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BY OLIVIA ABEL

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Zachary Louis Richter

# BIG MAN OFF CAMPUS

*This Syracuse University student loves his Amtrak rides home to New York City.*

By Olivia Abel

Zachary Louis Richter has always had a thing for trains. Perhaps it's because he grew up in Manhattan and has been riding subways since before he could walk. Or maybe it's because he sometimes takes Amtrak to one of his favorite pastimes: skiing in Vermont. "Looking out the window and seeing the snow in the mountains; it's one of my favorite moments," he says.

Richter, a junior at Syracuse University, also often takes Amtrak from Syracuse home to New York City, where he lives with his parents and two younger siblings. "Flying? That's a pain. Flights are expensive and by the time you get through the airport it's almost as long as the train," he says. "The bus? Nah, there is Wifi but it never works and you can get stuck in traffic."

*"I tell everybody about the train — and I know everything about it."*

But Richter finds the five-and-a-half hour trip on Amtrak to be a comfortable ride. "It's spacious; you can walk around. You also know exactly how long it is going to take. Sometimes I sleep, but I also get stuff done. Last fall I had an internship and I was able to work remotely the majority of the time on the train. That was nice."

Getting work done is a priority for Richter. A broadcast journalism major, he loves taking advantage of the student-run TV station in the prestigious Newhouse School of Public Communications. The station has a weeknight 6:00 broadcast; Richter most often works as a reporter. "It's like a local news station," he says. "It focuses on campus news, as well as Syracuse happenings and any big state or national stories. There are no professors involved."

Last semester Richter also had the opportunity to anchor a five-minute update that appears an hour before the broadcast. He

admits that the on-camera gig upped his profile on the 15,000 student campus. "People definitely recognize me from those broadcasts," he says.

Currently studying abroad in London, Richter has not slacked off on his duties for the TV station. "Yes, I've even been doing live shots from London."

A story about World Cup skiing returning to the U.S. for the first time since COVID-19 remains Richter's favorite piece. "I did it from Vermont, completely on my phone. The fact that skiing is such a passion of mine also made it really cool."

Richter started skiing at age three. Now, he still escapes to Vermont as often as he can to get some downhill action. His entire family spent the previous two Thanksgiving holidays

skiing at Killington Mountain. On the way home his parents dropped him in Albany so he could take Amtrak back to college. "It's two and a half hours; it gives me a chance to rewind," he says.

Richter has also recruited other students to accompany him on his Amtrak journeys to Manhattan. "I tell everybody about the train," he says. "I know everything about it now. When to book—far in advance is so much cheaper. And big weekends—Easter, Thanksgiving, Spring Break—the train will sell out quickly. Now I often see a lot of friendly faces on the train."

Will Amtrak play a part in Richter's life after graduation? "Oh probably," he says. "I love the train. And as a broadcast news major I am willing to go far away from New York City to get a job. Who knows? Maybe I'll take Amtrak home."