

Reflections:

Memories of the New England Transit Club

By J. David White
President 1969 and 1982

I am in good company with other senior members who fondly remember the New England Transit Club and many wonderful times. We are proud of the New England Passenger Transportation organization and of our present organization, The NorthEast Passenger Transportation Association.

Contrary to popular belief, I was not a charter member of the club 100 years ago! The only active members that might have been are George and Larry Anzuoni, but I do not think George was!

I joined the Transit Club in the early 1960s, then in 1964, my friend and mentor of the MTA, Wendell Perron, died three days after completing his term as Club President. The Board asked me to complete his term. I was honored. Wendell was a good friend. My own first term as President was 1969.

Here are just a few words on several of the many fine and dedicated people who served the club: Ray Benson (who is living in Colorado), Ralph Baker and Bob Mortimer all served as secretary and essentially ran the club for many years. All the senior members vividly remember Miss New England Transit Club, Mildred Lynch, who kept the organization together by reminding, persuading, cajoling and sometimes pestering. She ensured an increase in membership and large attendance at our quarterly meetings. It was not unusual to have over 400 people at our summer outing and at the Christmas party.

Most of all, I remember the former Presidents, Henry Bowen, Ken Hudson, Bill Fox, Bill Bodah, George Anzuoni and other who were Presidents of their bus companies. All were real bus professionals – very capable, decent people whose word was their bond. Boy, could they enjoy themselves!

During the 60s, the transit club contributed significantly to many of the area's transit achievements. The club initiated and coordinated joint meetings of the public and private bus carriers. These were instrumental in the progress of transportation legislation that assisted both the MBTA and the private bus carriers. Former Gov. Endicott Peabody received the American Public Transit Association's highest award in the late 60s for his dedication to transit. James (Cotton) Powell, general manager of Trailways of New England and the Club President in 1966 was first in the 60's to advocate that South Station be remodeled into a major transportation center for both bus and rail.

Again, in the 70s, the New England Transit Club assisted then Gov. Francis Sargent and Transportation Secretary Alan Alshuler to finalize legislation that established the 13 regional transit authorities in Massachusetts. Joe Kelly, Ray Gareau, George and Larry Anzuoni, Alex Michaud and Ken Hudson (all former presidents of the Club), were instrumental in that project that was vital to providing public transportation in Massachusetts. The T played an essential role too.

In the first 50 years of the Club, Ed Dana, President of the Boston Elevated Railway and the first General Manager of the USTA, along with Tom Dunbar, Treasure of the Boston EL and MTA, were both former presidents and very active in the 30s, 40s, and 50s. During the recent half-century, there were 10 Presidents of the Club from the MTA/MBTA.

I had the pleasure to serve as President again in 1982 when the Club reorganized into the New England Passenger Transportation Association. In its new form, the organization provided

leadership and lobbying activities for both public and private transportation. During the past decade, the Club has expanded to provide very timely and interesting transportation seminars, workshops and trade shows.

Massachusetts has provided several of today's national transit leaders. Several former members of the Club are now serving as general managers: Jack Leary in Philadelphia, Shirley DeLiberio in Houston, Ron Tober in Charlotte, Maureen Milan in New Jersey and Mike Burns in San Francisco. Just a few years ago, Joe Kelly former MBTA manager and President of the Club, was installed as a member of the APTA Hall of Fame.

During my 40 years in the transit industry, traveling the country to numerous bus properties, Ray Gareau, former President of Union St. Railway and former Club President, stands out as one of the most capable managers in all phases of bus operations including maintenance, labor relations, and finance. Of the five top maintenance professionals I've known, three were from Massachusetts: Carmen Picknelly at Peter Pan, Troy Souza at Bonanza Bus Lines and Don Wolfgang, the maintenance service representative for General Motors.

Every member of the New England Transit Club should be proud of the contributions of our organization has made to fostering and promoting efficient, safe and reliable transportation.

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