

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

Unightly outside

This response is to “Clean Up Your Mess” Joe who, in the May issue, complained that “...people are NOT keeping their lawns and property neat enough to my liking.” I usually read something that gives me a chuckle, but Joe took the cake. What makes him think Metra can do anything about property that doesn’t belong to Metra? So, here’s a few suggestions for him: a) sit on the other side of the aisle and look at whatever the view is over there, b) do as Metra suggested and look at your wonderful fellow passengers, c) read a book, d) create yourself a new job by getting off the train and going door-to-door in the area that’s not to your liking and offer to beautify their lawn, and/or e) see a psychiatrist, because you definitely have issues.

Vicki

We still think he should look at his fellow passengers. Except some of them, as the next letter shows, can be annoying, too.

Annoying inside

I’ve been riding various lines of Metra for over 20 years and have seen it all but I think the three things that annoy me most are: 1) clipping your fingernails on the train ... I mean REALLY?! 2) Taking your shoes off and putting your funky feet on the seat and not having the decency to remove them when another passenger sits down. 3) Lastly, women (I have never seen a man do this) who “pop” their gum. OK, do you have ANY idea how ignorant you look? First, in order to even accomplish this task you have to chew like a cow but some people act like



How many pops 'til Waukegan?

they’re going for a world record of how many pops they can get before their stop. Don’t think I’m talking about you? I am. You’re aggravating EVERYONE in the car because that annoying sound travels!!

Angela

Maybe we should publish a pops-per-mile conversion so you can compute how far you have to go based on the noises your fellow commuters are making.

Not musically inclined

What is supposed to be a quiet early morning ride north to the suburbs on the UP North line on weekdays has been wrecked by some musical wannabes! One young man boards with his headphones on and proceeds to hum and even sing for all to hear as he rocks in his seat. The other is a middle-aged guy who thinks it’s okay to tune his guitar and play a few chords - nonstop for an hour - as the train speeds on. This is an annoyance and distraction and yet as often as I have witnessed one of the other forcing their bad music on the entire car, the conductors notice and do not-

ing. Can’t they enforce the rules? I move cars every time.

Patty

OK, all you hummers and strummers out there, knock it off. Metra is not American Idol.

Sign your name

On May 4, I found a brand-spanking new monthly A to F pass for the Rock Island line (Mokena), complete with CTA Link-up. However, the user had neglected to sign the back or even put a contact phone number, so the best I could do was return it to my Metra station where the response was, “What do you want us to do if there isn’t a name on the back?” By my calculations, some poor guy (the ticket was stamped “M”) was out around \$170 for want of putting contact information on the back of his pass (or even keeping a business card in the pass wallet). I felt so bad for the guy that I thought I should write in and remind people that one small, simple act can help reunite you with your monthly pass and avoid a costly loss.

Kathleen

That’s a great reminder. We actually heard from a guy who lost exactly such a pass on the same day you found it. But since it wasn’t signed, he was out of luck. And he wasn’t happy with our policy of not refunding for lost or stolen tickets, even though he could prove he bought one. We’re not trying to be harsh, but we view the pass like the bank views money: You wouldn’t expect your bank to give you another \$100 if you lost that amount, even if you could prove that you withdrew it the day before. So please, monthly pass users, sign your name and include a way to contact you. You fellow riders are nice people (mostly, even if some of them are annoying). Just read the next letter.

Thanks to kind riders

I have been reading the Sound Off section for years and have been amazed at all the things people complain about and all the ridiculous things people do on the train. I would like to talk about the exact opposite. I want to give a big shout out to those commuters who have been so very nice to me. I returned to work three months after major, major spinal surgery and struggled on and off the train in my back brace. Commuters, both male and female, helped me to sit down in a seat, and helped me up when I got to my station, they helped me put my coat or take it off, AND they gave up their seats so I could sit down. To all those smashing wonderful commuters who take the Aurora express train stopping at Route 59 and Naperville, THANK YOU!

Tricia

And that’s a good way to close out this month’s issue.