

Dear JWC NERA Members:

I have joined Veterans Advantage ([www.veteransadvantage.com](http://www.veteransadvantage.com)), primarily to take advantage of the 15% and 50% discounts on Amtrak travel in 2002. Membership with Veterans Advantage will provide a 15% discount for an indefinite timeframe. However, a 50% discount, with some restrictions, is available from 1 June 2002 through 13 December 2002. While the cost of flying is and will probably continue to increase due to the added costs for "air" security, you may find it worth looking into.

As a member of Veterans Advantage, the only way I am able to get the discount is to make reservations by phone (800-872-7245) or in person; online reservation process does not allow for this particular discount. Membership gives a 15% standard discount on Acela Express or Metroliner routes. Otherwise, all Northeast Corridor train routes are subject to the 50% discount, with one exception. On Friday and Sunday, departure times between 11 am and 11 pm are subject to only a 15% discount.

People interested in 50% Amtrak discount need to join Veterans Advantage first; takes 3-5 weeks to get membership card. Membership card has 2 member numbers: a general overall membership number and an Amtrak number. Veterans Advantage has many benefits and discounts in addition to the 2002 50% discount for Amtrak tickets.

RECOMMENDATION: It might be a good idea to submit it early enough to get the membership card; there are many other benefits/discounts offered by Veterans Advantage. I, myself, plan on checking on Veterans Advantage hotel discounts to see if the Best Western for conference site has a better discount than NERA contracted rate. Who knows?

There are many train routes between Washington's Union Station (WAS) and Kingston (KIN) or Providence (PVD), Rhode Island. Both stations are staffed with similar hours of operation. The host chapter recommends arrival at the North Kingston station, closer to Newport. I made a telephone inquiry to Amtrak, mentioned Veterans Advantage Promotion Code H225 (mention of discount is required) and received two roundtrip fare quotes. The only difference is the first departure point; one is Alexandria, VA; the other is Union Station, Washington, DC. Both quotes are for train routes/times that meet the criteria for the 50% discount.

Roundtrip: Alexandria (ALX) to Kingston (KIN); return to ALX. Quoted ticket price – \$86.78

	ROUTE	STATION	DEPART	STATION	ARRIVE
22 OCT (TUES)	86	ALX	10:13 am	KIN	5:20 pm
27 OCT (SUN)	195	KIN	7:22 am	ALX	3:15 pm
	<b>99</b>	<b>KIN</b>	<b>9:32 am</b>	<b>ALX</b>	<b>5:15 pm</b>

Roundtrip: Union Station (WAS) to Kingston (KIN); return to WAS. Quoted ticket price - \$77.90

	ROUTE	STATION	DEPART	STATION	ARRIVE
22 OCT (TUES)	86	WAS	10:55 am	KIN	5:20 pm
	<b>66</b>	<b>WAS</b>	<b>9:25 pm</b>	<b>KIN</b>	<b>4:47 am</b>
27 OCT (SUN)	195	KIN	7:22 am	WAS	2:20 pm
	99	KIN	9:32 am	WAS	4:25 pm

I am not sure what routes I will reserve. However, I am considering a hybrid of the two quoted prices: Route 66 as my Tuesday departure from Union Station (the overnight run) and Sunday return to Alexandria on Route 99. Please let me know (when you know) if you are also planning on taking the train, especially, Route 66. This overnight run arrives early in the morning when it is still dark; station opens at 6:30 am. As the saying goes, "there's safety in numbers".

See you at the next JWC Meeting or the 2002 National Conference, whichever comes first.