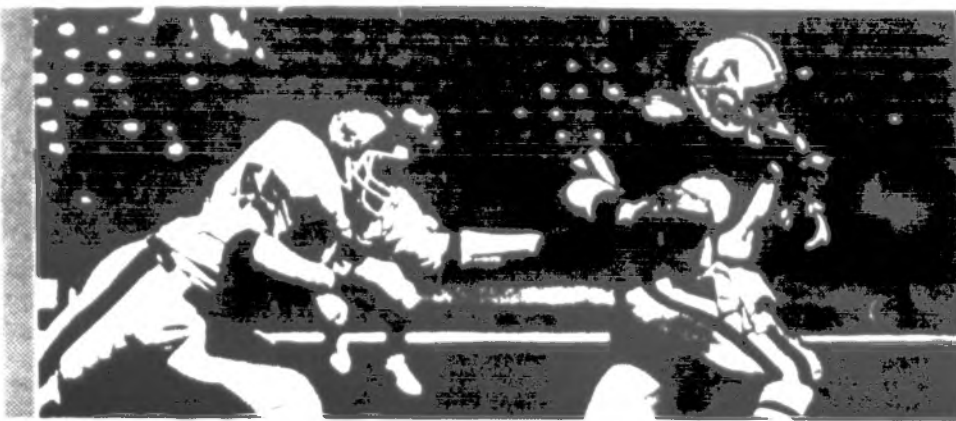


Kohl's win
Chancellor Helmut Kohl scored a big conservative win in national elections, insuring continued W. German support for NATO missile policy.
See Page A3



Generals demoted
'It's tougher than I thought it would be,' said Herschel Walker after his New Jersey Generals lost their United States Football League opener.
See Page B3

White House trying to ease pressure in EPA dispute — See Page A2

The Journal-News

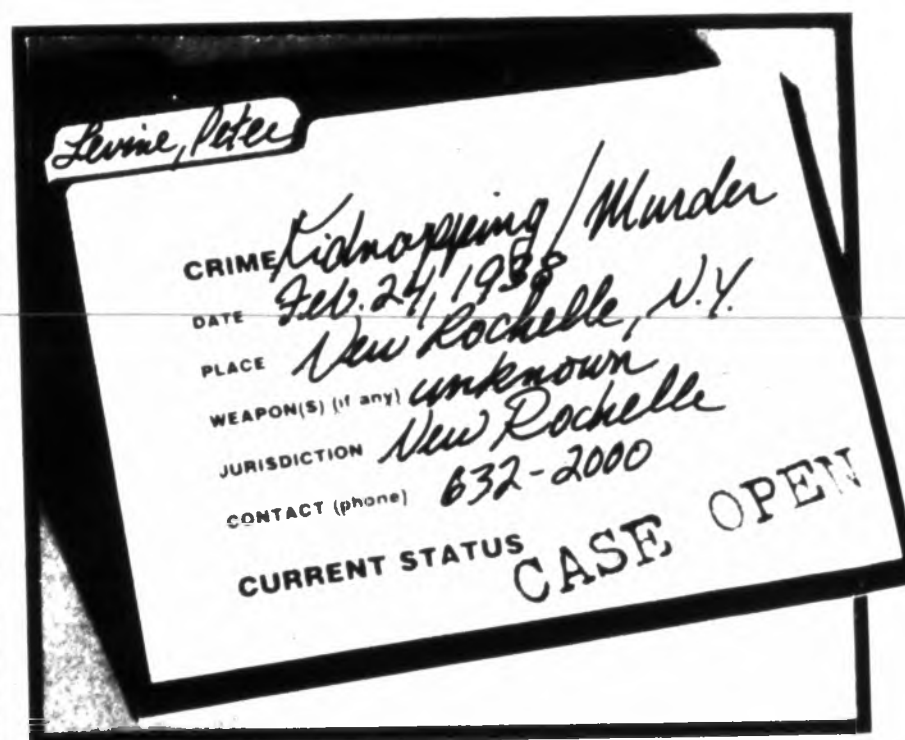
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Fun
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Casebook: Our unsolved crimes



The Levine kidnapping

By PHIL REISMAN
Staff Writer

The first weekend in April 1938 was cold, wet and dreary. Braving the elements, an army of 3,000 boy scouts, American Legionnaires and "G-men" scoured every nook and cranny of Westchester — from the congested streets of Yonkers to the rural reaches of North Castle — searching for an abducted little boy.

It was like something out of an Andy Hardy movie — one of those upbeat, optimistic flicks of the Depression Era where the child is saved at the last second before falling off a cliff.

But there was no happy ending for Peter Levine, a precocious 12-year old who was to become the victim of perhaps the most sensational kidnapping caper in Westchester history. It was a caper that the FBI — the fabled racket-busting "G-men" who kids like Peter admired so much — never solved.

Ninety-four days of hellish anxiety began innocently enough on the Thursday afternoon of Feb. 24.

Class was dismissed at Albert Leonard Junior High School in New Rochelle and Peter strolled down North Avenue towards Slocum Street, where his parents' 14-room house was nestled in deceptively safe suburban comfort. Some said later he was playing along the way with a friend. Others said he may have stopped at Gitlin's candy shop at the corner of Fifth Avenue or at a hardware store directly across the street.

No one ever figured out exactly where Peter went. But somewhere, somehow, he took a wrong turn and walked pell-mell into a dark, deadly netherworld. It seemed as if he simply vanished.

Please see **CASEBOOK**
on back of section

COMMUTER STRIKES

No early settlement expected

By MARY ANN POUST
Staff Writer

The Metro-North rail strike that left thousands of soggy commuters scrambling for ways to get to and from work today promises to be a long one, a chief negotiator for the conductors' union said.

"We'll do everything possible to make it a short strike. But the reality is — it will probably be a long one," said Edward Yule, a general chairman of the United Transportation Union, announcing the work stoppage on the Metro-North Commuter Railroad after 11 hours of negotiations broke off at 2:35 a.m.

No new talks were scheduled between the UTU and the state's Metropolitan Transportation Authority — the parent agency of Metro-North — but both sides said they were ready to sit down again at any time.

"I want to assure the public we did the best we could to try to avoid this strike," MTA Chairman Richard Ravitch said during a 3 a.m. news conference at MTA headquarters in New York City, where the talks took place. "But if the attitude of the union continues as it's been, this will be a long strike," he said.

With train service gone, commuters lined up at key train stations in early morning drizzle to board special buses bound for Bronx subway stations, where many bought large numbers of tokens for the days ahead.

Others drove to car-pooling sites around Westchester to link up with other drivers for the ride into Manhattan.

The New England Thruway reported traffic buildups as early as 5 a.m. Westchester County police said parkway traffic was fairly heavy at 8 a.m. but motorists were able to maintain normal speeds.

By 7 a.m., traffic was heavy on the Cross-Bronx Expressway, and a traffic reporter for a radio station described "an automotive avalanche" on the Major Deegan and



Richard Ravitch, chairman of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, announces that the Metro-North railroad has been struck.

Bruckner expressways in the Bronx.

The strike is the first since January 1961 to shut down all three commuter rail lines, which carry 85,000 daily commuters between the northern suburbs and New York City. The lines — the Harlem, Hudson and New Haven — form the Metro-North Commuter Railroad, which was created to take over Conrail passenger service Jan. 1.

Although they talked for 2½ hours past a midnight strike deadline, the two sides failed to reach a compromise on the key sticking point — who decides the size of train crews.

The railroad wants to eliminate minimum staffing requirements and it wants complete freedom to assign crews, claiming present "crew consist" agreements are outdated and cost taxpayers unnecessary millions each year.

Picket lines went up at Grand Central and New Haven terminals, the big Croton-Harmon station and other Metro-North points as soon as the strike was announced.

Even a short strike is expected to take a heavy financial toll on the 622 conductors and trainmen who now work on the Metro-North lines. Under terms of the federal Northeast Rail Services Act of 1981, the striking union members are not eligible for railroad unemployment benefits.

Under a recently negotiated pay package, Metro-North conductors make \$14.25 an hour, while trainmen make \$13.50 an hour. The work day for both categories is based on four hours on duty, followed by a four-hour layover, then four more hours on duty. Workers receive half their hourly pay for the layover period, so the basic day involves 10 hours' pay.

How we're handling it here

By RICHARD WOLF
Staff Writer

More than 2,000 Rockland rail commuters began their second week of busing, driving and car pooling today as mediators in the dispute between NJ Transit and its trainmen and conductors prepared to step up negotiations.

At the same time, about 300 to 400 Rockland residents who normally drive to Hudson line trains in Tarrytown were left without service by this morning's strike against the Metro-North Railroad in Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess and Connecticut.

Together, the two strikes have affected an estimated 155,000 commuters in three states, leaving municipal and private bus carriers overloaded and clogging most of the highways, bridges and tunnels leading to Manhattan.

The Westchester-bound commuters may find few options this week as negotiations between the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Metro-North trainmen continue. They can try to squeeze on to municipal buses that stop in Tarrytown and Irvington, or they can use the Kingsland Point Park commuter lot in North Tarrytown to hook up with a car pool.

But if last week's experience is any guide, the majority of Rockland residents who customarily ride the Pascack Valley and Erie Main lines to Hoboken, N.J., and the PATH trains into Manhattan should survive without much trouble.

"Basically, we haven't fared too badly," said Orrin Getz, a Nanuet resident who has done without his train by hitching a ride across the George Washington Bridge to a subway in the morning and riding a bus back home at night. "It could have been a lot worse," he said.

Some commuters have switched over to buses operated by Rockland Coaches or ShortLine Bus Co. without too much additional waiting, while others have formed temporary car pools. Still others have chosen to brave the roads single-handedly.

Steve Lofthouse, a Spring Val Please see **COPING**
on back of section

Judge raps state attorneys in O&R case

By PAUL CARLSEN
Business Writer

Most Orange and Rockland Utilities residential customers are in for relatively minor changes in electricity rates, if the state Public Service Commission accepts the recommendations of an administrative law judge.

But state Attorney General Robert Abrams had better make major changes in the way his staff handles future rate cases, unless he wants to hear another round of the scathing remarks Judge John Vernieu directed at the Department of Law in his decision, issued last week.

Abrams' assistant attorneys general — who had urged no rate hike for O&R — used shoddy methods that were unfair to others involved in the case, Vernieu wrote. The judge rejected virtually every assertion made by Abrams' office as either unsupported by any evidence or previously considered and rejected by the courts.

Vernieu recommended to the PSC that rates be set to boost O&R's electricity revenue by 2 percent, or \$5.2 million over what O&R would get under current rates, and to boost the company's natural gas revenues by 3.4 percent, or \$6.4 million more than it would get under existing rates. The hikes would take effect in the year ending May 31, 1984, since PSC decision must be made by June.

It would be the smallest rate hikes O&R has received in a decade, thanks in large part to reduced profitability for the company. The judge also recommended only minor changes in electricity rate design, despite requests for major changes by O&R

and other parties in the case. Back in July 1982 O&R asked for an electricity rate hike of 5.9 percent, or \$14.8 million, and a natural gas rate hike of 5.2 percent, or 9.5 million.

In the last rate boost received by O&R, in December 1981, rates were set to boost electricity revenues by \$20.3 million, or 6.7 percent, and natural gas revenues by \$5.5 million, or 4.6 percent.

The 1981 rate hike was aimed at hiking O&R's rate of return on common stock equity to 16 percent, the highest ever. But the company, the PSC staff and the

judge agreed that because of lower inflation and interest rates, O&R can get along with a lower profit margin, though they differ on the precise amount.

When it first filed the rate case O&R wanted the allowed rate of return hiked to 17 to 19 percent. But after interest rates dropped in the next few months, in January 1983 the company told Vernieu it would accept a rate of return of 15.5 to 16 percent, produced by rate hikes of \$11.5 million for electricity and \$8.7 million for

gas. Please see **O&R**
on back of section

Iran hard line delays OPEC summit

LONDON (AP) — OPEC postponed its summit until Tuesday after Iran said today it would never agree to a cut in the cartel's \$34 base price and demanded Saudi Arabia slash its production to 3 million barrels daily.

The 3-million-barrel figure is the same level Iran is believed to want for itself.

Venezuelan Oil Minister Humberto Calderon Berti told reporters that the meeting scheduled Monday afternoon was postponed until Tuesday morning at the request of the Iranians.

Indonesian Oil Minister Dr.

Subroto said: "We are still exchanging views. We will continue bilateral and trilateral consultations today."

Asked to comment on what would happen if Iran sticks to its position on prices, Subroto said only: "If, if, if, if, if."

Iran's position was announced by Iranian Oil Minister Mohammad Gharazi, who told reporters that "Iran will never come down (on the base price), never." He called for Saudi Arabia to reduce its production to 3 million barrels a day, down from a current 4-5 million barrels.

"Three million for them is enough," he said.

Gharazi said production — not price — was the only issue he wanted to discuss at the summit, to be held at London's Intercontinental Hotel.

Iran is now believed producing 2.5 million barrels daily and selling it for as low as \$26 on the spot market. Arab Gulf members of OPEC were to cut the base price to as low as \$28.50 to compete with African and North Sea producers, who last month cut their prices to \$30.

But informed sources said non-OPEC member Britain, the big North Sea exporter, had advised the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries that a cut below \$29.50 would trigger a further reduction in the North Sea price.

All 13 OPEC members have not met since price cuts last month by North Sea producers Britain and Norway and OPEC renegade Nigeria escalated the problems caused by sagging demand in a marketplace slowed by recession.

Iran, which did not attend the

earlier meetings, was the only member to publicly demand that OPEC resist the pressure to cut its prices.

Last year, Iran cut its price to \$30.20 with OPEC approval. Unofficially, however, it is believed to be selling its oil for as little as \$26.

Saudi Arabia and its allies on the Arabian peninsula — Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar — are demanding that OPEC drop its base price by at least \$4 a barrel. A lower base price would let OPEC boost sales.

