maintenance, leading to a number of deadly crashes. Railtrack had to be taken back by the government.

Amtrak President David Gunn is doing a good job in moving the company toward needed reforms and accountability, Larsen said. However, Congress is still working to understand where Gunn is taking the company. This has made it more difficult to get an adequate Amtrak appropriation through the House. (Editor's note: the lame duck Congressional session in November failed to pass any of the outstanding appropriation bills, including transportation. Congress punted to the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress by adopting a continuing resolution to January 11. It funds Amtrak at just over \$1 bill., under the \$1.2 bill. Gunn says he needs for

2003.) Larsen does feel a majority in Congress want intercity passenger rail service; they just can't agree on how to fund it and who should operate it. The White House, on the other hand, continues to insist on vague reforms, some of which are undoable or not feasible.

When asked about states like Montana, with its lone train, the *Empire Builder*, Larsen said some in Congress think long distance trains are the biggest money losers. WashARP is concerned about this allegation, (See **Larsen**, page 5)

## Amtrak's new state partnership model: it looks a lot like Washington state's

Gil Mallery, now Amtrak's vice president of Planning and Business Development, was one of the featured speakers at the NARP Board of Directors meeting held in Emeryville, CA Oct. 18-19.

(Where's Emeryville, you say? It's a small former industrial community sandwiched between Oakland and Berkeley that has remade itself into a major office and retail center. It's situated right at the east end of the San Francisco Bay bridge. The city also has recently constructed a major Amtrak station now served by 34 trains a day and is the transfer point for connecting buses to and from San Francisco.)

Gil showed us the short version of what Amtrak is presenting to its state partners. Amtrak plans to standardize its relationship with the states. Right now some states pay less than half the operating losses for their corridor services while other states (Washington, Oregon, California, Oklahoma and Maine) pay much closer to 100% of the operating costs. Although states like Vermont, New York, Michigan and Illinois aren't too happy about this new path they must proceed down, it sounds as if they will accept Amtrak's proposal, even as most states struggle with budget deficits.

The proposal, which is still evolving, would maintain the long distance trains (what NARP is now referring to as the national network trains) as the responsibility of the federal government, both for operations and capital investment. Amtrak also wants to remove the long distance trains from the on-going debate about need and costs. The funding for the long distance trains is, in the words of the Inspector General, "chump change" when compared to the investment needed to develop high speed corridors throughout the country. (See **Partnership**, page 4)



Congressman Rick Larsen, left, with WashARP Executive Director Lloyd Flem at the Oct. WashARP meeting in Everett. Lloyd had just presented the congressman with a railroad hat.

Photo by Zack Willhoite



*From the  
Executive  
Director's Desk  
by  
Lloyd H. Flem*

**So where  
do we go  
from here?;  
Thanks to  
two Great  
Ladies!**

Strictly from the viewpoint of passenger rail advocacy in Washington state, Election 2002 was not particularly positive. While there are now as many Republican US Senate supporters of federal investment in passenger rail as before the election—perhaps more, as new R senators from Texas and Minnesota are reported to be sympathetic—the new Republican Senate majority means key committee chairmanships will switch from pro-passenger rail Patty Murray (D-WA) and Fritz Hollings (D-SC) to far less supportive Richard Shelby (R-AL) and John McCain (R-AZ). Silver linings may be Murray's reported good working relationship with Shelby, and McCain's many iconoclastic views (some of which your Exec Dir appreciates!) may keep him from focusing too much energy in opposition to Amtrak. A little caveat here: many in Congress are more positive to the concept of "passenger rail" than they are to the corporate Amtrak. And Amtrak President David Gunn has significantly helped repair the beleaguered railroad's image in DeeCee, including in the mind of John McCain. However, the new Republican Senate majority could mean that body might be less likely to fund Amtrak or other domestic programs as readily as did the D-controlled Senate. But the change from November 2002 is no "mandate"; it is but a modest incremental difference in a couple of states. Again, committee chairmanships are now what merit our concern.

The increase of a few seats for the pre-existing Republican House majority will probably have little or no effect on House rail policy or funding. Key Republican chairs and Democratic ranking members will remain. Alaska's Don Young (pro-rail, anti-Amtrak) will chair and Minnesota's Jim Oberstar will stay as ranking Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Closely allied with Oberstar on the T and I committee are our 2nd and 3rd District Congressmen Rick Larsen (Arlington) and Brian Baird (Vancouver), both of whom have been featured guests at WashARP meetings

in the last 13 months and are good supporters of multimodal transportation.

All nine of our US House delegation were easily reelected. WashARP members must continue to communicate with these nine "winners," reminding them that federal investment in passenger rail must continue for the well-being of our country. They can all take the very affirmative experience of our state's rail program back to DeeCee and work for federal bucks to match that which we have accomplished Back Home.

Like the US Senate, the state Senate underwent a slight change, switching in Olympia from 25 D-24 R to 25 R-24 D. Again, the important change is in the chair of the key committee, from a pro-rail D to an amiable R who, symbolically, changed the name of this committee from Senate Transportation to Senate Highways and Transportation. Like Murray's relationship with Shelby, key state Senate Democrats feel they can work with the new GOP chair. And like in the US Senate, there are a number of state Senate Rs quite supportive of rail investments.

The Washington House will have a slightly larger Democratic majority than in the 2001-02 session. There will be changes in the House Transportation committee, as both the chair, Ruth Fisher (D-Tacoma), and the ranking minority member, Maryann Mitchell (R-Federal Way), will be voluntarily retiring from the Legislature at this year's end. Those mentioned as probable chair and ranking member for 2003 are men (men, this time) with whom WashARP has excellent rapport and who have consistently taken positions favorable to state rail investments. It has also been suggested that several newly-elected House members are less ideological than some in recent years, and that perhaps a greater degree of collegiality may again be present in Olympia. (Or is this wishful thinking on my part?)

Difficult to see silver linings in the overwhelming defeat of Referendum 51 or the narrow but exasperating victory of I-776. Had R-51 lost a close race, I was prepared to grump at us, the rail community, for not sufficiently getting the word out that rail was an important part of the package. As it was, even if we'd been able to turn around, say three percent of the voters—the most we could reasonably hope might be

moved by the rail issue alone—the overall R-51 loss would have only been marginally less devastating. Now, all transportation advocates, which includes most of the state's responsible leaders of all political stripe, need to regroup. I am one with most of the state's business leaders and editors in agreeing that it is the job of the Legislature to make tough decisions such as transportation funding. We are a constitutional republic, not (one hopes!) a populist mobocracy that government by massed plebiscite is unfortunately becoming. WashARP and our rail allies need to make certain that rail is not "forgotten" when transportation policy and funding are being considered. Rail must have a seat at the state transportation table. I see this as my foremost job in the 2003 Legislative session.

The I-776 victory is the prime example of populism run amuck. While those voters in the Sound Transit district voted 56% **against** I-776 and thus supported continuation of fees that they alone are paying for their transportation projects, voters in most of the rest of the state, who were not paying these taxes or the \$15 road fee collected only in four counties, voted to remove them! I am utterly convinced that the citizens of Winlock, Walla Walla, and Washtucna did not think, "Aha, I don't want King, Pierce, Snohomish and Douglas counties to be able to fund local transit and road projects of their choice, so I'm voting for I-776!" Doubtless most yes voters simply thought they were again reducing their vehicle license tabs to thirty bucks. (Even though, except in the three big Puget Sound counties and little Douglas County, they were at thirty anyway!) This sets a terrible precedent. Winlock, Walla Walla and Washtucna could choose to fund better fire protection, and if someone from these communities, or anywhere, didn't like the locational choices of the fire stations, they could in theory organize a statewide initiative to overturn the will of any of the three "W" communities! Absurd? So is I-776! I trust the thing will be found unconstitutional.

In WashARP's name, I will continue to work with many and varied allies to try to mitigate some of the damage done by these populist-anarchists and to help maintain and build statewide transportation infrastructure that includes rail as an important component. (See **Lloyd**, page 5)



# The View Down the

## Tracks =====

with Jim Cusick

### Sounder – Everett

Spring has sprung, the grass has riz, I wonder where baseball is?

Ah, spring. Nothing like taking long walks and breathing in those favorite smells. The smell of creosote down by the platform at Edmonds station, the smell of the low tide, the smell of garlic. Okay, so maybe it's only us old timers that fondly remember the smell of wood ties at the railroad station, which Edmonds still has right now. Many people also love that smell when it's low tide at Brackett's Landing. With baseball season, I'm figuring we'll be adding garlic to that.

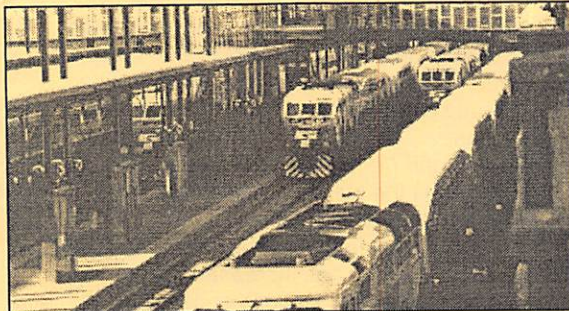
Uh oh, there he goes again! Where does he come up with this stuff? Okay, I'm letting my imagination go...but only a little bit. I was just surmising what will be on the menu at the "Take me out to the ballgame" Everett-Edmonds Mariners service kickoff on Sunday April 18, 10 a.m. at Everett Station. Hey, for the Seahawks "Tailgate Party" we were eating Kielbasa and potato salad at 10 am, so how far of a stretch is it to expect Garlic Fries. Barrels and barrels of Garlic Fries! Hey, if Sound Transit has any problem with people knowing when and if the train will be coming, they will surely know that it has passed! Great advertising, garlic is. Don't laugh, when I went down to the grand opening of the Portland Streetcar, I was drawn into the pizzeria at one of the stations because of that wonderful smell while waiting to ride.

So without garlic, how many riders do make use of the new Everett-Edmonds-Seattle service? Well, probably a bit more than is apparent from the official numbers. How would I know this? Because I make the attempt whenever I can to inform my friends and co-workers that the train is convenient and available. One friend, who has never commuted by train, now loves it. Her only problem is that the morning and evening times are too close to each other, so she can only make use of the service on certain days of the week. There are probably many who are in her position, and are awaiting the addition of the second (and third and fourth) round trip.

In the meantime, I would suggest that Sound Transit try to nudge the morning and evening times just a bit, say 15 minutes on each end. The times work well enough now for people whose work is next to King Street Station, but many commuters work farther away, and it's a (worthy) struggle to ride the train, but ride it they do. You might just see a jump in average daily ridership from that modification to the schedule alone.

### That Sinking Feeling.

Bad news! Sounder can't get to Freighthouse Square because of a problem with the earthwork under the



An impressive lineup of trains appears at King St. Station each weekday evening by about 4:30. Four sets of Sounder equipment are staged in the station and on the mainline awaiting the one Everett and three Tacoma departures. To the immediate left of the Sounder trains is Amtrak's *Empire Builder*. Beyond the *Builder* are two *Cascades* trainsets awaiting departures for Bellingham and Eugene. On this March 19 evening, BNSF business cars and Holland America's McKinley Explorer domes are also resting at the station. Between 4:45 and 5:35 there are seven trains departing King St. Station.

Photo by Jim Hamre

newly constructed connection between BNSF and Tacoma Rail. It appears the settling is more than they expected.

Time for Sound Transit to call Hanz and Franz to "pump YOU up!" Hanz and Franz, the concrete pumping company, that is! Never mind that the retaining walls have that slight saggy look, just do some healthy compaction grouting in the affected areas, and tell everyone that it was designed by Antonio Gaudi.

No problem.

All kidding aside, the key to fixing this isn't a technical issue, it's all political. The Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* had some front page fodder for the Monday March 22, 2004 edition and subsequent editorials, but the key for Sound Transit to fix this is to FIX IT! Don't do a lot of arguing about who's to blame, just get it fixed and get the service back to

Freighthouse Square as soon as possible. It's not like this type of thing is unique, it's just that the longer the problem hangs around, the more fuel there is for our headline seeking press to pursue. They need more important news to report, so don't make their job too easy. Good news is the service should be returning to Freighthouse Square soon. Don't kid yourself either about how it's unique to Sound Transit (or government in general) to be dealing with these particular issues. I'm sure many of you in private industry have witnessed the same problems with large projects and I personally have seen worse.

### Free parking in Edmonds?

Along with my toll road scheme of prior columns, I think I'll get into a real money-maker, Parking Lots! With the opening of the Edmonds Sounder station, Diamond Parking is making more money off that lot than ever. What's that, you say? Isn't parking free at Sounder lots? Well, yes, it's free for the Sounder riders but that's because Sound Transit has leased 100 or so spaces from Diamond. (Remember, free for the riders of the Sounder service, not free for anyone else. And yes, they are checking!) However, they didn't go for the lakefront spots. About 70 riders daily use the Edmonds station, and about 10 of them come directly off the ferry. The station has a fairly wide draw, so with some more advertising and more convenient scheduling, this station will be quite popular.

### Eastside Extra \$\$

Well, as I've reported before here, because of sub-area equity, the Eastside sub-area has excess funds, now totaling over \$30 million. I can think of plenty of things to do with the money. In particular, fix up the Woodinville subdivision for a bare bones commuter service between Snohomish and Tukwila (maybe even a direct run to Tacoma). Of course, it will take more than that, but at the very least, the rolling stock could be bought or leased from such manufacturers as Colorado Railcar or Seimens, both making FRA compliant trainsets now. In fact, later in the year Seimens will have a demonstrator in the area. Simple platforms could be built for an estimated \$500,000 a piece (See **Cusick**, page 5)



## Meetings, from page 1

being socially responsible. On transportation, Rossi said we need many modes to meet all our needs. We have to have a balanced approach that is reasonable, rational and responsible. He commented that public transportation is not sufficiently interconnected in downtown Seattle and that the mayor does not have full control over transportation in his city. Rossi noted that he has never been on an Amtrak train and said, "I need to do that." He asked WashARP to help educate him on state rail issues. Lloyd Flem and Tony Trifiletti volunteered to meet with Rossi and provide him with information on our state rail system, both passenger and freight.

### March 20 - Tacoma

Another excellent membership meeting, joining NARP Region 8, MTWYarp, AORTA (Assoc. of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates) and WashARP, was attended by about 90 people in Tacoma on Mar. 20.

Our first speaker was Joe McHugh, Amtrak Vice President of Government Affairs. He began by stating that rail advocates like us have an ability to convince state and federal legislators about the importance of a national passenger rail system that Amtrak itself cannot always do. McHugh praised NARP Executive Director Ross Capon and his staff for the tireless work they do in DC promoting our cause.

McHugh talked about the positive changes in management and accountability that David Gunn has brought to Amtrak. He said Gunn's arrival has led to the best days the company has had. Gunn has reduced the layers of bureaucracy and management; gotten control of the budgeting process, which is key to managing any organization; carried forward \$167 mill. from FY 03 to 04 (Amtrak had had to borrow money to make it to the end of the year in several previous years); reduced the number of employees by 3500 (including 1500 from the Boston commuter rail contract which Amtrak did not bid on again); improved the maintenance and heavy overhaul cycles of all equipment; and is repairing damaged cars that have sometimes been parked for years.

Amtrak expects to carry 25 mill. passengers this year, up 1 mill. from 2003's record. Amtrak is the seventh largest intercity passenger carrier in the US. Revenues are up 3.5% over last year. McHugh also noted that Amtrak sold five miles of old unneeded rail equipment last year!

On the legislative side, McHugh said it's unlikely there will be a highway/transit or Amtrak reauthorization this year. Amtrak is concentrating on the appropriations process. Amtrak has requested \$1.8 bill. for FY 2005: \$866 mill. for capital, \$570 mill. for operations, \$262 mill. for debt service, and \$100 mill. for mandatory payments.

Amtrak's 2005-2009 strategic plan up-



Speakers at our Tacoma meeting included, from the left, Amtrak's Joe McHugh, BNSF's Walt Smith and Sound Transit's Joni Earl.

Photos by Jim Hamre

date will be released soon. It will call for incremental corridor improvements based on what the various states want to do in the five year period. McHugh cited our Cascades corridor as one of three or four that will be highlighted in the plan. Ken Uznanski, manager of WSDOT's Rail Office, recently made an impressive presentation on Washington's future corridor plans. Our state has the key ingredients for expansion: already established service, the state has plans ready to go, a good host railroad in BNSF, and money to fund projects (of course, all the states still await a partnership with the federal government).

McHugh also touched on the topic of rail security. Amtrak has increased police presence in major stations and is working with the Transportation Security Administration on issues. Congress has thus far provided little funding for rail security while approving billions of dollars for airline and airport security.

Our next speaker was Walt Smith, Director of Engineering and Construction for BNSF. Smith has spent the last 12 years of his BNSF career working on passenger rail related engineering projects. He is currently managing the track improvements BNSF is doing between Everett and Tacoma to accommodate increased Sounder and Amtrak service in the years to come. Smith said we are entering a new age of passenger rail travel with the continuing growth in commuter and corridor service. He noted the major railroads are still in the passenger business, but this time with partners such as Amtrak, Sound Transit and states like Oregon and Washington.

Smith explained BNSF's five passenger rail principals:

- The railroad is willing to cooperate with others to operate passenger trains on its tracks.
- Capacity improvements must be made to mitigate any negative effects on its freight service.
- BNSF will retain operational control of the railroad.
- Accurate modeling of impacts is a must.
- BNSF cannot assume any additional liability.

As for track improvements needed between Seattle and Everett, Smith stated that projects will be prioritized by which ones can get permits more quickly. Unstable bluffs and the need to fill small areas of

Puget Sound to accommodate installation of a second main track in some areas make this a complicated project.

Joni Earl, CEO of Sound Transit, was our third speaker. Chuck Mott introduced Joni as the heroine of Sound Transit. She came to an agency about to collapse from all its problems, turned it around and now has it doing what the taxpayers expected to see done.

Earl noted that Sound Transit's three services, Region Express buses,

Souder commuter rail and Tacoma Link light rail handled 8.4 mill. boardings in 2003. The agency is currently constructing 39 capital projects, including significant parts of Central Link light rail in Seattle.

Sound Transit will ultimately invest \$638 mill. with BNSF between Everett and Lakewood for infrastructure improvements to accommodate freight, Sounder and Amtrak. Earl addressed the issue with earth settlement on the connection built between BNSF and Tacoma Rail. Sounder uses the connection to get to the Freighthouse Square station. It was taken out of service on Jan. 21 due to continuing settlement and trains are again using the temporary platform near the Amtrak station. Testing and analysis has been ongoing and Earl said several breakthrough meetings with all parties involved took place in mid-March. She hopes to restore Sounder service to Freighthouse Square by late April.

Earl addressed several other Sounder issues the audience raised. Parking lots at the Puyallup and Sumner stations are near capacity with only three roundtrips a day. There is no funding in ST's phase I, but money for parking garages could come from RTID or an ST phase II. Though Sound Transit has the right to operate up to 30 round-trips a day between Seattle and Tacoma, funding for additional BNSF track improvements must first be secured. To go beyond four round-trips a day between Everett and Seattle would require construction of a third main track, a very difficult proposition along Puget Sound. The request for proposals for the Tacoma-Lakewood Sounder extension will go out shortly. Service startup is four year away. Sound Transit is having conversations with Amtrak about allowing ST pass holders to ride Amtrak trains within the Sounder service area. This program has been very successful in the Los Angeles area.

George Chilson, NARP western vice president, provided an update on NARP with emphasis on what the western directors have been doing to improve both NARP and intercity passenger rail service.

State updates were given by Jim Green (MT), Dave Jannuzzi (OR) and Lloyd Flem (WA).

The four people elected from Region 8 to the NARP board are Bob Krebs (OR), Chuck Mott (WA), Art Poole (OR) and Jim Hamre (WA).



# The View Down the Tracks

with Jim Cusick

So, what's the first word you think of when you see a chart or a graph?

Is it "LIE"?

Unfortunately nowadays, that is all too true.

Those of you who attended the October meeting in Everett were able to see an example of data being distorted by graphical "artistic license." This was presented by the Puget Sound Regional Council in a simple graph created to show the urgency of our transportation needs due to rate of growth in population. It was an unfortunate distortion, since the real data, which was also displayed on the graph itself, was still convincing. It only served to add to the distrust of government. Two years ago, this same graphic was presented at a meeting of the I-405 Corridor Program Citizens Committee. This distortion was pointed out then and it still made it into print media two years later, which compounded the problem by now telling the same lie again to all the readers of that day's Seattle Times (Sunday, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> print copy).

What can you do to defend yourself from these subtle attempts to influence your decision? Well, here's another book I recommend looking at. (This time, I bought myself a copy.)

The title is "The Visual Display of Quantitative Information," by Edward R. Tufte. Everyone in this organization should look at this book, and if you're like me, the cover itself will be enough to convince you of its value.

Why are graphics used to present statistical data? Unfortunately, an all too common belief has been the assumption that "data graphics were mainly devices for showing the obvious to the ignorant." This has brought about a very interesting phenomenon, exacerbated by the proliferation of computers: "Chartjunk."

What has happened over the years is that people thought the general public could only digest statistical data if the graphics were "alive." Since the 1930s, it's been mainly the job of the Art Department to present the data to the public, who was generally considered too naïve to understand the raw data.

Here are a few of the important points I've picked up from reading this

book.

1) Chartjunk. Now that even "John Q. Public" can create graphics from their spreadsheet data, there is an even greater proliferation of clutter to try to see through. Just because the computer program has that feature doesn't mean it's a good idea to use it. If you see a graphic that is just plain hard to read, then why bother taking a long time to decipher it? What's the use of having the graph?

2) Graphics are revealing. Try the following experiment if you have a spreadsheet program with graphing capabilities. I suppose you could plot it on graph paper if you're energetic enough. Create 4 tables. The data for the tables are in (x,y) format, and there are 11 rows in each table:

- (1) 10.0,8.04; 8.0,6.95; 13.0,7.58; 9.0,8.81; 11.0,8.33; 14.0,9.96; 6.0,7.24; 4.0,4.26; 12.0,10.84; 7.0,4.82; 5.0,5.68
- (2) 10.0,9.14; 8.0,8.14; 13.0,8.74; 9.0,8.77; 11.0, 9.26; 14.0, 8.10; 6.0,6.13; 4.0,3.10; 12.0,9.13; 7.0,7.26; 5.0,4.74
- (3) 10.0,7.46; 8.0,6.77; 13.0,12.74; 9.0,7.11; 11.0,7.81; 14.0,8.84; 6.0,6.08; 4.0,5.39; 12.0,8.15; 7.0,6.42; 5.0,5.73
- (4) 8.0,6.58; 8.0,5.76; 8.0,7.71; 8.0,8.84; 8.0,8.47; 8.0,7.04; 8.0,5.25; 19.0,12.50; 8.0,5.56; 8.0,7.91; 8.0,6.89

Pick the "scatter plot" graph, and compare the results. You'll be surprised how much more a graphic reveals than is apparent in the raw data. Graphics are Great!

3) Measure the graph. This works when you have a reasonably simple graph whose area can be measured. This is what Edward Tufte refers to as the "Lie Factor." Simply put:

$$\text{Lie Factor} = \frac{\text{Size of effect shown in graphic}}{\text{Size of effect in data}}$$

If the value of one bar in a bar graph is twice the value of the other one, then the size of the bar in the graph should have exactly the same ratio and one should be twice as big as the other.

4) Beware of fake perspective. This is the art department at work again. I personally tend to dismiss the graph if it seems to look too "cute."

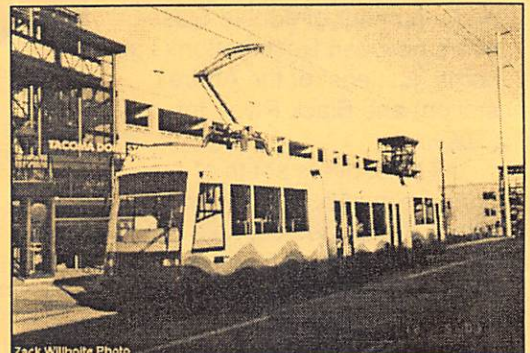
5) What is being compared? Remember, you're trying to find a pattern in the graphical data so you have to know what makes up the comparison. You should easily be able to understand what is being represented, and you also should be sure that the same limits are being compared. In other

words, if you're comparing changes over a period of time, make sure the same time is being represented for both inputs. Beware of labels such as "projected" on one input, but not another. Also be sure the data is in context. You should ask the question, "What is the data for the preceding segment; what follows?"

If you are curious about why the cover of this book makes it a requirement for any member of WashARP to read, heck, to have on their coffee table, well...you'll just have to check out the book at the library. You probably could see it if you're connected to the Internet and looked it up on Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble.

Next newsletter, I'm turning over a new leaf. No more complaining. No more whining. Next year, I'll share upbeat news. Tacoma Link will be coming on-line (see below). Sounder upgrades will be progressing. There will be lots to be happy about. Right?

RIGHT!!!!



Zack Willhoite Photo

Testing of Tacoma Link light rail vehicles started the week of Dec. 1. Right now testing is being conducted on a completed section of track on E. 25<sup>th</sup> St. between the car barn and Pacific Ave. As addition track work is completed, testing will expand to Pacific Ave. and Commerce St. Sound Transit is warning motorists and pedestrians to be aware that the cars may be operating along the line weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Planned start of service for the 1.6 mile feeder line between downtown Tacoma and the Tacoma Dome station is scheduled for Labor Day 2003. The Czech Republic-built cars are 66 feet long, 8.1 feet wide and weigh 61,729 pounds. They use overhead 750 volts DC for power. ST purchased three cars for about \$9 mill. as an add-on to Portland's order. Each car holds 30 seated and 26 standing passengers and is air conditioned. The low-floor design makes for easy boarding. A bridgeplate can slide out for easy boarding of passengers with wheelchairs and strollers. Photo by Zack Willhoite



## Sounder track and signal improvements update

Roger Jacobsen from BNSF was the speaker at the Nov. 21 Commuter Rail Section meeting at Andy's Diner. He is managing the infrastructure improvements needed to expand Sounder and Amtrak service between Tacoma and Seattle. He comes from Chicago where he was a trainmaster before moving over to the Metra commuter rail operation. As a trainmaster, Jacobsen felt commuter trains were just in the way of his freight trains. After moving to commuter rail he came to appreciate its value, particularly the capital improvements it helps to finance. He says he jumped at the chance to come here to work on a new commuter rail startup.

Phase 1 of the improvements is 50% complete. This involves installation of Centralized Traffic Control (CTC), a more advanced signal system than the existing Automatic Block Signals (ABS), and a number of double crossovers between Reservation (Tacoma, just east of the Amtrak station) and Black River Jct. (Tukwila).

All crossovers south of Auburn are installed. They are built with #24 switches capable of being traversed at 50 mph. Crossover installation north of Auburn is now underway.

The CTC is being installed on a fiber optic backbone. The cable will also carry an ST communications system to provide information to displays at the Sounder stations. BNSF began cutting in the CTC on Dec. 8 at Reservation. Phase 1 work will be fully completed by Sept. 2003.

Phase 2 is still being negotiated and is in design. It would add track capacity beyond Reservation into the BNSF yard in Tacoma. Although Sounder trains will leave the BNSF mainline at Reservation to use the Tacoma Rail tracks to the Tacoma Dome Station, the railroad needs the added capacity to stage trains before they move beyond Reservation. Also included is a third main track south of King St. Station (KSS) and relocation of the freight mains to the east side of the Amtrak maintenance base; electric switches at the south end of KSS; and CTC between

Black River Jct. and KSS. Phase 2 is to be completed in early 2005, though the KSS electric switches (needed decades ago) will be operational by late 2003. Completion of Phase 2 will allow nine Sounder round-trips a day between Tacoma and Seattle.

Phase 3, with funding and completion still uncertain due to I-695 budget cuts eliminating part of WSDOT's contribution, would add a third main track in Auburn to provide more flexibility at the junction with the Stampede Pass line, and untangle the BNSF/UP opera-



Zack Willhoite Photo

A Sounder Seahawks special loads passengers in Puyallup. The special Seahawks engine wrap is a joint marketing effort between Sound Transit and the Seahawks. The Seahawks trains operate for every Sunday afternoon home game. The service has been so successful that ST is now operating two roundtrips for each game; the first train of the season, with about 950 seats, carried almost 1700 passengers each way. The agency will experiment with midday service during the Christmas and New Year's holidays. On Dec. 23, 24, 26, 27, 30 and 31, and on Jan. 2 and 3 a train will depart from Tacoma at 10:45 a.m. and from Seattle at 1:55 p.m. All intermediate stops will be made. On these days the 6:45 a.m. from Tacoma and the 5:10 p.m. from Seattle will not operate.

Photo by Zack Willhoite

tions between Black River Jct. and Argo yard. The two railroads cross over each other at grade twice in this stretch. As an interim step, BNSF will assume dispatching control of this section in January. UP dispatching has not always favored Amtrak and Sounder trains as required by law.

On Seattle-Everett, Jacobsen stated the contract with ST is still in high-level negotiations. The big issue is how to mitigate the BNSF's desire to grade for a future third main track. The would require some filling of the shoreline along sections of Puget Sound. He pointed out that the shoreline was forever altered when the seawall for the original line was constructed over 100 years ago.

(Reporting by Jim Cusick and Zack Willhoite.)

## Partnership, from page 1

For corridor trains, the states would cover 100% of the operating loss but only 20% of capital investment. The federal government would be responsible for the other 80%, just as with the highway program. Some corridor trains that were part of the original 1971 Amtrak system and are now fully covered by Amtrak would also become the funding responsibility of the states. This applies to one Seattle-Portland round-trip. However, Amtrak will no longer charge the states corporate overhead costs (about 9% of today's payments) or depreciation and interest on assets (about 23%).

For Washington it would nearly be a wash.

Beyond the funding changes, which Mallery termed "absolutely critical" to Amtrak's survival, the company realizes it must become more transparent and credible in the eyes of the states. Gunn has taken steps to make Amtrak's financial system more understandable.

Mallery concluded by saying Amtrak must convince the states to embrace the plan as they are the ones that must sell it to Congress.

Other meeting highlights included presentations by Jeff Morales, director of California DOT; Dan Leavitt, executive director of the California High Speed Rail Authority; and Robin Stimson, marketing director for business development at Siemens Transportation.

Courtesy of Gene Skoropowski, NARP director and manager of the Bay Area-Sacramento *Capital Corridor*, the meeting attendees and guests were treated to a train ride to Sacramento for a reception at the magnificent California State Railroad Museum. At the reception, we surprised Doras Briggs, octogenarian NARP director and a dynamo when it comes to supporting passenger rail, with NARP's Golden Spike Award. Doras has been instrumental in pushing the American Assoc. of Retired Persons, one of the most powerful lobbying groups in the country, to the brink of adding passenger rail service to its national agenda. She is also now a citizen of Emeryville, having purchased a condo next door to the Emeryville train station where she'll be able to keep a close eye on Amtrak happenings.

## Amtrak moves to new Everett station

On Nov. 12, Amtrak moved from the Bond St. Station to the new Everett intermodal station. Several WashARPer rode the first train to stop, including Everett Historical Commission member Mark Garcia. He also rode the last train to depart the old station the evening before. A public ceremony was held that day to coincide with the evening arrival of the *Empire Builder*.



**Larsen**, from page 1

propagated by many foes of passenger rail. It always needs a vigorous rebuttal. When you analyze all the numbers, for the most part, the long distance trains are no worse than the corridor trains. David Gunn believes this, which is why he said the entire system would have had to shut down if Congress had not provided Amtrak with \$200 mill. in additional funding in June.

WashARP thanks Congressman Larsen for speaking to us and will continue working with him and other key member of our Congressional delegation on passenger rail issues.

**Lloyd**, from page 2

I'll need the help of many WashARP members. As always, communication with legislators, members of Congress, editors, and business, labor and community leaders is essential. Some of you do good work in this regard. More of you must.

Though a close call, the voters of Seattle chose to build an extended monorail system. While some steel rail advocates have mixed feelings concerning monorail technology, and unfortunate little verbal spats occurred between some monorail and LRT supporters, I say sincere congratulations to the dedicated monorail advocates! We who support any and all forms of multimodal and high-capacity transportation should support any and all, even if some are not our "favorite."



A bit of good news: America's most respected rail journalist, Don Phillips, in the 28 November Washington Post, had a feature article lavish in praise of our Amtrak Cascades passenger trains in all their detail. This praise echoed that of new Amtrak Boss David Gunn, following his Autumn visit here. The Cascades, along with California's Capitol Corridor, brilliantly managed by Eugene Skoropowski (a long-time rail advocate and friend of several WashARP members), and the Downeaster (Boston to Portland) are *the* American intercity passenger rail success stories of the past several years. This news must be shared

widely and loudly throughout our state!

I happily noted that radio and TV, when discussing Thanksgiving travel this year, gave near-equal air time to rail, not just the ubiquitous fly-drive. Videos of trains and train stations, as well as airports and highways, were evident. Radio KIRO (710 AM) had a short, extremely positive report on Amtrak travel over Thanksgiving from their man Harmon Shay (aka Rocky Shay, WashARP's satin-voiced secretary!). Good show, Rock!

And Centralia continues their efforts to rebuild their community around a rail theme. This year Santa Claus arrived on Saturday 30 November by Amtrak train and that entire morning a community breakfast was served at the restored (1912 NP) Amtrak station.



WashARP's best wishes to Maryann Mitchell, retiring ranking member of the House Transportation committee. Representative Mitchell consistently supported programs of balanced multimodal transportation for our state, definitely including the rail programs. Republican Mitchell worked closely and cooperatively with her Democratic counterpart in the House, Ruth Fisher. Always a gracious person, Maryann was devoted to getting the job done for our state, rather than the all-too-common partisan game playing. She led those House Republicans who retained the traditional view that it is the Legislature's job to make tough decisions in Olympia. She earned and has retained the respect of the transportation advocacy community of our state. As I write this (Dec. 5), Maryann is gravely ill. Our prayers to her and her family. Godspeed, Mrs. Mitchell!

While several state legislators in the past fifteen years have done excellent work in behalf of state rail programs, none has reached the stature of a delightfully candid senior Democrat from Tacoma, Ruth Fisher. Ruth, who is also retiring from the Legislature, is truly the Legislature's Mom of the Amtrak Cascades, the Sounder commuter train, and better transit service throughout the state. While a staunch member of the Democratic party, Repre-

sentative Fisher did not hesitate to work with Republicans who believed in better and balanced transportation for Washington. Likewise, Ruth would not excuse what she (and virtually always, WashARP as well) considered errors of commission or omission by some fellow Democrats. Among my best memories from working The Hill in Olympia were Ruth's chairing of committee meetings. Her wisdom and wit added both perspective and a bit of spice to what could be tough, but important, hearings and meetings. I had the privilege of meeting with Ruth many times, where I sought and received good counsel on forwarding the rail cause within Washington. Ruth has just received WashARP's Tom Martin award for extraordinary service to passenger rail (See page 6). Cannot conceive of one more worthy.

Many thanks from WashARP to two fine ladies.

**Amtrak West Roundup**

**Amtrak Cascades ridership** in Sept. 2002 was up 1.8% over Sept. 2001 to 44,425. Total NW Corridor ridership was down, however, 1.3% to 51,513. In Oct. Cascades ridership was off only 0.1% over 2001 to 38,505; total corridor ridership dipped 0.3% to 45,499...**Preliminary Thanksgiving weekend numbers** show 169 fewer passengers Wednesday Nov. 27 through Sunday Dec. 1 despite Amtrak running only two extra roundtrips instead of the four of past years. The extra train's schedule was adjusted to better fit when people want to travel. It operated on Wednesday and Sunday, leaving Seattle at 2 p.m. and Portland at 7:00 p.m....**Empire Builder with no coaches?** This happened on the Portland section of the train. Amtrak had cut off one of the two coaches because of light ridership. Then for the Nov. 22 departure, the lone coach was bad ordered for mechanical problems. Amtrak was forced to cram all the coach passengers into the lounge car until Spokane where they could be moved to the Seattle section's coaches. Connecting *Starlight* passengers has to endure an all day bus ride from Klamath Falls to Spokane due to lack of capacity.

**WashARP Officers**

Chuck Mott, Mt. Vernon..Chairman .....	360 422-5323 ...	chuckmott@earthlink.net
Tony Trifiletti, Shoreline..President .....	206 440-9451 ...	tonytrif@msn.com
James Neal, Ephrata..VP-East.....	509 754-3114 ...	rjneal@bentonrea.com
Rocky Shay, Federal Way..Secretary .....	253 925-2085 ...	WasharpSecretary@cs.com
Bob Lawrence, Mill Creek..Treasurer.....	425 939-9369 ...	rplaw88@hotmail.com
Jim Cusick, Bothell..VP-Commuter Rail.....	425 481-2322 ...	jc.cusick@gte.net
Bob Lawrence, Mill Creek..VP-Membership...	425 939-9369 ...	rplaw88@hotmail.com
Pat Halstead, Olympia..VP-Public Affairs...	360 786-1818 ...	halsteadpat@netscape.net
John Carlin, Edmonds VP-Finance .....	425 778-4529 ...	johnecarlin@attbi.com
Jim Hamre, Puyallup..Newsletter Editor .....	253 848-2473 ...	jimhamre@mindspring.com
Warren Yee, Seattle..Internet Webmaster .....	206 723-0259 ...	wye@earthlink.net
Lloyd Flem, Chehalis..Executive Director...	360 943-8333 ..	washarp@olywa.net
Office FAX.....	360 943-0136	
Address.....	2508 Columbia St SW, Olympia 98501	

All are evening numbers, except Lloyd's, which is available 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily.

**Important Addresses and Phone Numbers**

U. S. House of Representatives: Washington, DC 20515
U. S. Senate: Washington, DC 20510
Capitol Switchboard (all members): 202 224-3121
State Legislature: State Capitol, Olympia 98504
Hotline for leaving messages: 800 562-6000
Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245
WashARP e-mail: washarp@scn.org
WashARP: www.trainweb.com/washarp
NARP: www.narprail.org
NARP Hotline: www.narprail.org/hot.htm
Amtrak: www.amtrak.com
Amtrak Cascades: www.amtrakcascades.com
Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org



# WashARP News

**January 11:** WashARP meeting at 12:45 p.m. at Andy's Diner, 2963 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Seattle (just north of Spokane St).

**January 16:** Commuter Rail Section meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Andy's Diner, 2963 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Seattle.

**February 8:** WashARP meeting at 12:45 p.m. at Andy's Diner, 2963 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Seattle

An election for the 2003-04 WashARP board of directors was held at the Nov. 9 meeting from among the eligible candidates. Members of the new board of directors are:

- Stuart Adams, Bellevue
- Jim Cusick, Bothell
- Jim Hamre, Puyallup
- Noel Hancock, Pacific
- Bob Lawrence, Mill Creek
- Jim Longley, Olympia
- Chuck Mott, Mt. Vernon
- Hans Mueller, Seattle
- Jim Neal, Ephrata
- Paul Scott, Davenport
- Rocky Shay, Federal Way
- Eleanor Stewart, Seattle
- J. Craig Thorpe, Bellevue
- Tony Trifiletti, Shoreline
- Warren Yee, Seattle

Officers will be elected at the Jan. 11 meeting in Seattle.

In addition to the above, planned regular meeting dates and cities for the rest of 2003 were also set at the Nov. 9 meeting:

- March 8: Bellingham
- April 12: no WashARP meeting

Washington Association of Rail Passengers  
P. O. Box 70381  
Seattle, WA 98107

Return Service Requested

D/J <b>MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION</b>	
<b>RENEWAL FORM</b>	
<b>ADDRESS CHANGE</b>	
_____ Basic Membership .....	\$25.00 per year
_____ Student/Fixed Income .....	\$17.00 per year
_____ Family Membership .....	\$35.00 per year
_____ Patron .....	\$50.00 per year
_____ Extra Contribution .....	\$ _____
(always welcome and appreciated)	
Note: if you move, let us know in advance and save WashARP 75¢ for address correction service.	

April 26: joint meeting with NARP Region 8, AORTA and MTWYarp in Shelby, MT. Meeting will be between arrival of the eastbound *Empire Builder* and departure of the west-bound train. More details and a registration flyer will be in the next newsletter.

- May 10: no WashARP meeting
- June 14: Seattle
- July 12: Seattle
- August 9: Puyallup
- September 13: Kelso
- October 11: Tacoma
- November 8: Seattle
- December 6: Seattle

Exact meeting locations will be in the newsletter as each date approaches.

Planned dates for the Thursday evening Commuter Rail Section meetings in 2003 are:

- March 20      September 18
- May 15        November 20
- July 17

WashARP welcomed the following new members in Oct. and Nov.: Allen Nelson, Seattle; Hans Jack Ullman, Vancouver; Norma Fried, Port Townsend; and Lance Larabee, Yelm.

Abel Rigney of Tacoma, a long-time WashARP member, passed away in August. Mr. Rigney, a life-long resident of Pierce County, was born on Dec. 10, 1903; he would have turned 99 this month.

A reminder: if you haven't responded to our Nov. fundraising letter, it's never too late to mail in an extra contribution. These additional funds are critical to WashARP's important work on rail issues. Another way to support WashARP is to give a gift membership for the holidays. Mail us the person's name and address with your check and we'll take care of the rest.



Photo by Warren Yee

The Dec. 7 WashARP meeting, hosted by Lloyd and Darleen Flem and Susan Sauer in their Chehalis home, was a great success. Thanks to Lloyd, Darleen and Susan from the more than 40 members who were present to see WashARP present its Tom Martin Memorial Award to retiring state Representative Ruth Fisher (D-Tacoma). Above, WashARP President Tony Trifiletti presenting Ruth Fisher with her award, a plaque and handcrafted bellows designed to sound like a steam whistle. The wording on the plaque: "WashARP presents its Tom Martin Memorial Award to Representative Ruth Fisher: For many years of extraordinary service in the Washington State Legislature on behalf of passenger rail. Sincere thanks from the Washington Association of Rail Passengers. December 7, 2002." Talking about the state rail program, Ruth stated that she and Gill Mallery (when he headed WSDOT's Rail Office) put together a good program. Now we all need to lobby to keep it growing and expanding, she stated. Ruth ended her remarks with "hang in there and thank you, WashARP."

Members contributing to this newsletter include: Zack Willhoite, Lloyd Flem, Jim Cusick, Mark Garcia, Bob Lawrence, Jeff Schultz, Rocky Shay, Tony Trifiletti and Warren Yee.

<p>NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION U. S. POSTAGE PAID PUYALLUP WA 98371 PERMIT NO. 468</p>
---

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_