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Editors
LEWIS GARDNER
ROGER STINNETT

HELLO READER

We're back.

This is the fourth edition of the Magazine, which celebrates its six-month anniversary this month. Beginning in October, you'll find Magazine stuffed inside the Herald on the first Tuesday of the month.

If you've never read Magazine, it's a publication that offers material that the newspaper can't provide: long, in-depth articles, and extended features and big picture stories.

You may have thought of a subject worthy of major reporting and photographic value, or perhaps you've written some quality fiction. If you have, come tell us about it. We'll consider submissions from faculty or students. We're located in the Herald office on the ground floor of the university center, room 125.

We hope you like Magazine. If you do, let us know. If you don't, tell us why.

Riding Bowling Green's last passenger train, the Floridian, is a pretty nice way to go north or south. It's also a big money loser and some government officials would like to see it cut from Amtrak's schedule. A Magazine reporter and photographer rode it to Alabama and back, to capture some of the train's atmosphere.

A year ago, Lisa Petersen was a freshman who was sick and tired of school. Now she cuts grass for Western's groundskeeping crew. Photographer Mark Lyons followed her for a few hours to find out what the 19-year-old does and what she thinks of working at a traditionally male job.

WE GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS
The editors would like to thank Tom Bashear, Donna Buckles, Steve Carpenter, Judy Claywell, Connie Holman, Alan Judd, Mark Lyons, Tom McCard, Denise McGlothlin, Scott Robinson, Miles Steenbergen and Herald Editor Tom Ebelen.

Western Students

Pictures are to be made of all students through Sept. 15 for the 1979 Talisman at no charge.

Place: Off Main Lobby of Downing University Center

Time: Students scheduled in alphabetical order

Mon., Sept. 11 A-E 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Tue., Sept. 12 F-J 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Wed., Sept. 13 K-O 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thur., Sept. 14 P-T 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Fri., Sept. 15 U-Z 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Photos by Graham Studios
1029 State St. 781-2323
By ROGER STINNETT

The big silver train didn't hiss steam as it waited in the station. No one wore expensive English raincoats. There were no shoeshine boys soliciting business and no kids on balloon-tired bicycles just watching the train. No one kissed anybody goodbye or wiped tears from their cheek. And the conductor did not yell, "All aboard!"

The Floridian stopped just long enough to allow the conductor to bundle five passengers aboard. In a minute, the train pulled out and hurried along.

It was 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 2, and the southbound Floridian was running late. Nothing serious, but time was precious to us. We had to get off in Decatur, Ala., and quickly catch the northbound Floridian. If we missed it, we'd have 24 hours to wait for the next northbound. Our layover was only eight minutes. The Floridian was already 10 minutes behind schedule.

The Floridian provides Bowling Green's last passenger service. Two trains pass through a southbound in the morning and a northbound in the evening. Their routes are from Chicago to Miami, the only train connecting the midwest and Florida.

Once on board, the conductor was handed a letter from Amtrak public affairs, identifying the bearer as "a bona fide journalist" working on a story with the railroad's blessing. The conductor read it once, then came back and read it again. He seemed skeptical, but said, "Fine."

An attendant in the club car likewise acted with caution. "Don't take no pictures of me," he said. "The train may be on display, but I'm not."

A steward was the first to warn us. Almost immediately, she offered some advice. "Don't leave your cameras alone on this train, not even for a second."

Northbound Floridian passengers sample a view of Alabama from the domed, bi-level observation car.

Sophomore Debra Hussey of Nashville waits for the southbound Floridian.
"The Floridian is an endangered train. Its ridership is low and the cost of repairing or replacing its old equipment is high."

later, as we ate a light breakfast, I came back. "This is a great train to an article on," she said. "It's a of a train." The domed observation car afforded a great view to South's "natural countryside," explained. Amtrak's food quality has been med, but the stewed rose to its prime. "Someone asked me, 'Do I serve powdered eggs,' and I said, 'wondered eggs.' On Amtrak?" "People say our steak is the best "ve had in years. And our cheeseburgers taste like they were cooked outside." A handful of passengers, mostly young or black, dotted the cars. Many slept. In the domed observation car, two or three passengers watched southern Kentucky roll by. One, a Rochester, N. Y., man sat with a Nikon camera in his lap and a 5 o'clock shadow on his face. He was a train freak, spending his Labor Day weekend riding 3,000 miles on Amtrak. He started in New York, took the Lakeshore Limited to Chicago, boarded the Floridian and was about halfway to Florida when I sat next to him. The next afternoon he pulled into Miami, waited 45 minutes and climbed aboard the Silver Star bound for New York. To such people, getting there is all the fun. "Airplanes are functional," he observed. "Trains are romantic." He characterized Amtrak service as "variable." "They seem to try, but sometimes, I don't know, maybe they just don't know how," he said. The trains are not usually on time, he said, though it's better in the south and west than in the crowded Northeast Corridor. "In East Corridor it's better. We pulled into the Nashville station and he excused himself. "There's a picture I need to get here," he said, walking down the steps to the regular level. New faces began filling the dome. Among them was a man in his 60s who stood peering down the steps to the seats below. He craned his neck right and left and bent over, acting like an outlaw watching for the posses. "Damn those women," he complained. "They sat and laughed—haw haw haw—all the way from Indiana. I'm very sensitive to noise, especially unnecessary noise. This is the last time I'll ever do this. My son wanted me to fly. All I ask is a little consideration. I'll never ride another train."

A few seats forward, an Englishman, his wife and two kids took in the view while traveling from Bloomington, Ind., to Miami. He was in wonderment that a country so big and trains so slow. And he declared that Amtrak would not last unless it arranged more special excursion fares and make more stops. (The Floridian makes only 15 stops in the 1,122 miles from Chicago to Waycross, Ga.)
When England nationalized its railroads, he said, trains offered low fares, charters to soccer matches and other specials. For a couple of years, it lost money, "but you might as well lose money on a full train as an empty one." The railroad is now a success, he said.

Back in the club car, we found the train freak, who produced a book that cataloged all of Amtrak’s more than 2,000 cars, including their service history. Amtrak started with 1,275 car-bought or leased from railroads. The average age of the cars is more than 15 years. So the book revealed interesting tidbits. For example, the crew’s sleeping car originally was an Army medical car. The dining car was the Floridian’s oldest car — 31 years old.

In a while, we sought out R.A. Wynn, a sleeping car porter. We found him in the Pullman car. White hair clinging to his brown scalp, he proved to be an articulate gentleman.

He had worked on railroads for 36 years, 26 with the Pullman Car Co. “I’ve been on trains from steam engines to diesels,” he said. A white-haired conductor lounged in his compartment while Wynn stood talking. The old porter insisted that better service is the only thing that will bring people back to the trains.

“Pullman knew what it was doing,” he said. “Amtrak’s just guessing.”

It concerned him that some young employees didn’t regard the job as he did. “These new employees don’t care how clean it is, not like he and I,” he said, pointing to the old conductor.

Soon, word came that we were approaching Decatur. Five minutes later, the “Decatur” sign that hung crookedly greeted us. Paint peeled off the wall of the station. I asked the ticket clerk if he had missed the northbound. “No you’re right on time,” he said, and our admiration for Amtrak rose several degrees. Eight minutes later, the northbound arrived and we boarded.

The Floridian is an endangered train. Its ridership is low and the cost of equipping its old equipment is high. In late 1977, after a fiscal year in which Amtrak accumulated a working loss of $315 million, Amtrak decided to cut the Floridian. Congress rescued it, however, and ordered the U.S. Department of Transportation to make a study of the future of intercity rail service. And during the summer, Congress froze the system until October 1979, giving the Floridian a year’s reprieve.

A transportation department study released in May recommended that the Floridian be cut, along with about a third of the present routes. A department spokesman said the Floridian “is one of those classic examples of trains that should be cut. It has old equipment, it’s losing money and has low ridership.”

Consider:

- The Floridian’s ridership is the third lowest among Amtrak’s 20 long-distance trains. Further, ridership is down about 8 percent from 1977, though that’s not as drastic as several other routes.
- Its June 1978 ridership—11,855—was only three-fourths of that in June 1977.
- The train is losing about $6,280,000 a year, or about 6.6 cents per passenger per mile.
- Most of the cars are old, bought from assorted railroads and are of several different makes, creating problems in maintenance, especially in finding parts.

The transportation department conducted public hearings in 51 cities (including Louisville and Nashville) this summer to gather citizen opinion about Amtrak, and one Amtrak spokeswoman said that might have discouraged riders. “People read something in a newspaper and get the idea the train has stopped running,” said Susan Dwyer of Amtrak’s public affairs office.

The transportation department is expected to present its findings to Congress in January. Amtrak probably will offer its study of a proposed re-routing of the Floridian through Chattanooga and Atlanta (instead of passing through Alabama). Sometime next year, Congress will decide the fate of the Floridian and other endangered routes.

So far, legislators have been most watchful of the Floridian. But if true facts — the proverbial bottom line — have much to do with the decision, Bowling Green is probably entering its last year of passenger train service.

The patrons of the northbound Floridian were decidedly more docile than the southbound passengers. Few characters emerged, and the enthusiasm with which the southbound folks enjoyed the club car was absent. Northbound passengers mostly slept, curling up across two seats like big cats or leaning against their traveling thousands of billboards and traffic occupied four seats in the back of one car, during the entire trip.

A girl wrapped in an Amtrak blanket sat talking to a guy in the seat across the aisle. After a long time, he asked who she was traveling with. “Oh, my ex-husband,” she chirped. “We get along much better these days.”

The sun was low in the sky as we glided through northern Tennessee, and the train threw a shadow on the houses built close to the track. There’s something to be said about riding through America without seeing the thousands of billboards and traffic signs that grow like thistles along highways. And there’s plenty to be said about covering great distances in a long tube that serves liquor, has cushioned seats, serves food (sandwiches or hot meals), provides beds (if you can afford it) and allows you to wander at your heart’s content. Best of all, someone else drives.

The Floridian has other things going for it. Too.

Amtrak figures for several recent months indicate it’s on time about two out of three trips. And in 1978, it was on time 80 percent of the time.

The fares and traveling time seem reasonable.

A 14-day pass good for unlimited mileage costs $250. Floridian passengers may be eligible for discounts on rental cars and motels in Florida. And Amtrak offers many excursion
People read something in the newspaper and get the idea the train has stopped running.

discounts. The food seems satisfactory, and we had no complaints about the service on our 10-hour trip. The cars on the Floridian are old, but, an Amtrak electrician said, they are renovated every two years. They seemed comfortable enough.

Nevertheless, the Floridian is hurting for passengers. But there's no shortage of suggestions for helping the ailing train including:

- Making stations more attractive, which Amtrak claims to be doing fairly extensively.
- Providing entertainment such as closed-circuit movies, music or dancing.
- Offering special excursion trains (to football games or other sporting events, for instance).
- Hiring people to meet with those who live near the routes to inform them about the trains and find out what they want from a passenger railroad.
- Establishing flag stops.
- Building more facilities for the handicapped.
- Advertising the Floridian more extensively.

But of course, all this requires money—a commodity that Amtrak and the Floridian are losing at a very high rate.

Some of the burden is being lifted with cooperative efforts between Amtrak and private railroads, private developers, state and local governments and citizens' groups. State and local governments can request new service if they will split the bill with Amtrak, and it has happened in California, New York, Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota. Other bodies have helped renovate or build passenger stations throughout the country.

But to date, no one has offered the Floridian a massive dose of what it needs most: passengers.

When we reached Bowling Green—half an hour late—the sun had almost set. The train stopped just long enough to expel us, then hurried off toward Louisville. In a minute, it was almost out of sight.

No one greeted us as we walked toward the car. No lover stepped forward with a hug and a kiss. There was no fog, no newspaper.

In fact, what filled the station that night was the feeling of being alone. The train probably sensed it.

So the next time you see the Floridian rumble by, hum a few bars of "The City of New Orleans." It could use it.
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With cooperative efforts between the Floridian and Amtrak, it could use it.

Famous Recipe

SNACK

Fish Sandwich

- 2 pc. honey-dipped fried Chicken & 1 Biscuit &
- Sm. drink.
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $1

Bar-B-Q Pork Sandwich

- 2 Catfish fillets smothered in melted American Cheese & Sm. drink.
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $1

SHRIMP DINNER

- Fried Shrimp, French Fries & cole slaw, 2 hush puppies
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $2

FREE "Strawberry Shortcake"

- 2 Chicken Breasts and small drink of your choice
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $1

Famous Recipe

Chicken Livers

- ½ pt. Livers, mashed pot. & gravy, 2 biscuits & honey
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $1

2 Chicken Breasts

- Bar-B-Q Pork Steaks
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $2

Famous Recipe

FISH DINNER

- 1 pc. fried fish, 1 pc. chicken, & 1 pc. shrimp
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $2

Famous Recipe

SHRIMP DINNER

- Shrimp, French Fries & cole slaw, 2 hush puppies
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $2

Famous Recipe

CHICKEN DINNER

- 1 pc. fried chicken, 1 pc. tub of macaroni & cheese, 2 biscuits, bag of chips
- Expiration 9/10/78
- $2

Famous Recipe

Don't forget the Wednesday Special! $1.57

Famous Recipe

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Working in a man's world

Story and Photos by Mark Lyons

"I was miserable in school," says Lisa Petersen, maintenance crew worker. "I thought it would be fun to work and earn my own money and not have to study. I learned fast."

At 19, Petersen is winding up her second summer cutting grass and trimming bushes as part of Western's grounds crew. She's a full-time employee this year, after beginning last summer as part of a work-study program. This fall, she is enrolled for a single night course.

Petersen is one of only three women on the grounds crew, so she is constantly working with men in what used to be considered a man's job.

She could have chosen other jobs, but she said she lacks the skills for many. Restaurant work doesn't appeal to her, she said, because she doesn't like to serve anybody. "I'm too bitchy," she said, "I wouldn't get any tips."

The work is tough, she said, but that doesn't intimidate her. Neither do the men she works with.

"The reason the men can do the work is because they are used to it. Women haven't been doing it very long, so it's something you have to work up to."

Though the male workers accept her now, she said they gave her some problems at first. Sometimes they got fresh. But she put a stop to that. "I snacked one guy."

She said the men realize her desire to be treated equally. So they seldom go out of their way to perform such niceties as opening doors for her. "Then, I open doors for them, sometimes," she said.
Though the job doesn't pay enough money, she said it has other rewards.

When she was a full-time student she "felt awful" physically. Since she began on the grounds crew, her health has improved. She even feels better.

She plans to be married soon, so her work will supplement the income from her fiancé, who works at a local factory.

She said she doesn't enjoy working around great numbers of people. The pace is usually too fast and it's hard for her to think. "Doing what I'm doing, I have got time to think a lot."

Still, she envies the students she sees walking across campus, with their apparently limitless free time.

But the outdoors is where Petersen wants to remain, at least for now.

"I like being outside...I don't like being inside, in air-conditioning, flippin' burgers."

Grounds keeper Lisa Petersen shares a laugh with co-workers during lunch (above), but she turned down an offer from Vic Conner during a break (opposite).

Dodging runners, Petersen walks a lawn mower back to the physical plant building with friend Debbie Meador (top).
Get Ready for Fall with Men's Denim Suits
Ladies' Corduroy and Denim Suits

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Watch for My Friend's Place balloons & bring yours into the store to see what your prize will be: 3 piece suits, radios, sweaters, jewelry & discounts up to 50%.

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