

# What's this poster → all about?

We told you last month how we were stepping up our efforts to make sure all fares are being collected on every train. Now we are asking for further assistance from our riders to accomplish that goal, and this poster – which will soon be appearing on our trains – is part of that effort.

Collecting fares has always been important and we have always expected our crews to do the best they can to make sure every passenger has paid. But at a time when we are going to be asking riders to stomach a large fare increase, we know we'd better redouble our efforts to ensure we

collect every penny that is already owed.

The “Be Fair, Pay the Fare” campaign was introduced to the Metra Board of Directors at its September meeting. Information about the campaign is being distributed on all trains and through My Metra customer alerts and Twitter feeds.

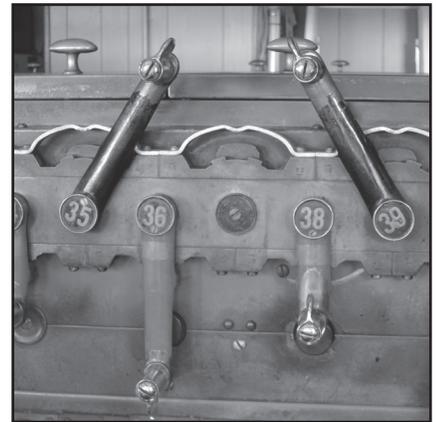
Through the campaign, Metra

*(Continued on Page 4)*



## ♪ Workin' on the railroad ♪

Thousands of Metra riders pass by Stacie Kransdorf (left) everyday, without realizing the key role she plays in their commute. Kransdorf is a leverman in Tower A2, lining up the switches at the most complex intersection on the Metra system near Grand and Western. Three Milwaukee District tracks cross four UP tracks at that location, and more than 350 trains pass through the area each day. “Getting people to work on time and safely is very gratifying,” she says. To read more about A2 and its retro-cool switching machine (right), read *Off the Bi-Level*, the *On the Bi-Level* web supplement in the Newsroom at [www.metrail.com](http://www.metrail.com).





## On the Bi-Level

Published by Metra's Media Relations Department. Send letters, questions or feedback to On the Bi-Level, Metra, 547 W. Jackson, Chicago IL, 60661-5717. Or e-mail [onthebilevel@metrarr.com](mailto:onthebilevel@metrarr.com).

We can't guarantee all letters will be printed or answered. Please keep letters to less than 200 words and include your first name, hometown and what line you ride. (Names are not required but strongly encouraged.) We reserve the right to edit letter for length and grammar.

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## SOUNDING BOARD

Got a question? We've got an answer

### Alert threshold

The UP West Line train No. 26 was late 15 minutes this morning yet there were no notices posted. I access the website from my iPhone. I'm just wondering if that type of delay is supposed to get posted so that passengers are aware of what the delay is.

John

*We generally send alerts out when a train is delayed longer than 15 minutes. Your train was as late as 13 minutes at the Elmhurst Station but was never more than 15 behind, so that's why there was no alert sent.*

### Seeing double

I am curious as to why I see extra-long 11 car trains (e.g. the BNSF 1243 at 3:56 p.m.) pulled by one old locomotive, then see much shorter trains pulled by sometimes two locomotives, one of them the newer model locomotive. Seems odd. Aren't there fuel savings to be had by switching more trains to just one locomotive?

Chris

*In most cases where you are seeing two locomotives on a shorter train, it's because one of them was recently rehabbed or had periodic maintenance performed on it and testing or trouble-shooting is being done.*

### Late explanation

I'm all in favor of Metra sharing copious information with riders about what's going on with any delays, and I always appreciate it when that happens, but I don't get the "due to late arrival of equipment" explanation. To me that sounds kind of like "The train is delayed because the train is delayed." Can you come up with a more explanatory explanation?

Eric

*We can try: We don't have one set of equipment for every scheduled train run. Instead, a set makes its run to one end of the route then turns around and starts a new run. So Train No. 1 (odd numbers are outbound trains) turns around and becomes Train No. 2 (even numbers are inbound). No. 2 turns around and becomes Train No. 3. If 1 is delayed, then that set of equipment arrives late, so 2 can't start on time. 2 is late and 3 therefore can't start on time. When that happens we may say 2 and 3 are delayed due to late arrival of equipment. Make sense?*

### Ravenswood's future

I just took your online survey concerning proposed fare increases and service cuts for 2012. Metra would save a lot of money by junking the building of the new Ravenswood Station. This station is totally unneeded; we riders don't care. What would make us riders more comfortable would be to just to install some additional benches so more people can sit. These benches don't have to be in a glass enclosure like the ones already there; just install a bunch of new benches stretched out along the platform. That's all we want!!

Carol

*Thanks for filling out the survey. However, we believe there would be an uproar if we pulled the plug on Ravenswood. Many, many riders have been insisting for years that we rebuild it. It is now the busiest station on the line, with heavy passenger loads in both directions. At the very least the platforms must be extended to accomodate longer trains, and it must be made accessible to people with disabilities. We're planning to start work there next spring in conjunction with the UP North bridge project. It should be done in 2015.*

### Room for bikes?

Why is it that Metra allows people to carry bicycles on the train? Last week I saw a man set his bike down in front of three seats and he sat in another. Total four seats. Does he pay for one or four? If they are such avid riders, why not cycle downtown? This also should apply to families with strollers. I have also seen people forced to stand while families with strollers are taking up seats. It's understandable why Metra is losing money.

Irene

*We only allow bikes on non-rush hour trains, and even then conductors can ask cyclists to de-board with their bikes if the space is needed. The thinking is that there is extra room then and they would not be taking up seats that others would use. The thinking also is that we are making money by attracting riders who want to bring their bikes on board. We are getting about 25,000 fare-paying people a month with their bikes. The same goes for Family Fares – we are getting people who would otherwise not be riding Metra and maybe turning them into regulars. Strollers are supposed to be folded on the trains.*

### Catching fakes

How do the conductors know if the monthly tickets they are being shown by passengers on the train are real or a copy?

PJ

*We are aware of the possibility of counterfeiters and photocopiers and we have several features on our monthly passes designed to thwart them. We don't detail what they are because we don't want counterfeiters to know. Our conductors, however, know what to look for so they are not fooled.*

# SOUND OFF

“...the snarky, snotty observations by Metra’s customers about fellow commuters ... offer some of the best free entertainment around.” - SouthtownStar, March 13, 2009

## Love on the tracks?

As a new rider, I can’t help but notice that there are a lot of attractive singles riding the Metra. I’m a married girl myself but I’m always on the lookout for potential soulmates for my single friends. While telling a coworker about how I sat next to her perfect match on the train (based on their shared love of kombucha tea) a had a fun idea.

My idea is that you could do a small missed-connections type feature in *On The Bi-Level*. I even have the perfect name for it: MetraMatch. We could ask riders to submit “We met on the Metra” success stories about how they met on the train.

I was really thinking it could just be a fun addition to the newsletter, although it really could become it’s own online entity. Perhaps a singles-car is not far off as well? Although that could be annoying for us non-singles looking for a seat.

Sarah

*What do you say, riders? Anyone miss a connection recently (and we’re not talking a CTA connection)? Anyone meet their soulmate? Write to us at [onthebilevel@metrarr.com](mailto:onthebilevel@metrarr.com)*

## Stop making scents

Can something be done about women who feel they need to bathe in their perfume? They need to be more considerate of the people around them. Some of us have bad asthma and triggers attacks. Thank god I had my inhaler with me. Thanks for letting me vent.

Traci

*We can think of lots of things that can be done. But we should probably limit ourselves to the*



## Thanks to a special rider in Arlington Heights

To the gentleman in the maroon shirt at the southeast end of Arlington Heights depot on August 3, 2011:

You were waiting for UPNW No. 609, standing on the center platform. My train was approaching, 70 mph, going inbound and not scheduled to stop. As my train entered the station from the northwest on the middle track, an elderly man started to cross Arlington Heights Road for the same train for which you were waiting.

The reality of the situation was obvious to both you and me. With the bell sounding and the whistle blowing, you seemed to look at both him and my train simultaneously. Without another moment of hesitation, you grabbed the man by his shirt and chest and pulled him clear of my train. Mind you, had this man been able to clear the center track without your intervention, the back-draft of train No. 632 would have, no doubt, pulled this man into and under the train.

After eight years, I continue my career as a locomotive engineer without one fatality. Unfortunately, such a statistic is near-impossible to maintain for any conductor or engineer should they otherwise enjoy a full career as a railroader.

I’ll forever remember your lifesaving act; an act that also put your own life in harm’s way. If this were my railroad to own, you most assuredly would carry the free-ride-for-life ticket.

Sincerely,

S.C. O’Connor

Locomotive Engineer, Union Pacific Railroad

*polite and legal things, and simply suggest that all riders try to aware of how powerful they are.*

## Finding carats

I was so upset when I realized that that I had lost my one-carat diamond wedding band on the train. I remember getting off the train and something falling, looking behind me and seeing nothing. It wasn’t until later that I realized I’d lost it. I had little hope that it would be turned in. Today, I stopped by Lost and Found and they had it. For the

person who turned it in, thank you, thank you, thank you!

Andrea

*We were going to suggest your soulmate found it, but then we realized someone has already given you a one-carat ring, so you found that person already. Congrats on finding both.*

## Following too closely

This is to the young lady with the black trench with black shoulder bag who ran right into the back of me. You remind me

of those people who drive up on people and follow, kissing their bumpers. You weave in and out, running into others ever so slightly to almost push them out of their way. And why....to get farther faster. There’s no need to be pushy!

Merry Ms Berry

*Maybe she was looking for something...a soulmate, or a diamond ring? Nah, she was probably just in a hurry and being impolite. Slow down, people, please.*

# Winter Travel Notes

## Minor schedule changes coming for 4 lines

Metra will implement minor schedule changes on four of its lines on Sunday, Oct. 16, at 2:01 a.m., primarily so that the schedules more accurately reflect actual operating conditions. The changes cover only certain trains on the Milwaukee North, Milwaukee West, SouthWest Service and Heritage Corridor lines. In most cases, the changes adjust a train's departure times from certain stops or its running times between stations or overall by one to four minutes. Those changes are being made so the schedules are more accurate. A proposal to advance the departure time of outbound Milwaukee North Train No. 2121 by 10 minutes was rejected after feedback from riders indicated the change would negatively impact them. That train will retain its current departure time from Union Station of 2:35 p.m. The new schedules can be viewed at Metra's website, [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com)

## Metra seeks sponsors

The Metra Board has approved a contract with the Superlative Group to appraise and identify potential sponsors for LaSalle St. Station and the Rock Island Line, as well as for systemwide sponsorship

of uniforms and collateral materials like timetables, maps, this newsletter and the school safety program. No other lines will be included initially. The goal is to increase revenues from sources other than fares.

## Meetings set for 75th St. CREATE project

IDOT will host a public meeting concerning the CREATE 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, which will eliminate bottlenecks and lead to more reliable service on the SWS line. Potential solutions may route SWS trains to LaSalle Street Station instead of Union Station. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Provide an overview of the project
- Review a Range of Alternatives developed to address identified project-related transportation needs
- Obtain public input on those alternatives

The meeting will be held from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on October 27 at Freedom Temple Church of God In Christ, 1459 W. 74th St., Chicago. For more information, go to [www.75thcip.org](http://www.75thcip.org), or call Gretchen Wahl at 312-675-3030.

# Be Fair campaign

(Continued from Page 1)

riders are being asked to keep their tickets visible throughout their entire ride, alert the conductor before they depart the train if their ticket has not been collected and report any instances where they perceive that crews fail to collect.

Customers can go to Metra's website, [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com), where they can fill out a form detailing specific instances where fares were not collected and/or any other irregularities, such as fare evasion or passengers riding beyond their ticketed zone. The information provided will then be used by Metra to address these issues with the crews involved.

A recent survey of Metra customers regarding proposals for the agency's 2012 budget found the issue of failure to collect fares brought up repeatedly by respondents. Metra has already taken action on this issue through random observance of fare collection practices on all its rail lines, the investigation of specific allegations

and discipline for employees found in violation.

We understand that crowding, the need to aid passengers and other exceptional situations onboard trains can slow — and in some cases prevent — fare collection by crews. But we also know there are other times when the conductors can and should collect, and we want to know when they do not.

"We believe that the vast majority of our crew members do an excellent job performing their duties, but we are always looking for ways to be better," said Metra CEO Alex Clifford. "We believe that asking for our customers' assistance in identifying problem areas will help us improve service in ways that are good for our customers and our employees."

*Regarding our fare proposal, we hope you saw the special September issue of On the Bi-Level, which spelled out the most recent information. To view that issue, and read more about our budget, please go to [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com).*

## Shh-assistance

You should be seeing these fliers now in our *On the Bi-Level* holders. They are meant to help riders to kindly and discreetly remind fellow riders that they are sitting in a Quiet Car. Be nice.

This literature is for passenger use in advising other passengers that they are sitting in a Quiet Car.

Need some quiet time?



Try a  
Quiet  
Car.

On Monday, June 6, 2011, Metra began to offer Quiet Cars on all lines.

The second car from the engine and the second car from the other end are designated as Quiet Cars on all diesel trains of 6 cars or more. On trains with 5 cars or less, the second car from the engine is the only Quiet Car.

On the Metra Electric Line, only the third car from the south end is a Quiet Car. There is no Quiet Car on two-car trains.

**Quiet hours**  
Apply to trains arriving in downtown terminals at or before 9 a.m. and departing downtown terminals between 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

You are sitting in a Quiet Car. Please be mindful of noise you might make.

- Please turn off the ringer on your cell phone and mute electronic devices.
- If you must answer your phone, please move to another car for the duration of your call.
- Conversations between passengers are discouraged. If you must talk, please keep it short and use subdued voices.
- If you're using headphones, please make sure the volume is low.

Enjoy your quiet time. Metra thanks you for your courtesy and cooperation.

**Metra™**  
The way to really fly

[www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com)

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