

# ng Up the Tempo

been trying to keep you apprised of all the latest acro-  
marathon dance with the Department of Labor. You may  
DOL, for reasons known only to them, have expressed  
s, their longtime partners in farmworker housing, while  
ary eagerness not to be ditched.

that keeps us dancing. It's not even the money, most of  
from us to our delegate partners in the field. Mainly it's  
worker families who have been relying on us and the  
in out of the rain.

back, not taking no for an answer. And while we may  
have certainly been lucky in our allies. There have been  
marathon.

imes from the Hill, and it is bi-partisan. Twenty-nine  
senators have signed eloquent letters to DOL Secre-  
firming their deep distress over the secretary's plans to

sponsored by Sen. Pete V. Domenici, a New Mexico  
letter was chiefly circulated by Reps. George Miller and  
ocrats from California and Kentucky, respectively.

is dance will end, but we'll keep you informed. Mean-  
to our friends on the Hill and elsewhere throughout the  
they've added. Keep the trumpets blaring—we're still on

## ills and Windmills

er decision to decontrol the price of domestic oil is ano-  
nical energy policy that spells disaster for rural com-  
with cuts in Amtrak service, airline deregulation, pro-  
er-city bus service and the allocation of only three cents  
ollar to nonmetropolitan areas, Carter's energy initia-  
people either to move to the city or else stay in their

on, which means a \$16 billion windfall for Mobil, Ex-  
st heavily on rural residents, who already spend a size-  
ome on heating their homes and driving to work. It is  
eople, both rural and urban, will spend 40 percent of  
after deregulation takes effect.

the nation's energy consumption without raising the  
uel for rural residents, but they don't seem to have oc-  
ation yet. Instead of encouraging the use by farmers of  
s and fertilizers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture  
resources to work helping farmers who want to grow  
larly, the administration could promote direct, regional  
acts, rather than perpetuating the wasteful shipment

rogram would also include a national transportation  
eople an alternative to their cars, and it would explore  
alternatives, such as solar power, to help free rural  
dependence on expensive, centralized energy sources.

is more windmill power and less windfall profit.  
ing because there is a creative energy shortage in Wash-

## HEW and HMO's

organizations (HMO's), a sensible solution to the high  
having a particularly tough time making headway in  
illustrates. Part of the blame appears to lie

## Cardinal Sins

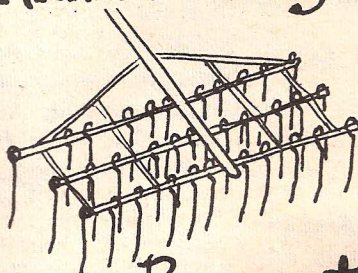
# On Retaining the Train

The people who live in and around Beckley, West Virginia, an area blessed with an abundance of green vistas and black coal, are fighting to save their public transportation system. The system consists of a single Amtrak train, the Cardinal, which limps daily between Chicago and Washington, D.C., traversing scenic West Virginia in the dark of night.

The Cardinal is slated for extinction, one of dozens of trains the Department of Transportation (DOT) hopes to derail this summer in an attempt to pare down rising deficits. The attempt is penny-wise and passenger-foolish. As someone in Beckley remarked recently, "The government wants to move our coal but not our people. That doesn't make sense."

Sense or nonsense, unless Congress

**Richard J. Margolis**



## Beneath the Harrow

decides to veto DOT's proposal, nearly half of Amtrak's 27,500 rail-miles will soon disappear, and passenger service throughout most of rural America will be just a memory.

It would be hard to imagine a shabbier symbol for a crusade than that presented by the Cardinal. It's a ragtag train — unkempt and unloved — one of Amtrak's many unwelcome orphans delivered up by a bankrupt railroad industry. No one comes to praise the Cardinal, but no one in Beckley or Hinton or Shady Springs or Crab Orchard wants to bury it either. The Cardinal, threadbare as it is, is all these folks have.

So they've organized a citizens' group called "Retain the Train" (RT), and they've been writing letters to their congressmen. Some have been boarding the Cardinal in the chill pre-dawn and riding to Washington, there to lobby on the Hill. In early March an RT retinue of 40 Cardinal-ites set out bravely for the nation's capital, only to be delayed six hours by a rockslide near Hinton. The incident confirmed the passengers' misgivings about Amtrak's miserly program for roadbed maintenance.

A month later, though, some of the crusaders made it to Washington on time. Led by Bonni McKeown of Beckley, the delega-

tion testified at a House subcommittee hearing on transportation, and although few congressmen were there to listen, the West Virginians said their piece.

What they said was simple enough, even for a congressman. First, *rural people need trains*. In West Virginia, they rely upon the Cardinal for all manner of necessities and emergencies: To transport them to friends and relatives (even in the still of the night); to take them to medical specialists in Charlottesville and Huntington; to carry them and their petitions to Washington.

Second, *prisoners need trains, too*. There's a big federal penitentiary in Alderson, W. Va., and for thousands of prisoners' relatives the Cardinal is the only cheap conveyance for visits. Ironically, Amtrak added the Alderson stop to the Cardinal's itinerary just three months ago, after years of pleading from convicts' families.

Third, *for rural people, Amtrak cuts are the unkindest cuts of all*. Contrary to DOT mythology, the long-distance trains are chiefly a form of rural delivery. A 1977 survey taken by the West Virginia Maintenance Authority, for example, showed that 94 percent of all the Cardinal's passengers board or disembark at towns *between* Chicago and Washington. At the station at Prince, W. Va., 10,000 passengers boarded the Cardinal last year.

And fourth, *Amtrak's suicide is everyone's suicide*, for how will any of us get from place to place once OPEC and Exxon have finished with us? As Bonni McKeown has pointed out in a letter to the *Hinton News*, "With gasoline prices rising, we will need passenger trains more than ever...." Nevertheless, the U.S. Transportation Department proposes to stop running nearly half America's passenger trains in order to save less than one-tenth of one percent of the total 1980 transportation budget. And at least half that savings will go toward paying Amtrak employees not to work.

"Economic damage to rural areas and the loss of an energy-efficient transit system for the future is simply not worth the amount supposedly saved." Amen . . . All aboard?

Next Month

'Rural  
America  
Now'

An Organizational Report

# ruralamerica