

Wisconsin Chapter National Railway Historical Society

Volume 70 Number 5



May 2020

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

May 1, 2020 in-person chapter meeting replaced by virtual (online) meeting



With the arrival of Spring the railroads in Wisconsin have started to work on a few maintenance-of-way projects as evidenced by CP ballast train 8WWA at Truesdell, Wisc. on April 3rd. The train departed from Milwaukee and spent the morning dumping ballast at multiple locations along the C&M Sub. The train's two SD40-2s have run around the train and are being throttled up as they begin the trip to Portage to tie down for the night. Photo by Dan Grudzielanek

In This Issue

- ◆ *From the President*
- ◆ *Do You Know ?*
- ◆ *Virtual May Meeting*

Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



Friday May 1, 2020 ~~Dave Sima FRA Modern Day Steam Regulations and Other FRA Regulations~~
See elsewhere in this issue for info about our replacement virtual (online) meeting
Saturday June 6, 2020 ~~Annual Chapter Banquet at Pallas Banquet Center – BANQUET POSTPONED !!~~

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 handi-cap 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.nrhiswis.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

The annual chapter banquet, scheduled for June 6, has been postponed, due to the coronavirus outbreak. We pledge to hold the banquet when life returns to normal. Please watch this space for updates.

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 June, 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.nrhiswis.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 Mike Yugas president@nrhiswis.org (or via USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yugas, President (president@nrhiswis.org); Keith Schmidt, Vice-President; Tom Marcussen, Secretary; Tara Grudzielanek, 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@nrhiswis.org (or USPS at PO Box 070758 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 ©2020, Wisconsin Chapter, Inc.,

Notes from the Prexy

I hope you are safe and healthy.

The world is deep in the throes of a coronavirus pandemic, and we have cancelled our in-person meetings for April and May. Our banquet, originally scheduled for June 6 this year, is being postponed until all this is done.

However, we do want to continue to meet, and the way to do that in this environment is virtually, via videoconference over the internet. Our regular monthly meeting will take place at 7:30pm on Friday, May 1 – on your computer (or tablet, or smartphone). See the article elsewhere in this issue for general information. Full details will be posted on the chapter's website. The chapter's board held an informal virtual meeting in early April (see draft minutes elsewhere in this issue) where we specifically discussed conducting our regular membership meetings in this manner. The advantages are plentiful: we still maintain our meeting programming while maintaining proper social distancing. Whether you are a meeting regular, or if you live far from Fox Point and cannot usually attend, here's your chance to participate. After all, you'll probably be stuck at home anyway. I hope you can join us!

Our First Virtual Meeting

Dave Sima's presentation about the FRA and modern steam locomotives, originally scheduled for May 1, will be rescheduled for fall 2020, when we again meet in person.

In its place, Wisconsin Chapter is holding its first-ever virtual meeting, featuring short "slide shows" from several members. Here's how it will work:

On your computer, tablet or smartphone, install the Zoom meeting application. There are versions for Mac OS, Windows, iOS and Android devices. It's easy to do – just go to <http://zoom.us> and download the appropriate software for your computer. If you don't have a camera and microphone on your computer, you can still install the software and join the meeting, but we won't be able to see and hear you.

Alternately, you may participate on your iOS or Android device. Just download the appropriate app from your app store (search for "ZOOM Cloud Meetings"), and launch it.

Regardless of the device you use, you'll want to set up Zoom well before our meeting. Additionally, we recommend participating in an informal meeting or two with your trusted friends, so you can get a feel for how the videoconferencing software works. This is important, because we won't be able to provide real-time support the evening of the meeting. Important details about connecting to our meeting will be shared to all on our email list a few minutes before the virtual doors open, by 7:00 pm Friday, May 1. Feel free to drop in at any time for informal chit-chat with other members. If you are not on our email announcement list, please send a request to Mike Yuhas at president@nrhswis.org.

President Mike Yuhas will call the meeting to order promptly at 7:30 pm. After a few short announcements, we'll turn the floor over to our presenters. At press time, Keith Schmidt and Dan Grudzielanek have committed to presenting short programs. They will run 10- to 15-minute slide shows on their computers and share their screens – and you will see their photos and hear their narration as if you were sitting next to them.

If you would like to present a show, please send a note to Mike Yuhas, who will add you to the program and provide additional technical information. Check the chapter's website (www.nrhswis.org) for an up-to-date lineup of presenters and topics.



Chapter's New Address

With some the changes made in the board of directors and also security concerns it was decided that the chapter should get a Post Office Box. So as of now any correspondence sent to the chapter should go to the PO Box. The box will be checked often for mail. This will be important for payment of dues and any other events. Below is the new address for the chapter

Wisconsin Chapter NRHS
PO Box 070758
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Please make a note of it.

UPCOMING EVENTS !!

With the current situation involving COVID-19 and attempts to contain the spread of the virus. PLEASE check before heading to any of the events listed to make sure they will still be happening. Events are being cancelled and postponed daily so please check before leaving.

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
Check website for updates on meetings

WISE Division NMRA www.wisedivision.org
Check website for updates on meetings

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

Milwaukee Road Historical Association
www.mrha.com
2020 National Convention - Elgin, IL
June 18-21, 2020 CANCELLED

Soo Line Historical and Technical Society
www.sooline.org

Green Bay & Western Historical Society
www.gbwhs.com
No Meetings Scheduled

Board Meeting Minutes April 11 2020

Here are the minutes of the April 11, 2020, Wisconsin NRHS meeting (via videoconference).

The following people participated:

Mike Yugas
Andrew Roach
Ralph McClure
Dan Grudzielanek
Tara Grudzielanek
Keith Schmidt

According to the bylaws, for the purposes of board meetings, a quorum is 2/3 of the board. Our board consists of nine individuals. Six board members were present, thus we attained a quorum.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am. Participants used the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

Each of the participants briefly described the adjustments to their daily routines due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Tara reported that she had signed the necessary bank paperwork to become an authorized check writer. Keith advised he will do the same when public health restrictions are lifted.

Mike mentioned that his local amateur radio club has suspended its in-person meetings, and that they held a membership meeting via videoconference this past week, with 39 attendees, about the normal size for an in-person meeting. The club president presided and acted as emcee, and after a few announcements, the floor was turned over to the presenter, who shared his computer screen and gave a PowerPoint presentation. There were no glitches.

Mike reported that he and Keith initiated a private video meeting to discuss the possibilities of holding a chapter meeting through videoconference. He further noted they screen-shared presentations and were pleased with the results.

Mike then shared his screen with the board and presented a few slides from a prior chapter presentation. Keith also presented a few slides from a PowerPoint on his computer. All participants agreed that the remote viewing of the presentations would make for a good experience for members while social-distancing requirements are in effect.

Therefore, the board agreed to cancel the in-person May meeting, and replace it with a virtual (videoconference) meeting.

The board then discussed the next item on our calendar, the June 6 banquet. All agreed to postpone it, and to reschedule on a date to be determined when all returns to normal. Ralph said he would call the venue to alert of our intent.

Mike noted a modest monthly charge, approximately \$15, to utilize the Zoom platform for online group meetings. All agreed this is a reasonable fee for the chapter to pay for a few months.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Yugas
President

Railroads Feel Affect of Coronavirus Pandemic

Amtrak, which normally handles 100,000 passengers a day, is down to about 4,000 a day because of the coronavirus pandemic, CEO Richard Anderson told employees during his weekly Town Hall session on Friday. "We are running trains where we have more staff than customers," Anderson said. While the \$1.018 billion Amtrak is receiving from the coronavirus relief act is "essential," he said, "we are burning about \$50 million a week in cash." About 57% of all departures have been suspended nationwide, including about 77% in the Northeast Corridor, he said. "We are going to be a very different railroad when we come out the other on the other side of this; we will be 20% smaller ... We will build up from where we are as customers buy tickets. The hope is that people will realize we're much better than airlines in shorter-haul markets because we don't pack 'em in like the airlines do."

The Association of American Railroads today reported U.S. rail traffic for the week ending April 11, 2020.

For this week, total U.S. weekly rail traffic was 412,503 carloads and intermodal units, down 21.9% compared with the same week last year.

Total carloads for the week ending April 11 were 198,726 carloads, down 23.8% compared with the same week in 2019, while U.S. weekly intermodal volume was 213,777 containers and trailers, down 20% compared to 2019.

One of the 10 carload commodity groups posted an increase compared with the same week in 2019. It was grain, up 595 carloads, to 22,237. Commodity groups that posted decreases compared with the same week in 2019 included coal, down 29,609 carloads, to 52,468; motor vehicles and parts, down 15,521 carloads, to 2,185; and metallic ores and metals, down 5,982 carloads, to 17,949.

"The pandemic is affecting firms in every industry, and railroads are no exception," said AAR Senior Vice President John T. Gray. "When rail customers suffer a drop in demand for their products, their need for transportation services declines as well, and that negatively impacts rail volumes. That said, railroads are continuing to move massive amounts of freight, including countless essential chemicals, food products and manufactured goods that we need in good times and bad. It's still too early to say when the current crisis will end, but when it does — and it will — railroads will be ready to ramp up their service to safely, reliably and cost-effectively meet the freight transportation needs of our nation."

Courtesy Kalmbach Media TRAINS Newswire

Do You Know ?

Story and Photos by Dave Nelson

Freight car loads are often secured and braced by nailing timbers onto the floors. And those floors can be expensive: Bruce and Anderson, which both make high quality oak flooring for residences, supply quality laminated edge-grain oak for use in boxcar floors. The floor has to be smooth and even to avoid ripping the sacks and boxes of material that may be shipped in the car. And oak is so hard and tight-grained that it can withstand the weight and abrasion of the loads (remember, the famous Naval warship USS Constitution of 1797 got its nickname "Old Ironsides" when British 18-pound cannonballs bounced off its astoundingly strong and durable hull -- made of oak).

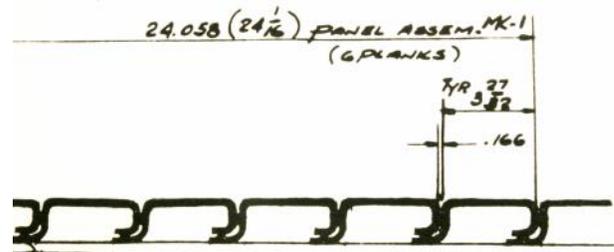
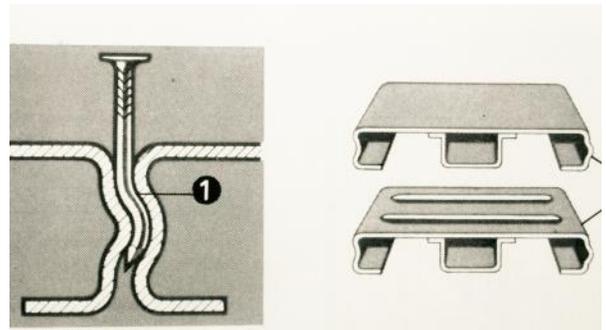
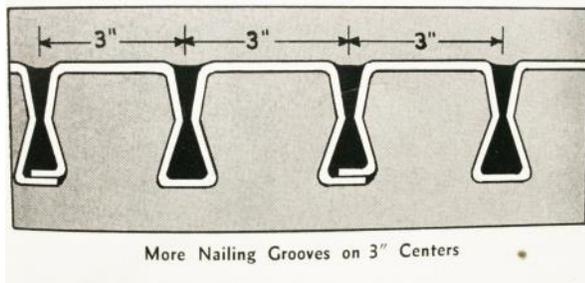
Now, a well-maintained edge-grain oak residential floor can and will last several lifetimes, but with constant nailing of wood bracing, with the abrasion from the heavy loads themselves, and the use of fork lift trucks and other machinery on the floor, wood floors in boxcars take a terrible beating. The removal of nails also does great damage; if you've ever tried to pry up a tack strip from a carpeted oak floor you know how reluctant oak is to give up a ribbed nail! Chipped and splintered wood is not uncommon.

A railroad that supplies freight cars to customers has the duty to supply a "broom clean" car that has nothing about the floors or walls that can damage the next load, and that includes protruding nails left in the floor. Failure to do this thoroughly may leave the railroad vulnerable to claims should the next load arrive in damaged condition. This means all "dunnage" - busted up bits of wood bracing or steel strapping, fragments of packaging from the prior load, not to mention any nails remaining in the floor, all have to be removed before the car will be accepted by the shipper, and many rail yards have a "car cleaning track" for just this purpose. Car cleaning is itself a considerable expense, but even more expensive is having to regularly replace a costly wood floor that has been reduced to splinters after repeated nailings of support bracing, and the often rough and hasty removal of the bracing and nails after the car has been delivered and emptied.

In the 1930s some boxcar manufacturers began to experiment with perforated steel flooring with wood underneath. Bracing would be nailed into the wood through the perforations. This product addressed damage to wood floors from heavy, shifting or sharp-edged loads, and from fork lift trucks and other mechanical loading aids, but it did nothing to address the constant, repetitive attack on the integrity of the wood itself from the constant nailing of bracing and then the removal of the nails. Indeed the perforated steel tended to concentrate the nailing damage so much that the underlying wood still had to be replaced far too often.

Hence the invention of the "nailable steel floor." The what? Yes, nailable steel floors: steel planks as the flooring for boxcars (and gondolas). The slight gaps between these planks of steel are wide enough to drive a large, long nail into. The inner edges of the steel planks hold the nail in place in several different ways. Some nailable steel floor planks have a sort of tongue and groove on their edges (National Steel Corp.), so the driven nail is actually curved around the tongue in a "U" shape and held in place by the groove. Another form has a "pinch point" that holds the nail (Transco), and still a third version of the nailable steel floor has the edges of the steel planks form a curve (Republic Steel). The driven nail is curved and thus won't easily work its own way free. These photos of nailable steel floor advertisements tell the story. I imagine a fair amount of elbow grease is needed to remove the nails from a nailable steel floor. And while nice houses and ordinary boxcars may share Bruce or Anderson oak flooring, I do not expect to see nailable steel floor planks become popular for residential use any time soon.

Because of this shorter spacing, this flooring also provides increased strength for all larger sized truck wheels, too.



Maintenance Time on the Railroad

With fewer trains running maintenance is in full swing on the railroads. Dan Grudzielanek caught a ballast train on the Canadian Pacific sporting two SD40-2's in classic CP paint on April 3rd. Dan also caught a Herzog work train assigned to cleaning ditches at St Francis. The train has been in the area since late March. Keith Schmidt caught the Loram Railgrinder train at Duplainville on the Canadian National on April 11, 2020



From the Archives

May 1950 - 70 Years Ago

The newly-organized Milwaukee Chapter – NRHS is planning its first fantrip. It will be a special trip on the SpeedRail system (formerly The Milwaukee Electric Lines) on May 7.

May 1955- 65 Years Ago

GRANDEST EVENT FOR RAILFANS IN 1955 – NRHS Convention in Milwaukee, Wis., September 3, 4, 5. Three big days and nights, with meetings, banquet, field trips, inspection tours, and other activities. Visit old friends; meet new ones; learn what's new in railroad circles.

May 1960 - 60 Years Ago

The Wisconsin Chapter celebrated its 10th Anniversary with its Annual Banquet on April 30. Among the guests was NRHS President E. Lewis Pardee.

May 1965 - 55 Years Ago

The Burlington, Milwaukee & North Western – Monday, April 12, saw the temporary end of service along the River Division of the CMStP&P due to flooding from the Mississippi River. The last passenger train between La Crosse and St. Paul was No. 3, the Afternoon Hiawatha, of Sunday. The detour route for the Milwaukee Road has been via the ex-Omaha Road, now C&NW's Twin Cities Division, from Camp Douglas to Minneapolis. One freight train has been operated via the Valley Division north of New Lisbon to Junction City, then via the Soo Line to Minneapolis. On Monday the CB&Q also began a detour route consisting of their own line south of La Crosse, C&NW to Wyeville, and "Omaha" to Minneapolis. Thursday, April 15, witnessed the beginning of operation of the North Coast Limited and Empire Builder through Milwaukee using CMStP&P Chicago-Camp Douglas and the "Omaha" to Minneapolis.

May 1970 - 50 Years Ago

Larry Trovinger reported on the first run of No. 11, the combined remnants of the California Zephyr, the Nebraska Zephyr, and the American Royal. Larry completed the trip despite several reservation snafus....Mark Borleske contributed a history of the North Shore Line's Skokie Valley Route culminating in the first run of the Skokie Swift on April 18, 1964....Also appearing was a pæan to Great Northern's goat, Rocky, which originally appeared in the St. Paul Dispatch

May 1975 - 45 Years Ago

"Light Rail: A New Option for Urban Transportation" was the theme of a two-day conference sponsored jointly by UW, Marquette, and the Wisconsin Coalition for Balanced Transportation on April 25 and 26....Editor Bob Adams reported on a grand detour aboard the Broadway Limited which saw the former Pennsy flagship make the last hundred miles or so into Chicago via former NYC trackage....Due to delays caused by necessary track reinforcement, Old Smoky is now scheduled to arrive at Union on July 17....The Milwaukee Road has instituted a system-wide train re-numbering scheme which eliminates duplication and standardizes train designations into district number groupings

May 1980 - 40 Years Ago

The continuing dismantling of the Milwaukee Road was noted....The majority of this month's issue was the conclusion of a very detailed description of "A Journey on a Milwaukee Road XL-Special Dynamometer Car Test Run" by Bob Perthel.

May 1985 - 35 Years Ago

The Third Annual Butler Railroad Day is scheduled for Sunday, July 28, with ex-C&NW No. 1385 once again powering the Butler 400. Wisconsin Chapter is a co-sponsor of the event....At press time it is likely that 1385 will also power the Circus Parade Limited from Baraboo to Milwaukee via Madison, Janesville, and Illinois points on July 9 and 10....A tentative agreement by IC to sell its Iowa Division to a new company which will operate it as the Chicago Central & Pacific was announced on April 2.

May 1990 - 30 Years Ago

Chapter members were saddened by the passing of Fran Wiener on April 4. Fran was a brakeman and crew caller during his nearly 36 years with the Soo Line. Fran chronicled the birth of the Wisconsin Central and spent many hours chasing and photographing trains....American-European Express operation between New York and Chicago on the Broadway Limited is tentatively scheduled to begin May 3....The speaker at the Annual Chapter banquet will be Joe Weinfurter. His topic will be the Circus Train.

May 1995 - 25 Years Ago

Amtrak announced additional service cutbacks on April 7. Effective June 11, the California Zephyr will only operate four days per week west of Salt Lake City and the City of New Orleans will only operate four days per week. Other service cuts included the Illini, Hoosier State, and the Illinois Zephyr. Loop and State House service will be discontinued. The speaker at the Chapter's Annual Banquet on May 6 will be Chris Burger, former C&NW Wisconsin Division Manager and currently President and CEO of the Central Railroad of Indiana and the Central Railroad of Indianapolis

May 2000 - 20 Years Ago

Wisconsin Chapter celebrated its 50th Anniversary with the Annual Banquet. NRHS President Greg Molloy was the speaker. Sparks & Cinders celebrated with a giant 24-page issue featuring color photos on the front and back cover pages....Amtrak began service between Chicago and Janesville with the Lake Country Limited on April 15....On April 2 crews began installing the overhead trolley wire for the Kenosha streetcar system. Regular service is scheduled to begin in June....The historic 1887 former Soo Line depot in Ashland was heavily damaged in a multi-alarm fire on April 2

May 2005 - 15 Years Ago

The Annual Chapter Banquet was held on May 7 at the South Woods of Cudahy. The speaker was Trains magazine editor Jim Wrinn....On April 13, Amtrak trains 7 and 27, the Empire Builder, derailed on the crossover at Grand Avenue. No injuries were reported, but the train was annulled at Milwaukee. The dining car and the coach behind it derailed but remained upright – the diner continued to serve dinner – passengers remained on board and were transferred to the rear five Superliners which remained on the tracks and were towed back to the Milwaukee depot a few hours after the derailment

May 2010 - 10 Years Ago

Butler Railroad Night continued at the Butler Public Library. Presenters included Mike Yuhas, Tom Hoffmann and Jerry Hilton. Amtrak's National Train Day was celebrated on May 8, 2010. This is the 3rd year for the nationwide event that features railroad appreciation and safety. The speaker at the Chapter's 60th Anniversary banquet is Eric Godfrey chapter member and co-editor of the annual NRHS Yearbook and the bi-monthly NRHS News publications.

May 2015 - 5 Years Ago

The 65th Anniversary Chapter Banquet speaker is Kevin Keefe. Kevin was editor of TRAINS magazine for 8 years before becoming Vice President Editorial at Kalmbach Publishing. Kevin will give two presentations. One "Trains of the East Side" featuring Milwaukee Road Beer Line. The second will feature the work of George Gloff long-time Art Director of TRAINS Magazine. The banquet will be held at Meyers Restaurant on May 4, 2015.

An EF-4 tornado touched down in the area of Rochelle, IL on Thursday April 9th. Damage was reported in the area of Flagg Center on the BNSF north of Rochelle. Damage was also reported in Fairdale on the Canadian Pacific, formerly Iowa Chicago and Eastern and before that Milwaukee Road.



Wisconsin Chapter NRHS
PO Box 070758
Milwaukee, WI 53207

FIRST CLASS

The Final Frame



An unexpected ending to a freight train on the Canadian Pacific. CP Train #287 had two passenger cars on the rear of its train on April 4th at Duplainville, WI. Both cars were headed to Calgary, Alberta Canada Photo by Keith Schmidt