

Deo Et M T A

Six classmates from 1996 break the Guinness World Record™ for riding the entire NYC Subway system.



By Kieran Darcy '96

Some interesting topics tend to come up in conversation at Regis reunions. Religion. Politics. And even more importantly, the Regis alumni basketball league.

But occasionally other topics come up as well. And at the Class of 1996's 10-year reunion last summer, a few Regians were talking, and dreaming, big.

Guinness Book of World Records big.

Bill Amarosa was the ringleader. Amarosa has always been fascinated by the subway, and ever since his days at 55 East 84th Street he'd had a dream – to ride the entire New

York City subway system on a single fare, and break the record for the fastest time.

That's the kind of lofty goal that sounds a lot more attainable after a few adult beverages. But five of his classmates were still serious about it after the reunion. "I don't think I'll get around to running a New York City marathon," said Michael Boyle, "so this challenge seemed like a fair enough replacement for running through all five boroughs." Soon, plans for the historic ride were underway.

To break the record, the Regians needed to stop (doors opening and closing) at each and every one of the sprawling system's 468 stations. (There's another record, for which

the trains don't need to physically stop and open the doors at every station, but that's not officially recognized by Guinness.) The previous record was 26 hours, 21 minutes and 8 seconds – set by a man named Kevin Foster back in 1989.

With the help of some computer modeling, Amarosa along with his "teammates" – Boyle, Brian Brockmeyer, Stefan Karpinski, Jason Laska and Andrew Weir, all members of the Class of '96 – designed a route projected to break the record by a significant margin. Weir's scientific approach to the route planning, combined with Amarosa's infinite knowledge of the subway system, made for an extremely efficient ride.



ABOVE: Bill Amarosa points out an upcoming segment to Brian Brockmeyer while on the L Train at 2:53 a.m.

LEFT: At the final station on their journey: Bill Amarosa (front) with Brian Brockmeyer, Stefan Karpinski, Andrew Weir, Jason Laska, and Michael Boyle (left to right)

The Regians kicked off their journey by boarding a shuttle train at the Rockaway Park station in Queens at 3:43 p.m. on Thursday, December 28th. Confidence was high. But there was a lot of work to be done. Team members had to document train car numbers and the exact time they stopped at each and every station, as well as gather dozens of witness signatures along the way.

“We rarely got a break and I never got the chance to put my iPod on and relax during the ride,” said Boyle. “We were constantly noting our log books or preparing for the next scramble through a transfer station.” In all, the group made 75 transfers. Their longest ride on a single train was 1 hour, 9 minutes and 27 seconds, on the L train.

The group spent the majority of Thursday afternoon and evening blanketing the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. The overnight portion of the journey was the toughest. The guys were operating on practically no sleep and little food, and limiting their liquid intake so as to avoid lots of time-consuming bathroom breaks. (Although the group had mapped out bathroom availability along their route, too).

But there were also some pick-me-ups along the way. The guys got early-edition copies of the New York Daily News Friday morning, with their pictures and story featured prominently. Members of the public and MTA workers recognized them and cheered them on, even egging them on to run between transfers. And several fellow Regians hopped on board at various points in the journey to offer support, particularly

Tom Noone '96 – who brought some much-needed delicacies from McDonald's Thursday night, and coffee on Friday morning, along with his witty banter.

As the sun rose and they continued to make good time, the Subway Six knew that, barring a disaster, they would break the record easily. The journey was downhill from there. The group wrapped up their trip on a No. 2 train at the Wakefield-241st Street station in the Bronx at 4:37 p.m. Friday afternoon, surrounded by well-wishers and news crews. Their final time, 24:54:03, shattered the world record by almost an hour and a half.

“The best part of the experience was the teamwork among the six of us,” said Amarosa. “Whenever one person was tired or needed a break, someone else would step in right away and take over. I don't think we could have completed the ride without everyone doing their part.”

So, the hard part is over – but the group's journey is not complete. In order to make the record official, they had to submit an extensive package of information to Guinness documenting their journey – and they're still waiting for the record to be verified. The earliest they expect to hear from Guinness is the end of March.

In the meantime, these six Regians are soaking in the satisfaction of a job well done. And by the way, the guys also managed to raise more than \$2,600 for their alma mater as well.

Will they ever convene again for another record-breaking attempt? Doubtful, they say. But these six now share a bond they'll treasure for a lifetime.

“It was a unique experience, it was definitely worth 10 years of waiting for,” said Amarosa. “It was great to spend the day on the subway with other New Yorkers, with my friends and classmates. It was just an awesome experience.”

And if the 2nd Avenue subway line ever does get built ... well, watch out.

For more information on the record setting ride, please visit rapidtransitchallenge.com.



Facts About The Ride

Stations and Transfers:

- 75 transfers were made over the course of the run
- 579 stations were visited, 111 of which were repeats
- All but one of the 26 subway routes were taken, the Z train being the only omission
- The route was arranged to meet the requirement of stopping at the Aqueduct Racetrack station in Queens. This station is only open on racing days (there are about 120 each year), from 11am-7pm on those days, and trains stop only in the Manhattan-bound direction
- Both Cortlandt Street stations are closed for long-term construction, so the Guinness rules allowed them to pass through them without stopping

A Typical Hour During the Ride Included:

- Stops at 23 stations with 19 being first time visits
- 3 transfers between trains
- 11.7 miles of track traveled
- 4 new witness signatures collected

Speed and Distance:

- The approximate distance covered during the run was 292.2 miles of track
- Only 44.3% of the 660 miles of passenger track in service were covered
- Excluding transfer time, the average speed was 16.1 miles per hour
- Total travel time was 18 hours, 8 minutes, 17 seconds
- Total transfer and waiting time was 6 hours, 45 minutes, 46 seconds