Message from the President

It's an exciting time to be taking the helm of WTS Connecticut Valley Chapter. I'm pleased to follow in the footsteps of Christina Olson, our founder and first chapter president. We all wish Christina well as she moves on to the WTS National Boards heading up the By-laws committee. My main goal for the chapter is to increase chapter membership and provide forums to discuss transportation issues.

I have recently returned from the 15th Annual WTS National Convention TRANSPORTATION IN TRANSITION, which was held May 18-20 in Los Angeles, California. Ginger Gherardi, Executive Director, Ventura County Transportation Commission, Ventura, California was elected President of the WTS National and replaced Ann Hershfang, Vice Chairman, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. In 1993 WTS membership increased nationally by 19%. Approximately 300 people attended the national convention in Los Angeles. Our largest chapter is the Boston chapter with about 400 members, followed by the New York/New Jersey chapter with about 300 members.

Honored at the National Conference were the 1994 WTS National Recognition recipients: Member of the Year—Mary Jane O'Meara (Boston); Woman of the Year—Grace Crunican (Washington, D.C.); and Employer of the Year—Rizzo Associates, Inc. (Boston). Next year the National Conference will be in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and in Portland Oregon in 1996. Thank you Los Angeles chapter for a terrific National Conference! —Diane Connelly

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to work on a special one-time program committee to organize a potential "Meet the Gubernatorial Candidates" night in October.

For more information on this program, contact Connie Dice at 525-8267.

Third Annual Luncheon

The WTS Connecticut Valley Third Annual Luncheon was held on Friday, April 8, 1994 at the Radisson Conference Center in Cromwell. Ninety-two participants attended the meeting.

Past-president Christina Olson introduced the new Board of Directors (pictured below) including the newly elected President Diane Connolly. After the gavel was handed over to Connolly, Olson was presented with a plaque for her outstanding commitment and dedication to WTS. It was also publicly announced that Olson had accepted the position of WTS National By-laws chair for the next two years.

Ann Hershfang, WTS National past-President, was a special guest who shared a few words of encouragement to the Connecticut Valley Chapter. Hershfang reported that WTS National continues to grow with over 2,756 members. Currently 17 members have been elected to the Clinton Administration, and internationally WTS is being featured in the "Urban Transportation Record."

The keynote speaker was Kathleen Stein Hudson who facilitates the Quinnipiac River Bridge project. The bridge, which carries I-95 over the Quinnipiac River in New Haven, is a complicated old structure that transports many commuters. This project has obtained a lot of attention at both public hearings and through the media. ConnD.O.T. was complemented for its courage in trying to find a solution that worked with the community. The Intermodal Concept Development Committee (ICDC), a group of 26 organizations representing neighborhood, environmental, transportation, regional planning agencies and local government interests, was established. This democratic group uses the consensus process to work and produce results. The committee had come up with 12 alternatives, including highway build alternatives, transit alternatives, disincents, HOV lanes and light rail. These will be narrowed down to 4 or 5 alternatives for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

1994 Connecticut Valley Board of Directors
Top row (l to r): Nancy Hayden (secretary); Laura Dowaliby (job bank); Sue Reynolds (publicity); Linda Coates (fundraising); Shirley Grunick (fundraising); Roxane McKee (program); Patricia Marrs (membership); and Maria McEvoy (newsletter). Front row (l to r): Connie Dice (vice president); Diane Connolly (president); Peggy Beal (treasurer); and Monica Kawola (program).
Diversity Advantage

"Realizing the Diversity Advantage" was the topic of the WTS March program meeting. The meeting was held at the Connecticut Department of Transportation in Newington and was attended by 23 participants.

Those who came to the meeting were treated to a lecture from Dr. Michael Pesci, a psychologist, representing the Sable Group, a management consulting firm located in Weston, CT. Pesci said that our backgrounds play an important role in shaping our values, attitudes and behavior. He defined diversity as all the various characteristics that make one individual different from another. Pesci said that often people define diversity narrowly by limiting the definition to differences between race and gender. He pointed out that there are other attributes that create diversity among us including national origin, religious orientation, age, marital status, presence of differing abilities, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, occupational experience, organizational tenure and veteran status.

Pesci went on to tell the group that he believes that managing diversity is more than just sensitivity and awareness training. Rather diversity is a competitive weapon that businesses can use by capitalizing on the talent pool of their employees. He contends that as managers, our goal should be to fully tap the potential of everyone connected to our organizations to collectively work toward a common vision.

Membership Report

To date membership in WTS Connecticut Valley totals 72 members, and is growing. The Membership Committee encourages each participant to share and promote WTS. Participation in WTS offers a wide range of activities and services to its members. If you know of someone with a professional interest in transportation, who would like to know more about WTS or receive a membership application, please write to: WTS Connecticut Valley Inc., P.O. Box 290164, Wethersfield, CT 06199.

Connecticut Valley welcomes the following new members to our chapter:

May’s MetroNorth Tour

On Thursday, May 5th, some members of WTS Connecticut Valley entered a New Britain Transportation Company bus for New Haven’s Union Station. More members joined the group at Union Station to board a private MetroNorth car en route to New York City’s Grand Central Station.

Once in Grand Central, the group received preferred treatment and was escorted to a briefing in Metro-North’s training center. The tour of the 48 acre facility was made up of approximately 60 WTS members from Connecticut Valley, New York and Albany chapters. The group was expertly guided through the operations control center, M-42 substation, and service plant. The Operations Control Center contain the impressive computers that communicate to engineers, dispatchers, and rails for scheduling and dispatching the routes. The M-42 substation, better known as the main operating floor, is made up of thousands of circuit breakers (and other awesome equipment) which feed power to move the trains. The group also learned about the station’s security system, which includes infrared cameras and magnetic door locks. The service plant, the guts of the service, house the steam, hot water, air conditioning and fire pump units for the whole station.

Following the tour, the group gathered at the north balcony while the hustle of the afternoon commute got under way. Of great interest was the renovation work being done to the ceiling’s popular constellation painting. Our members then joined the New York chapter to enjoy a reception from a balcony on the 27th floor of the Lincoln Building. Dinner at the 60 East Club followed.

Guest speakers were Executive Vice President of MetroNorth Geneviève Firminheber and Deputy Commissioner of Conn.D.O.T. Patricia Zedalis. Firminheber outlined the station’s redevelopment plan and MetroNorth’s budget, while Zedalis gave the history of Connecticut’s involvement in rail operations.

This monthly meeting was truly an exceptional one. Many thanks to the program committee members who organized this memorable session.

Survey Results Are In!

Several months back, Connecticut Valley Chapter members were asked to complete a survey to help the Program Committee better meet the needs of the chapter when developing and scheduling future programs. Reported below is the most popular answer to each of the seven survey questions.

Question One: If you have not attended WTS programs during the past year, why? Answer: Other commitments.

Question Two: What kind of WTS programs would be of interest to you? Answer: Informational programs.

Question Three: How much advance notice of WTS programs do you generally need? Answer: One month.

Question Four: How much would you be willing to pay to attend WTS programs? Answer: $10.00.

Question Five: What times of the day are most convenient for you to attend meetings? Answer: 12 p.m.—2 p.m.

Question Six: Which program locations (towns) would be most convenient for you? Answer: South of Hartford.

Question Seven: How frequently should WTS schedule programs? Answer: Every two months.

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Next Meeting: Thursday, July 28th Conn.D.O.T. Management Center Training Center Video