



SPARKS AND CINDERS

Our purpose as members of Wisconsin Chapter—National Railway Historical Society is to gather, preserve and disseminate information, both historic and current, pertaining to railroading in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest.

Since 1950

Preserving Wisconsin Railroad History for 70 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage www.nrhswis.org



Amtrak #4627 splits the signals at Duplainville pulling an Amtrak Test Train on Tuesday January 28 2020. This train was run to test the Siemens SC-44 pulling long distance trains. Photo by Keith Schmidt

In This Issue

- ◆ *From the President*
- ◆ *East Broad Top to Run Again*
- ◆ *Amtrak Long Distance Test Train*

Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



Friday March 6, 2020 The Milwaukee Road by Fred Hyde

Friday April 3, 2020 To Be Announced

Friday May 1, 2020 Dave Sima FRA Modern Day Steam Regulations and Other FRA Regulations

Milwaukee Road - East from Aberdeen SD By Fred Hyde

"In 1980, I began graduate school at the University of Minnesota, an ideal place to use as a jump-off point to see the remaining part of Lines West and the rarely-visited Dakotas. While I did get west to make photos of the sparsely-traveled main line, I focused more heavily on the "Lines East" segments, capturing images of the mainlines and secondary routes radiating out of Chicago, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

"My program contains images created between September, 1979 and the last of the remaining Milwaukee corporate history in 1988.

Monthly meetings are held in the lower level of the North Shore Congregational Church at 7330 N Santa Monica Dr. in Fox Point. The church is handicap accessible. Refreshments are available for a donation. For more up to date information on meetings and speakers, and also any weather cancellations, check the chapter's webpage at www.nrhwis.org.

Doors open by 7:00 pm, so arrive early to socialize. The meeting will start at 7:30pm sharp with introductions and railroad-related news and announcements. Please bring a friend!

If you have a program idea please contact Program Chair Dave Nelson at engine1385@aol.com

Sparks & Cinders is published by and for the members of the Wisconsin Chapter, Inc., National Railway Historical Society monthly except for July and August. The Chapter meets at the North Shore Congregational Church, 7330 N Santa Monica Blvd, Fox Point, Wisconsin, on the first Friday of each month, except May, July and August, at 7:30 p.m. The Wisconsin Chapter is a not-for-profit corporation, affiliated with the National Railway Historical Society and the Wisconsin Historical Society, organized to preserve the history of railroading in Wisconsin and the surrounding area. Additional information is available on the chapter's website, www.nrhwis.org.

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading who is also a member of the NRHS. Paying \$20 annually to the Chapter will entitle you receive Sparks & Cinders. Paying the National dues of \$50 to the NRHS will entitle you to membership and subscriptions to the NRHS Bulletin and NRHS News. Full NRHS membership is required to participate in chapter business discussions and to vote in annual chapter elections. All address changes should be sent to Tom Hoffmann, treasurer@nrhwis.org (or via USPS at 1102 Aspen Dr, Waukesha, WI 53188).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yugas, President (president@nrhwis.org); Keith Schmidt, Vice-President; Tom Marcussen, Secretary; Tom Hoffmann, Treasurer. Directors: Dan Grudzielanek, Ralph McClure, Andrew Roach, Cathy Wegner and Neal Wegner.

Contributions to Sparks & Cinders should be sent to Editor Keith Schmidt at editor@nrhwis.org (or USPS at 3286 S Springfield Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53207) by the 15th of the month to be considered for the following month's publication.

All original material published in Sparks & Cinders may be reprinted in other railfan publications provided credit is given to "Sparks & Cinders, Wisconsin Chapter, NRHS." If an author is indicated for the item or article, credit must also be given to the author. The views, opinions, and comments published in Sparks & Cinders are those of the authors and do not reflect the policies of the Wisconsin Chapter or the National Railway Historical Society. Copyright ©2019, Wisconsin Chapter, Inc.,

Meeting Summary Feb 2020

President Mike Yugas started the meeting at 7:30 pm. There were then 29 people in attendance. Two more arrived at 7:32 pm, for a total of 31.

Mike introduced three recent new members: Reid Van Sluys, Jim Knoch, and Bill Becker. Bill Becker recently retired from a 26-year career as a Canadian Pacific locomotive engineer.

Our March 6 meeting will feature noted Milwaukee Road historian Fred Hyde on the Milwaukee Road lines east of Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Tonight's presentation, on Morse Code telegraphy, began at 7:34 pm. Our presenter was Mr. Jim Wades of Michigan, who currently works for a major railroad signal company. Mr. Wades is also the international president of the Morse Telegraph Club. They are the successor to the Railroad Telegraphers Union. That union converted into a non-profit educational and historical society. They publish a monthly journal Dots and Dashes.

Mr. Wades explained the large impact that telegraphy, the first form of nearly-instantaneous communication, had on world history. Up to then, the speed of messages was limited to that of the fastest conveyance available, usually a horse or a train. Practical and efficient railroad dispatching, and coordinated (and eventually standardized) time became possible.

In most small towns, the railroad station was also the Western Union office, staffed by the same personnel, and using the same wires. The telegraph operator was also the railroad agent, authorized to sell tickers and accept freight shipments, on behalf of the railroad, in addition to transmitting train orders and offering message services to the public.

Mr. Wades brought some historic telegraph equipment with him. He had that connected to Reuters News Service current news line, which still sends out a Morse Code feed today.

The presentation ended at about 8:52 pm. The last of the attendees left about 9:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Thomas W. Marcussen

Notes from the Prexy

The transition between Chapter Treasurers is underway. Retiring Treasurer (since 1986!) Tom Hoffmann is handing over chapter books, records, notes and procedures to incoming Treasurer Tara Grudzielanek. This is a large, ongoing effort. On behalf of all members, thank you to Tom and Tara.

About thirty members and guests attended the February chapter meeting, which featured a lively and informative presentation by James Wades about telegraphy, specifically, American Morse Code, which was the system in widespread use by America's railroads and industry. Hard to believe that this 19th-century technology was still in place, in isolated areas, until the 1980s. James did an excellent job in drawing parallels between telegraph networks and the internet of today. Railroads would have been unable to meet the commerce needs of a hungry nation were it not for telegraphy in the late 1800s!!

Our March meeting is sure to be a hit for Wisconsin chapter members, as it features noted Milwaukee Road author Fred Hyde giving a presentation of Milwaukee Road's lines east of Aberdeen in the 1980s. (See the information elsewhere in this edition of Sparks & Cinders.)

Our previously-announced April presenter, Erik Hendrickson, had to postpone, as the Class I railroad where he's employed has recently made some major staffing changes, which will keep him in the Jacksonville area for a while. It is hoped this is a temporary situation. We hope to host Eric for an interesting and entertaining program in the near future.

However, with a hat tip to Dave Nelson, we are covered for April. The first portion of the April program will feature Chris Barney, who has extensively researched a 1920s-era grade crossing accident at St. Francis Avenue. Dave Nelson himself will maintain that theme for the second half, with his 1905 South Milwaukee tragedy program.

Then in May, Dave Sima, of the Federal Railroad Administration, will present a program about modern-day regulation of steam locomotives and other FRA regulatory actions.

We're moving our annual banquet to June this year, to put a giant exclamation mark (or other punctuation) on the end of our 2019-20 season. The dinner will be held on June 6 at Palas Restaurant in West Allis, our venue of a few years ago. In addition to a fine meal and an opportunity to relax and socialize with other members, our keynote speaker will be Stefan Loeb, Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer at Watco Companies. He'll talk about Watco's history and vision, with an emphasis on Watco's Wisconsin properties (they own more in the state than just the Wisconsin & Southern!). Please put June 6 on your calendar now, and look for more information in next month's Sparks & Cinders.

If you have an idea for a top-notch meeting program, please be in touch with Dave Nelson or me. We figure the best way to grow attendance at our meetings, and our chapter membership, is to bring quality programs to you every month, from September to June.

And speaking of growing our chapter membership, I'd like to welcome the following new members (or S&C subscribers) who have become affiliated with the chapter over the past couple months:

Dick Tollefsen
Reid Van Sluys
Joe Kmoch
Bill Becker

... and perhaps a few others who will be recognized in next month's S&C.

Thank you again for your membership in Wisconsin Chapter,



Original 25th Annual Model Railroad Show

Presented by Metro Model Railroad Club

Sunday March 8, 9am to 4pm
Circle B Recreation Center
Cedarburg, WI

Operating Model Railroad Layouts in Various Scale
Over 50 Swap Tables

For more information check out
www.metroclub.org
jimbartelt@gmail.com



The Extra Board - Upcoming Events

NRHS National Convention
www.nrhs.com
2020 National Convention Fullerton, California
June 9-13, 2020

TMER&THS (Traction and Bus Club)
www.tmer.org
Waterstone Bank
Saturday March 21, 2020 - Dick Apel - Tri State Shore Line

WISE Division NMRA www.wisedivision.org
Monthly Meet Sunday March 15, 2020
Mt Pleasant Lutheran Church Racine, WI 1pm

C&NW Historical Society
www.cnwhs.org
National Convention
May 28- May 31 Mankato, MN

Milwaukee Road Historical Association
www.mrha.com
2020 National Convention - Elgin, IL No Dates
June 18-21, 2020

Soo Line Historical and Technical Society
www.sooline.org

Green Bay & Western Historical Society
www.gbwhs.com
Annual Meeting April 18, 2020
Tittletown Brewery Green Bay, WI

Annual Meeting Minutes January 3 2020

January 3, 2020—NRHS Wisconsin Chapter Annual Business Meeting Minutes

President Mike Yuhas started the meeting at 7:32 pm. Thirty-one people were then in attendance.

Mike had established that we have a quorum of members present. Only dues-paying members of NRHS National are Chapter members. These were identified by receiving pink paper slips, at the door coming in, to be used as ballots. According to the latest records available, we have 58 members. A quorum is 5 per cent of that number, which works out to 3 members. We had well in excess of that number. As always, business meetings are for members only. Subscribers are only receiving copies of *Sparks & Cinders*, and are not members. Guests and non-members were asked to only listen to and observe the business meeting.

The first item of business was a report from the Banquet Committee, consisting of Ralph McClure and Tom Hoffmann. The 2020 banquet has been moved to June. There will be a regular Chapter meeting on Friday, May 1, at the North Shore Congregational Church. There will be no regular Chapter meeting in June. The annual Chapter banquet will held on Saturday, June 6, from 4:00 pm to 9:30 pm. We will be returning to the Pallas Restaurant at 1657 South 108th Street in West Allis. The food will be served buffet style. There will be 2 meats, chicken and beef, with salad, potatoes, vegetables, and dessert.

President Mike Yuhas noted the passing of long-time Chicago & North Western employee and historian Jim Yanke, on Monday, November 25, 2019. A fuller account of Jim's life and accomplishments was published on Page 4 of January 2020 issue of *Sparks & Cinders*. That accounting did not show that his son Jim Yanke just recently moved back to this area, in Slinger, and is a rail fan.

We also several days ago lost Gustave "Jim" Hennemann, an *S&C* subscriber, and occasional attendee at our meetings.

President Mike Yuhas offered one addition to the summary report for the December 6, 2019 meeting. The first half of Jerry Krug's presentation had been on the Green Bay & Western Railroad.

Treasurer Tom Hoffmann presented his summary report for 2019. It is not final because we have not received our final bank statements yet. It is based on the checkbook and other records that we have (which all balance), and should be very close.

Receipts

Dues	\$1946.00
Banquet	787.50
Miscellaneous	30.00
Interest	3.66
Total	\$2767.16

Expenses

Digital Projector	\$1457.93
Sparks & Cinders	1328.56
North Shore Church (2 years)	900.00
Banquet	857.49
Insurance	500.00
Treasurer Expenses	64.00
Church Custodians	50.00
Dave Nelson-Expenses	38.00
Sales Tax Registration	10.00
Total	\$5205.98

The expense side was inflated by our one-time investment for a digital projector. (The projector carrying case will be delivered in 2020, and appear as a 2020 expense. It will cost about \$71.00 to \$72.00.) We also had two annual contributions to the North Shore Congregational Church (given in gratitude for the ongoing use of their space) and their staff, for Christmas 2018 and Christmas 2019, appear on the books for 2019.

President Mike Yuhas publicly thanked Tom Hoffmann for his 34 years of service as our Chapter Treasurer since 1986. Tom will be retiring as Treasurer after tonight. He will continue to serve as Special Assistant to the President—see below. The next topic of business was the election of 2020 officers and directors. All of the incumbent 2019 officers and directors are running for re-election, except for Treasurer Tom Hoffmann. Tara Grudzielanek volunteered to serve as our new Treasurer. Mike Yuhas read the names aloud. Those that were present raised their hands on hearing their names. (The two Grudzielanek's and Andrew Roach were not present tonight. They had all agreed to serve if elected.) The slate of candidates then becomes:

President—Mike Yuhas
 Vice President—Keith Schmidt
 Treasurer—Tara Grudzielanek
 Secretary—Tom Marcussen
 At-large Directors— Dan Grudzielanek, Ralph McClure, Andrew Roach, Cathy Wegner, and Neal Wegner.

President Mike Yuhas called for any other nominations from the floor. There were none. It was moved and seconded that the nominations be closed. That motion passed by unanimous voice vote. It was moved and seconded that the above candidates be elected together, as an entire slate (sparing us from the minutiae of voting for each candidate individually). There were no objections. That motion also passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no "no" votes to either motion. Those listed above then became our 2020 Chapter officers.

President Mike Yuhas then appointed Tom Hoffmann as Special Assistant to the President. The intent is that the Chapter continue to benefit from Tom's experience and knowledge.

Dave Nelson moved that we approve the minutes of the previous annual business meeting on January 4, 2019, as re-printed on Page 5 of the January 2020 issue of *Sparks & Cinders*. Al Lederman seconded that motion. It passed by unanimous voice vote.

Dave Nelson moved that the business meeting be adjourned. There was a second. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no "no" votes. The business meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Tom Hoffmann presented "50 Years Ago—1969." There were three trays of slides, with a short break between trays one and two. These were predominantly a mix of Wisconsin / local subjects and Texas subjects, with some other locations as well, plus several (non-railroad) slides of South Vietnam. His presentation ended at 9:12 pm.

Upcoming future meeting dates and presentations will be:

February 7—Morse Telegraphy, by expert Jim Wades
 March 6—The Milwaukee Road east of Aberdeen, South Dakota, by Milwaukee Road historian Fred Hyde.

Respectfully Submitted

Thomas W. Marcussen

Wisconsin Chapter Secretary

Do You Know ?

Story and Photos by Dave Nelson

Steam was gone early from the C&NW's "old line" that ran through my home town of South Milwaukee, so even my clear childhood memory (circa 1955) of seeing a line of black smoke heading south above the tree line across from our home was more likely an ALCO diesel, or perhaps a steam powered wrecking crane, than a steam locomotive. And anyway, all I saw was the smoke.

The big Schlitz Circus Parade involved steam powered circus trains; the first operating mainline steam locomotive I saw in Milwaukee was the CB&Q's 4960 in 1965. Of course I had ridden the train at Milwaukee County's "new" Zoo that included a really neat little 4-4-0 that they don't seem to run any longer. "Old Smoky," the Milwaukee Road S-3 class 4-8-4 Number 265, was stuffed and mounted on a length of track in Bay View from 1956 to 1975. It was shiny and new at first, and you could (and I did) climb all over the locomotive. Eventually a chain link fence was installed but not before vandals pretty much trashed the engine including the realistic looking train crew manikins in the cab, together with hard to replace steam, water, and air gauges in the cab. It was a rusted eyesore when the Illinois Railroad Museum took it off the city's hands in 1975. It had a slow ride to Union, IL; brass bearings had been stolen. Reportedly just months earlier the Milwaukee Road finally disposed of a boxcar full of S-3 parts it had retained in case there was interest in making Old Smoky, or the 261 in Green Bay, run again.

And then there was the X90. For most of the 1960s, if you knew where to look while exploring Jones Island, tucked away on an isolated siding you could find the X90, an odd-looking 0-6-0T with big side tanks for water and strange staircases leading up from the pilot. Behind it was a Soo Line slope-back tender which had been in work train service (couplers at both ends). Parts were missing including the stack (stored in the cab or tender I later learned). X90 had been the shop goat at Shoreham Shops, pulling dead locomotives onto the turntable and into or out of the roundhouse. In the late 1950s the engine and a tender were sold for scrap to Miller Compressing, and they arrived at Jones Island in 1962. Scrapping a steam locomotive is a messy operation, and eventually Miller decided to find a worthy local organization to donate X90 to. In 1967, the locomotive and tender were given, and moved, to the Manitowoc County Historical Society

An article by Larry Bohn in the Soo Line Historical Society's "The Soo" in Fall 1999 gives full details about the locomotive and its history, including Bohn's role in saving, moving, and accurately backdating it to original appearance. It was built in 1887 by the Rhode Island Locomotive Company as a normal 0-6-0 with tender for a predecessor of the Soo Line. After long service to the Soo as Number 321, it was modified in 1927 by adding the side tanks for water; a coal bunker filled the fireman's side of the cab making a tender unnecessary. It was renumbered X90 in 1932. The tender that Miller Compressing bought, similar to but larger than the 321's original tender, was built in the early 1900s by Brooks for an entirely different Soo Line 0-6-0, Number 2327. Numbered 321 again, what had once been X90 and the tender can be seen at the Pincrest Village in Manitowoc.

The photo was in a set of Soo Line steam slides sold by the late Rob Robinson labeled "Russ Porter Collection."



East Broad Top to Steam Again

Sixty years ago, that quote by East Broad Top Railroad owner Nick Kovalchick signaled the first rebirth of the historic East Broad Top narrow-gauge railroad in central Pennsylvania. It came true again Friday with an announcement that the bulk of the 33-mile line, including six Baldwin steam locomotives, rolling stock, and extensive shops, has been sold to the nonprofit East Broad Top Foundation, Inc., which aims to reopen it for operation in 2021.

Organized by a group of railroad-industry executives and dedicated EBT fans, the foundation plans a number of "soft-opening" events this season, including marking the 60th anniversary of the August 13, 1960, start-up of the railroad's tourist operation. The group's goal is to rehabilitate five miles of tourist-era track from Rockhill Furnace to the wye at Colgate Grove, and to restore locomotives and rolling stock to permit steam operations to resume next year.

Built in the 1870s, the three-foot-gauge line hauled primarily coal until the abandonment of local mines in 1956. When EBT closed that year, it was the last remaining narrow-gauge common-carrier railroad in the Eastern United States. It was bought by the Kovalchick Salvage Co. of Indiana, Pa., which in 1960 reopened a segment for tourist service in connection with a local bicentennial celebration. Under the Kovalchick family's watch, including that of Nick's son Joseph Kovalchick, EBT ran as a tourist railroad for a remarkable 52 seasons, closing at the end of 2011.

Among those who worked to organize the foundation were Lawrence Biemiller, longtime East Broad Top historian and frequent guide for shop and roundhouse tours; David Brightbill, EBT's office manager; Brad Esposito, 20-year employee of the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad and new general manager of the EBT; and Stephen Lane, entrepreneur, Amtrak employee, and volunteer at the Everett Railroad.

The foundation will be governed by a 10-member board. Three members represent the group's founders, three represent the railroad and presentation industry, three represent outside or community interests, and one member will be named from the Kovalchick family.

Principal backers of the foundation – and the three industry board members – are:

Bennett Levin, a retired entrepreneur and electrical and mechanical engineer who heads the Juniata Terminal Co., which owns and operates two historic former Pennsylvania Railroad Electro-Motive Division E8-model diesel locomotives and a small fleet of three private passenger cars. He has been involved in the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum and the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

at Strasburg, Pa.

Charles "Wick" Moorman, retired chairman and CEO of Norfolk Southern Railroad and former CEO of Amtrak. It was he who instituted NS's "Steam for the 21st Century" program that employed steam locomotives borrowed from museums to pull public and employee specials. In addition, he instituted NS's "heritage fleet" of 20 modern diesel locomotives painted in the historic colors of railroads that were predecessors of NS.

Henry Posner III, chairman of Railroad Development Corporation of Pittsburgh. Through RDC, he oversees the Iowa Interstate Railroad and railroads in Europe, and formerly operated railroads in South America, Central America, and Africa. The Iowa Interstate owns two steam locomotives that are used occasionally for fund-raising purposes for first responders.

The three founding members of the board will be Biemiller, Brightbill, and Esposito. Of the community members, only one has been named thus far, Jane Sheffield, executive director of the Altoona-based Allegheny Ridge Corp., an economic development and heritage tourism agency.

*Courtesy TRAINS Newswire - Kalmbach Media
Photos by Keith Schmidt June 2009*



From the Archives

March 1955- 65 Years Ago

Described was a proposed Chapter trip leaving Friday evening and returning by Sunday: Milwaukee to Durand, Michigan, to Grand Rapids, then via way freight to Grand Haven and return. Finally, Grand Rapids to Muskegon to catch the car ferry back to Milwaukee. Lots of steam – under \$20... Also, “Happy Birthday!” Doggone if we (Milwaukee Chapter) aren’t five years old this month. First meeting was held March 17, 1950. We still have three of the original nine members. They are Don Ross, Jim Scribbins, and Jim Grace. Wonder how many others have come and gone in these five years.”...Fontaine Fox has pulled the big switch on his “Toonerville Trolley” cartoon after 36 years. Although an American institution, it was not carried locally.

March 1960 - 60 Years Ago

The ‘Q’ having retired the Pioneer Zephyr on February 20 after nearly 26 years of service (beginning May 26, 1934), will have her make one final run on March 20, Lincoln-Galesburg. Upon completion of this run she will retire to a well-earned rest at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry....The Chapter’s 10th Anniversary Banquet on April 30 will feature Charles Able, Assistant General Passenger Agent of the CB&Q as speaker.

March 1965 - 55 Years Ago

John Lauber contributed a roster “Rolling Stock of the TMER&L Co. – Passenger, Freight, and Repair as of January 1, 1965.” Shown were car numbers, types, descriptive data, and location for over 40 pieces of equipment still existing as of that date. In addition “There is still some doubt as to whether or not the following cars are still in existence although rumors persist: No. ? - Interurban trailer - Pewaukee Lake (in 94 ft. of water) and several 100, 200, 300, and 400 series articulated city cars are reported below water in a Cedarburg quarry.”...Chapter member Russ Porter had a four-page spread of Milwaukee Road photos in the March, 1965, Railroad Model Craftsman magazine.

March 1970 - 50 Years Ago

News items: The ICC authorized the discontinuance of the San Francisco-Salt Lake City portion of the California Zephyr effective March 22....On February 2, the U.S. Supreme Court approved the merger of GN, NP, CB&Q, SP&S, and the Pacific Coast Railroad into the 26,500-mile Burlington Northern, Inc.... A Chicago-Iron Mountain, Michigan, ski train is scheduled to operate via the Milwaukee Road.

March 1975 - 45 Years Ago

“Old Smoky” is now the property of the Illinois Railway Museum at Union, Illinois, and will be moved as soon as the Milwaukee County Expressway Commission approves a bid for construction of a connecting track to the C&NW....The C&NW has asked the PSC for permission to discontinue the resident agent at Port Washington and sell or raze the depot.

March 1980 - 40 Years Ago

Ex-NKP 2-8-4 No. 765 is operational again after four years of effort by the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society. Skokie Swift service may be extended one mile to the Old Orchard Shopping Center in the Chicago area....The Milwaukee Road has asked the ICC for authority to serve certain Rock Island customers in eastern Iowa and northern Missouri.

March 1985 - 35 Years Ago

In a surprise decision, Federal Bankruptcy Judge Thomas H. McMillan awarded the core assets of the Milwaukee Road to the Soo Line....Amtrak had no operational coach equipment available at the Chicago coach facility on December 24. RTA equipment was dispatched on the Chicago-Milwaukee, Chicago-Carbondale, and other short-haul trains.

March 1990 - 30 Years Ago

Gov. Tommy G. Thompson announced on February 21 that he wants the state to join a study of possible high-speed rail service between the Twin Cities and Chicago via Milwaukee. Magnetic levitation technology is being considered for the project....The Soo Line was ticketed by Brookfield police three times in January for blocking crossings....On Track, hosted by Chuck Zehner airs on Channel 10 Saturdays....The Wisconsin Central is taking delivery on some of the 400 new granule cars it has on order.

March 1995 - 25 Years Ago

Amtrak’s Hiawatha service dodged the bullet on February 8 when an agreement was reached for additional state funding of the service through June. A long-term funding agreement is to be worked out by then. Shareholders of Burlington Northern and Santa Fe approved a merger of the two companies on February 7, the ICC must still approve the deal.The FRA has given its approval for electrification of Amtrak’s New Haven-Boston line.WC formally completed its purchase of Algoma Central on January 31. All 23 ACR locomotives were immediately renumbered and provided with WC emblems....The Chapter’s 45th Anniversary Banquet will be held at the Columns Restaurant on May 6. Speaker will be Chapter member Chris Burger, President and CEO of the Central Railroad of Indiana. Chris was formerly C&NW Division Superintendent in Butler and General Manager of the Central Vermont Railway.

March 2000 - 20 Years Ago

WC has a new method for handling ore trains between Superior and Escanaba. There is a manned helper engine on the rear of the train. The idea is to eliminate drawbar and knuckle separations; it seems to be working. The Northern Indiana Commuter District, which operates South Shore Line commuter service, is pressing to replace the vintage 1925 overhead electric catenary system on the line. The proposed timetable for the beginning of high speed rail service under the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative was announced. Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison: December, 2003; Madison-La Crosse-Twin Cities: July, 2005; Chicago-Milwaukee- Green Bay: July, 2007; Chicago-Milwaukee 110 mph service: January, 2009.

March 2005 - 15 Years Ago

The proposed Transportation Dept. budget for fiscal year 2006 included no funds for Amtrak. Many in Congress came to Amtrak’s defense and the crisis was averted....WSOR asked for more state funds for track upgrades to state-owned track. The goal is to upgrade 125 miles of track from 90 lb. to 115 lb. rail.

March 2010 - 10 Years Ago

Although previously reported as completed, the sale of Milwaukee Road No. 261 is still pending and may be completed by mid-March 2010. Bob Mertz, president of Sterling Rail, the broker offering the locomotive for sale, told Trains New Wire on February 18 that the deal to sell the locomotive is still going forward. The famous excursion locomotive, which is owned by the National Railroad Museum of Green Bay, was operated between 1993 and 2008 by the non-profit “Friends of the 261,” which leased the engine from the Museum. The two organizations were unable to reach an agreement to extend the lease on the locomotive. The engine is presently in the Friends’ Minneapolis shop, having been torn down for its federally mandated 15-year inspection

March 2015 - 5 Years Ago

Celebrate Trains magazine’s 75th anniversary with a gala dinner at the landmark Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee, Wis. Join past and present editors, columnists, writers, and photographers to celebrate the legacy of great writing and dazzling photography that entertains and educates while giving voice to generations of railroaders and railfans. The event will be held on November 14th
Long time NRHS member Phil Fritz died peacefully on Thursday 1.29.15. He was an active member of the Wisconsin Chapter serving in several different roles. Originally from Milwaukee, he religiously made the Friday night trip from Sturtevant in all kinds of weather. Phil loved steam engines of all kinds and made many chases in his white Volvo. He even showed his movies a couple of times at NRHS.His final years were spent in a nursing home in Fond du Lac, preventing him from attending the NRHS meetings. But he kept in touch with several members of our organization, and enjoyed Sparks and Cinders.

Sparks & Cinders
1102 Aspen Dr
Waukesha, WI 53188

FIRST CLASS

The Final Frame



Soo Line Caboose #268 rounds a curve at Fairwater, WI in Oct 2010. The sun is setting in the west. The train was pulled by Soo Line #1003. Photo by Keith Schmidt