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News for Darien

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Talking Transportation: Taking Reader's Comments

Author : Darienite.com Staff

Categories : [Opinion](#), [Transportation](#)

Tagged as : [Cameron on Transportation](#), [Cameron on Transportation 2022](#), [Jim Cameron's Transportation Column](#), [Jim Cameron's Transportation Column 2022](#), [Talking Transportation](#), [Talking Transportation 2022](#)

Date : June 19, 2022

I love getting feedback from you, my faithful readers. So I thought I'd share some recent comments.

Last week I wrote about the railroads' history of naming their best trains and stations. One reader, CL, reminded me that Metro-North names its express train to Yankee stadium "The Yankee Clipper", a nice homage to baseball great Joe DiMaggio.

Another reader, BW, wrote "In Ireland, all the inter-city trains have names; they are named after Ireland's rivers." That's classy.

On my recent column about marijuana tourism, CW from Pawcatuck opined: "Please. Do better. I'm alllllllll for legal weed," but "IT IS AGAINST FEDERAL LAW TO TRANSPORT MARIJUANA ACROSS STATE LINES! You should also write about who can NOT partake in "legal" marijuana. Like those of us with security clearances, (and) the police. But that's your job, isn't it?"

I reminded CW that I am a columnist, not a reporter. I never imply my writing is a comprehensive gathering of all the facts. Rather, I'm offering opinions. I'm not trying to fully inform but more to get people thinking, questioning their assumptions.

By far the biggest response in recent months was to my column "Metro-North's Hypocrisy Unmasked" in which I questioned the railroad's taking hundreds of millions of dollars in aid from the federal government but its apparent refusal to enforce federal, and now its own, mask rules. Those CDC and TSA guidelines have since been lifted, but remain on the books of the MTA.

JN emailed me "(I rode) from Grand central to Bridgeport and not once did the conductor ask five people to wear a mask. About five to six people in the afternoon didn't wear a mask and the conductors just punched the tickets and goes on."

Darien commuter AY noted "I have counted about 10 unmasked people boarding and riding on my Metro North car today from Darien to Grand Central. No announcements either! So frustrating."

East Norwalk commuter DG noted "I am not a regular commuter, partly due to this lax (mask) enforcement. I liked the article, and seem to recall that for over two years, this has been ongoing. I don't think they have EVER enforced masking. The conductors just don't want to get into battles. I'd appreciate it if you actually get any sort of response from MN — to publish what they say. I'm fully expecting some bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo Orwellian response: 'The passenger's safety is job number one — but blah blah, and we can't be everyone's Nanny. So, deal with it.'"

Heaven knows I've tried, DG. The railroad's public postings keep emphasizing their mask rule, but our FOIA searches have turned up a dismal enforcement effort by MTA Police.

Westchester rider TF noted that Amtrak had no problem enforcing its mask rules (since lifted), concluding: "The only rational conclusion I can come to is that MNR is a failed service."

What are your thoughts? Your comments (and story ideas) are always welcome by email (CommuterActionGroup@gmail.com) or on Twitter ([@CTRailCommuters](https://twitter.com/CTRailCommuters)).

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Jim Cameron has been a Darien resident for more than 25 years. He is the founder of the [Commuter Action Group](#), sits on the [Merritt Parkway Conservancy](#) board and also serves on the Darien RTM and as program director for Darien TV79. You can reach him at CommuterActionGroup@gmail.com.