



The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc. (MARP) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation established in 1973 to improve passenger train service, travel conditions for passengers, and to work for the preservation of historic rail stations.

Monthly meetings are held at locations around the state. Check the website for dates and venues. The public is invited to attend.

MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2012-2014

Robert Tischbein	Chair
Larry Krieg	Vice-Chair
Dave Randall	Treasurer
Hugh Gurney	Secretary
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Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Open	West Region Chair
Rosemary Horvath	East/Central Region Chair

*The Michigan Passenger Editor and Webmaster, Larry Sobczak
ON TRACK Editor, Kay Chase*

2014 MEETINGS (tentative)

- 18 January** – Williamston Depot-Museum
- 15 February** – University of Detroit-Mercy
- 8 March** – Herrick District Library, Holland
- 5 April** – Wayne County Community College
- 10 May** – National Train Day
- 14 June** – Former GTW Depot, Lansing
- 19 July** – Traverse City
- August** – Executive Committee
- 20 September** – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- 18 October** – Grand Rapids
- November** – TBA
- December** – Executive Committee

Visit www.marp.org
Email marprail@yahoo.com

Algoma Central Railways Passenger Service Slated to End in March

Last week brought alarming news from our neighbors to the north with the sudden announcement that passenger services on the Algoma Central Railway (ACR) line will be terminated effective March 31, 2014. The line serves communities along the 300-mile route between Sault Ste. Marie and Hearst in Northern Ontario, an area with limited highway access.

Canadian National (CN) which operates the ACR advised affected communities that this decision was based on the federal government’s decision to terminate Transport Canada’s Remote Passenger Rail Services funding - \$2.2 million - for ACR passenger services. The government contends that it is not cost-effective to fund passenger railway services to communities that have year-round access to the national transportation system through other means, such as highways, and that **all official stops** along the ACR route have year round road access. In fact, the railroad serves many small communities, hunting and fishing lodges, and remote areas that do not have year-round highway access.

Because of the unexpected and summary nature of CN’s decision to terminate passenger service, Northern Ontario business and tourism interests are urging continuation of funding for one year in order to maintain service while stakeholders work to develop a plan to assure viability of the passenger and freight service into the future.

The Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT) is asking the public to assist by submitting letters of support to both Sault Ste. Marie MP Bryan Hayes (bryan.hayes@parl.gc.ca) and Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing MP Carol Hughes (carol.hughes@parl.gc.ca). CAPT asks that any communication on this matter be copied to CAPT via info@captrains.ca. Click [here](#) to learn about CAPT and link to many news articles on this issue.

If you would like to read a detailed “Briefing Note” prepared by Tom Dodds, CEO, Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation, send your request to Marprail@yahoo.com.



MARP MEMBER MEETING
Saturday 15 Feb 10am – 1pm
College of Engineering, Room 131
University of Detroit-Mercy

McNichols Campus
4001 McNichols Rd West, Detroit 48221

[MAP & Directions](#)

Dr. Leo Hanifin will speak about his work on the politics, leadership, and public perceptions of transit in the Metro Detroit region. Details on the website marp.org Or send email to marprail@yahoo.org.

MARP Members Learn of East Lansing Station Plans

Notes by Hugh Gurney

Approximately thirty members gathered at the Williamston Depot and Museum in Williamston on January 18 for the first MARP meeting of 2014. Debra Alexander, Assistant Executive Director of the Capitol Area Transportation Authority reviewed plans for the new [CATA Multimodal Station](#) which will serve Amtrak, Indian Trails, Greyhound and Megabus. Talking from a [site plan](#) handed out to all, Alexander confirmed that the present East Lansing Transportation Center will be expanded and reconfigured, and will encompass most of the area between Harrison Road on the East, the Canadian National Railroad on the North and the CSX Railroad on the South. All but one structure, including the current Amtrak station, will be demolished. The site of the one remaining building closest to the diamond could serve commuter rail on the CSX line in the future.

A successful TIGER grant of \$6.2 million will provide the majority of the funding for the \$10 million project. Much of the remaining funding comes from the in kind donation by MSU of a long term lease on the property and a grant from MDOT.

The entrance drive off Harrison Road will lead to three areas, the first being a self-paid parking lot occupying the northeast quadrant of the property. The parking lot will be divided into three areas, one for short term parking of 15-30 minutes, a second for 2-3 day parking and a third for parking up to one week.

The entrance drive also leads to a drop off loop near the main entrance to the station where passengers can be dropped off and picked up. The entrance drive also leads to the drop off and pick up area for taxis and intercity buses. The bus loading area is large enough for four buses to be loading and unloading simultaneously. Additional buses can be parked nearby.

The 8,000 square foot station is a roughly triangular structure adjacent to the CN tracks with both interior and exterior seating. The Amtrak ticket counter, office and baggage area are in the part of the station closest to tracks. The intercity bus ticket office and baggage area are on the opposite side of the building. Rest rooms and the CATA Emergency Operations Center occupy the center of the facility.

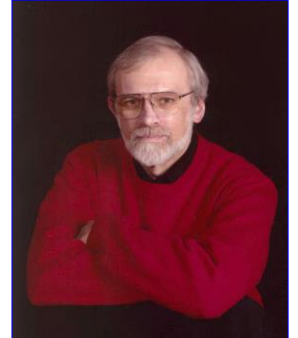
Three vestibules with limited seating will be accessible when the facility is unstaffed, however public restrooms will not be accessible at such times. A canopy around the entire structure offers additional waiting space.

(STATION continues on page 3)

Krieg Named to *TheRide* Board of Directors

At the Jan. 21, 2014 Ypsilanti Township Board of Trustees meeting, Dr. Laurence Krieg, an avid rider and student of transportation systems around the globe, was unanimously appointed to the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority's (*TheRide*) Board of Directors.

Dr. Krieg, a decorated military veteran who taught at the University of Michigan, Washtenaw Community College, and Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí in Mexico, received his PhD in Linguistics from the University of Michigan. He has used and studied transit throughout Spain, Japan, Israel, Germany, France, England, Canada, and the United States in an effort to observe and document what works and what doesn't.



Dr. Krieg said that his work on *TheRide's* Board will focus on ensuring that all citizens who need or want public transportation have access to it. "When excellent transportation is within reach of all citizens, all have the opportunity to prosper, to contribute to the economy, and to enjoy a healthy life," said Krieg. He also plans to work to provide transportation that is socially, fiscally, and environmentally sustainable; building a more desirable quality of life for all citizens in the region. "Transportation does more than get people from place to place. It shapes their lives by determining the extent of an individual's sphere of life, the distance and location of places they can work, worship, play, shop, and seek medical services," he added.

Krieg is Vice Chairman of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers and serves on the RTA Citizen's Advisory Committee.

2014 Membership Dues are Due

Please send your check, along with the form you received in the mail, or [DOWNLOAD](#) a form and mail it in TODAY!

(**STATION** continued from page 2)

The fully accessible building is all glass, providing excellent sight lines in all directions, mainly as a security measure.

Amtrak is responsible for the platform, scheduled to be rebuilt in the next two years. Amtrak will negotiate with CN and FRA on platform features and height.

The fact that the electrical feed for the entire MSU campus passes through the project site complicates matters. Alexander hopes to complete lease agreements with MSU and wrap up negotiations with the contractor by March 1, when one of the few windows when power can be cut to the campus occurs. If successful, demolition of the existing buildings can then begin. During construction, a trailer at the Southeast corner of the property will serve as the ticket office and waiting room. About forty parking spaces will be available. Alexander is hoping for a spring of 2016 project completion date.

Tim Hoeffner, Director of the MDOT's Office of Rail, reported that Norfolk Southern crews under contract with MDOT completed three seasons of work upgrading portions of the *Wolverine* tracks between Kalamazoo and Dearborn between August and November of 2013. New signals between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek will be operational sometime in 2014. The **Troy Transportation Center** is ready to go whenever condemnation actions turn the property over to the City of Troy. Platform construction at the new **Dearborn Transportation Center** will begin when the double tracking is complete. The station is expected to open in August. Hoeffner expects the track connection and PTC work at **Grand Rapids** to be completed during the first quarter of 2014, permitting that station to open. The State of Indiana and Norfolk Southern are finalizing their agreement for upgrading the tracks between Porter, Indiana and the Illinois State line. Included will be an Amtrak siding just north of the Porter interlock. Hoeffner will attend a briefing during the week of January 20 to learn the status of the new coaches for Michigan and other states. He is pleased that Siemens has been awarded the contract to build the new locomotives for the Midwest states and California.

Langdon expressed surprise over the addition of a morning Amtrak Thruway bus from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo, connecting there with the *Blue Water* to Chicago. Hoeffner sees this as a sign that the whole west side of the state could open up to more Amtrak Thruway service.

Krieg reported that Amtrak officials in Chicago have taken a number of small steps to improve passenger circulation at Chicago Union Station. Unfortunately, the 2013 federal budget sequester forced postponement of more ambitious plans to make more space available to waiting passengers.

On The Road With MARP

"It is amazing to find out, when talking to people, that many are unaware of Amtrak's existence and where the closest train station is to their home." Chuck Merckel, made this observation as he took on his new role as MARP's Outreach Chair. And he is on a mission to change that public perception.

For many years, MARP has sought opportunities to meet with the public at train shows around the state. More recently we have expanded our activities to include green fairs, senior expos, and other venues where we have an opportunity to talk with folks having a broad range of interest.

These events offer opportunities to make people aware of the mission and activities of MARP as well as to share our excitement about train travel. We can help people discover what we already know: trains are a great way to enjoy the scenery, meet new people while dining or chatting in the Sightseer Lounge, and to leave the hassles of flying or driving behind while "traveling green".

Chuck and Jeanie are doing a great job, but **they need your help** to make these efforts successful. ON TRACK will publish upcoming outreach events and you are encouraged to volunteer to help at events in your area. If you can give even 3 or 4 hours to an event, that will be appreciated. Chuck can help to arrange carpooling to save on expense and offer some socializing as well.

You can email Chuck at crmerckel@aol.com or phone him at 734-522-7329. He's waiting to hear from you!

Here are some upcoming events:

44th Annual Train Show and Sale

Saline Middle School
7190 North Maple, Saline MI 48178
Sat, Feb 15, 10-4 and Sun, Feb 16, 10-3
(Steve Sobel, Clark Charnetski)

Das Dutchman Essenhaus Train Show

240 U.S. 20 Middlebury IN
Sat, Feb 22, 9-2:30
(John Landgon, Bob Tischbein,
Chuck and Jeanie Merckel)

Trains & Trades

Beacon Hill Golf Club
6011 Majestic Oaks Drive
Commerce Twp. MI 48382
Sun, Feb 23, 10-3
(Chuck and Jeanie Merckel)

View from elsewhere . . .

“When excellent transportation is within reach of all citizens, all have the opportunity to prosper, to contribute to the economy, and to enjoy a healthy life.”

-- Larry Krieg, MARP Vice-Chair, on his appointment to the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority Board of Directors (see story on page 2).

"I just wanted to post my thanks to Michigan Flyer tonight. The driver did an OUTSTANDING job getting us back to East Lansing, despite a ridiculously nasty storm. I was pretty nervous about commuting back today, but all the flights back were booked up until well later into the week. I am glad that students and the general public have the Michigan Flyer to rely on. Keep up the great work and service. And to the drivers, thank you for putting safety above all else. Our driver today expertly navigated through some awful, awful weather conditions."

-- Comment from a grateful rider who found The Michigan Flyer the perfect way to cope with the now infamous Polar Vortex that has held Michigan in its icy grip; read more [HERE](#).



A Secret Opera Erupts Inside Train Station

This fall passengers were intrigued, mystified, and entranced with a performance unfolding around them as they awaited their trains at Union Station in Los Angeles.

“Invisible Cities”, an opera by Christopher Cerrone based on the novel by Italo Calvino took place in public space within the station. A reviewer described it as “fully immersive and sometimes extremely jarring.” Production was by The Industry and LA Dance Project.

LA Weekly music writer Christian Hertzog has more photos and a fascinating account of the production [HERE](#).

Comparing 2014 omnibus budget approved 16 Jan 2014 to 2013 actual appropriations

Program	FY2013 (post sequestration)	FY2014 Omnibus budget agreement	Increase in FY2014 omnibus over FY2013 sequestration
TIGER grants	\$475m	\$600m	+26.3% \$125m
Amtrak capital	\$902m	\$1.05b	+16.4% \$148m
Transit New Starts	\$1.86b	\$2.13b*	+14.5% \$270m
Transit formula grants	\$8.46b	\$8.6b	+1.7% \$140m
Federal-aid highways	\$39.62b	\$40.26b	+1.6% \$640m
High speed rail	\$0	\$0	0% \$0
Amtrak operations	\$441m	\$340m	-22.9% \$101m**

* \$1.942b in New Starts funding in bill, but makes prior year transit funds available to this program for \$2.13b in total

** The Amtrak operations cut is deceiving: \$340m is close to Amtrak’s requested appropriation and also close to the total operational cost for the year just ended.

Source: Transportation for America www.t4america.org

