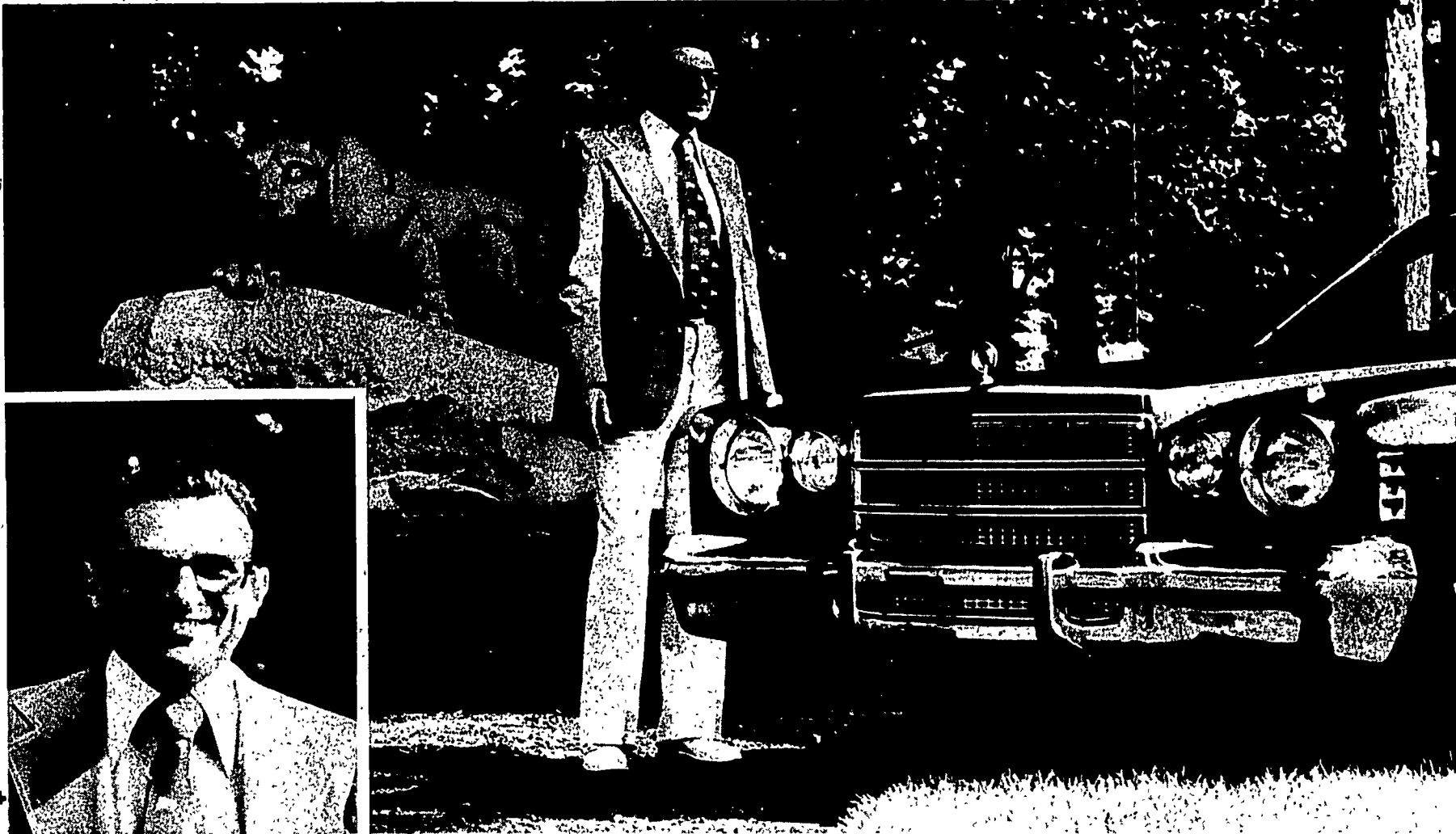


# It's the last time Dodge coaches Paterno



Would you buy a new car from this man?

This fall television viewers will see that old Paterno smile as Joe endorses Dodge vehicles. Here we see him standing beside a '77 Charger.

Photo by Barry Wyshinski

By BOB BUDAY  
Summer Sports Editor

Fame bestows all kinds of hectic demands. Joe Paterno found that out for the umpteenth time while taping Dodge automobile commercials on campus during the past two days.

Three 30 second video-taped spots on the wonders of the Dodge Charger, Aspen, and Truck required Paterno to do take after take, re-take after re-take, in front of the discriminating eye of a TV camera, a sweat-inducing August sun, and an even more discriminating TV director.

The sacred statue of the Nittany Lion was the site of the first day of taping Wednesday. Paterno traipsed around the Penn State mascot while reciting his well-rehearsed lines.

Yesterday morning, the crew from Television Production Center (TPC) in Pittsburgh moved the Penn State football coach to the field of Beaver Stadium where Paterno would do the last two ads.

A white Dodge Aspen station wagon lay on the grass awaiting Paterno's royal endorsement. Above the car, perched on a 12-foot stand, was the camera and a young man operating it.

The coach was decked in his 1970 Orange Bowl wind breaker and light green trousers. Above his sunglasses rested that slicked-back brown hair. He waited for the cue.

"When I'm sizing up the competition," explained Paterno to future commercial viewers, "I look for their weakness, and that's where I put Penn State's strength." Cut. TPC director Russ McKay wasn't satisfied.

Nine takes and several feet of video tape later, the commercial still wasn't

done just right. Back to the drawing board, Joe.

"You'd almost think I was coaching the Dodge Boys when they brought out this Dodge Aspen wagon. They put it up against the competition's weakness." The commercial was apparently done — without an error.

Apparently, but not really, as one crew member pointed out Paterno's change of verb tense. Paterno wasn't too pleased, and his patience wore thin. "I'm not a pro at this stuff and no one expects me to be," he said to the crew.

"We understand, Joe," answered one crew member. Several others reiterated those words to clear the tension.

On another occasion, the wireless hanging from Paterno's seat pocket was found to be too conspicuous. Again, the part was tried over.

Several other times the taping had to be stopped while some noisy truck or airplane passed by. It didn't seem like Paterno's day. Repeating those lines a dozen times would have driven anyone slightly nuts.

Around one — some four hours later — Paterno took a needed break. He walked down the track to the exit of the stadium, not looking in the least like he had just won the Pennsylvania lottery.

"Did you enjoy doing that stuff, Mr. Paterno?"

He answered my question instantly, like a reflex action.

"Not really."

The next inquiry followed: "Would you consider doing it in the future?"

"It'll be the last time they ever get me," said Paterno. He got in his car and drove off. He would return a half hour later to do take, after take, after ...

## the Collegian living

A weekly look at the life in the University community

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# ConRail rejuvenates bankrupt railroads

By BARBARA COIT  
Collegian Staff Writer

Running a railroad is no simple matter. Witness the Penn Central, Central of New Jersey, Lehigh Valley, Lehigh & Hudson River, Erie Lackawanna and Reading railroads. All of them went bankrupt. But this year no minor transfusion brought them to life again.

Actually their vital signs could be felt when Congress passed the Regional Rail Reorganization Act in 1973. Three years later as Congress' deadline hit, those six bankrupt lines began to function efficiently. Now they are one railroad, Consolidated Rail Corporation.

ConRail continues what Congress began in '73. Reorganizing, reshuffling and generally trying to convert a disaster into something workable.

Conrail for about the next eight years will be owned by the government. After that it will become a profit-oriented business that will once again be privately owned. It is owned by the government, in effect, because Congress has allotted \$2.1 billion dollars to ConRail for overhauling tracks and equipment that are in disrepair.

The \$2.1 billion must be repaid, however. ConRail expects to begin around 1980. After that, it will be on its own, but with few of the problems it had under separate ownership.

For instance, in 1974 Penn Central alone lost \$100 million on passenger service. ConRail will still provide passenger service, but on a limited basis — mostly commuters — and will be reimbursed by the government for any losses it incurs.

The \$2.1 billion loan will go mostly for rebuilding and repairing the 7,000-mile track that ConRail uses. Cecil Muldoon, who works in the Public Affairs Department of ConRail, said the theory behind fixing the rails and tracks "is like buying a Cadillac and having nothing to drive on but muddy roads."

The reasons for the railroads' bankruptcy fall into several categories, but the ones most often cited by ConRail are government control and restrictions.

Muldoon blames the railroad's woes on inflation and restrictions. He says because the railroads had to receive permission for every shipping and passenger price rise, by the time the hikes were granted, it was time for another. Now, he says, the government realizes the problems inherent in the shipping business and will be less inclined to offer such resistance — particularly since it has a \$2.1 billion stake in the enterprise.

Besides problems with passenger service and restrictions, 6,000 miles of light-density track that had to be maintained added financial aggravation to an already serious problem. The solution was to abandon about 3,000 miles of track. For the remainder ConRail will receive subsidies from the state or local governments where the extra track is located.

Management can once again rest easy, as long as the trains get where they're going and in one piece. Management may have headaches, but the men who work on the trains have backaches as well as headaches.

In Altoona, where the largest ConRail repair shop for locomotives is, the grease and guts it takes to move the trains are highly visible.

For beginners, Altoona not only has the repair shop to operate but must

content itself as being a thoroughfare to both the East and the West.

Between 60 and 80 trains pass through Altoona daily and another large number remain for repairs.

The people who direct them in and out of the city, as well as move them throughout Pennsylvania and parts of New York, are known as "train dispatchers."

Their duties are similar to those of airplane traffic controllers, only what they direct is land bound. The pains, aggravations and tensions of the job seem almost incomprehensible to outsiders.

The dispatcher, in fact, is by law permitted to work only nine hours per day and must have two days off every seven.

Five dispatchers work in Altoona and together they control and direct traffic for about 2,300 miles of track. They each control different sections, and continually bark orders to towers spaced all along track lines. An alcove is provided for each dispatcher. That way, orders cannot be overheard by the wrong towers and noise intrusion is at a minimum.

Each man works from a large table-like desk with sprawling pieces of paper that he marks each time a direction is given. At times the dispatcher may deal with up to six trains at one time — all on the same track or 100 miles from one another.

The dispatcher is expected to know every signal on every track he controls. Maps are provided, but when split-second timing is necessary, there is no time.

Even with all of the pressures the job entails, dispatchers are dedicated railroaders. For William Mix, who has been with the railroad 31 years, serving as a dispatcher for 25, there is no other job. He has passed up 11 promotions. Mix says he acquired his skills as an apprentice. Several months were required before he could fully master the work — the jargon used would take months by itself.

Dispatchers tell the rail towers which switches on the tracks to operate and how fast trains should go. The tower operator then throws the switches or tells the engine man what to do.

Dispatchers must also know when to stop a train because of the heat that builds up in the steel wheels. "You either decide to keep 'em (trains) moving or stop 'em; of course, you had better know what you're doing or you'll burn off a wheel and wreck," Mix says.

If a wreck were to occur, it would no longer be the dispatcher's problem, but that of the "train master". The train master has the job of overseeing all workers, trains, tracks and just about anything you can think of pertaining to railroads. Dave Christ, who is the train master for Hollidaysburg, Altoona, and Tyrone, is on call 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Christ is the first one notified in case of accidents and is required to see that the railroad operation runs smoothly. Christ has worked for the railroad 26 years, and like Mix and Muldoon, has had three different employers without leaving his job.

Finally, there are engineers who, by the way, are not called engineers any more, but "enginemen."

At any rate, the job is still the same as those in the fables — only the hours have gotten worse. Dennis Glass works out of

Altoona and is on call nearly 24 hours a day. He may work more than 12 hours a day.

Glass, who had been an engineman for seven years, is responsible for getting trains-across-Cresson Mountain — no small job. Indeed, it is his only job. Cresson Mountain is such a barrier to trains that Altoona became the headquarters for repairs caused by constant breakdowns on the mountain.

To help a train up Cresson Mountain, Glass must attach either two or four engines to the caboose of the main train, the number varying according to the train's tonnage.

Each engine has a horsepower of 3,600. If it's a mineral train, then at least four helping engines must be attached. Rarely, if ever, Glass says, does a cargoed train make it over the mountain alone.

The conductor's job is basically supplemental to the engineman's and he, along with the rear brakeman, always rides in the caboose. The front brakeman rides along with the engineman and must attach and detach trains as needed. He actually does not operate the brakes; that is a job for the engineman.

It takes a lot of people to run a railroad. Christ says, "If half the guys who work on the railroad quit every time they threatened, there wouldn't be enough people to move the train."



Brakeman's blues

Few now use the transportation that once helped bind the nation together. A brakeman and conductor for ConRail cruise out of Altoona headed west toward Pittsburgh.

Train photos  
by Barbara Coit



Everything checks out

Railroader checks out connections ahead to make sure the train is ready for a steep climb. This train had over 100 cars and seven engines, pushing and pulling an enormous load up Cresson Mountain in Cambria County.