



NRHS

WISCONSIN CHAPTER



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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.

Preserving Wisconsin Railroad History for 75 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage www.nrhwis.org



NRHS President Tony White presents Chapter President Keith Schmidt and Vice President Ward Wells and the entire Wisconsin Chapter Board of Directors with a 75 year anniversary certificate from the NRHS National. Photo by willing attendee and Keith's camera

In This Issue

- ◆ *From the President*
- ◆ *Chapter Banquet Photos*
- ◆ *Trainfest Help Needed*

Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule

Upcoming chapter events

Friday November 7 2025 "Beyond the Frozen Tundra" by Rob Pfeiffer—the show features focuses on the MILW/E&LS and the C&NW/UP/WC/CN lines from Green Bay north to Escanaba and Iron Mountain from the 70s to present day.

Friday December 6 2025 TBA To Be Announced

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. For more up to date information on meetings and speakers, and also any weather cancellations, check the chapter's webpage at www.nrhswis.org.

Doors open by 7:00 pm, so arrive early to socialize. Meetings start at 7:30pm sharp. Please bring a friend! Our meetings are live-streamed on the Zoom platform. Connection details are shared with chapter members and other interested persons via email the day of the meeting, or before. To ensure you are made aware of this info, we must have a working email address on file - send yours to president@nrhswis.org.

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

The Big Picture is your page!

We've changed the format of the Sparks & Cinders back page, giving us room to run a large photo. Member submissions are solicited. Please send one or two of your outstanding pictures to Keith Schmidt, editor@nrhswis.org.

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.nrhswis.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 Yuhas membership@nrhswis.org (or via USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Keith Schmidt President Ward Wells Vice President, Tom Marcussen, Secretary; Tara Grudzielanek, Treasurer. Directors: Dan Grudzielanek, Mike Yuhas, Ralph McClure and Neal Wegner. One Vacancy

Contributions to Sparks & Cinders should be sent to Editor Keith Schmidt at editor@nrhswis.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 ©2025, Wisconsin Chapter, Inc., NRHS.

From the President

With no meeting summary for the October I decided to move the President's column to here and make it a little bit longer.

The year of celebration of the 75th anniversary of the chapter is coming to a close. What a year it was. We celebrated with snacks before some chapter meetings. The chapter visited the Christopher Transportation Museum in Sheboygan to check his collection of transportation related china and other railroadiana items. We also visited the beautiful gardens that surround the area. Some of us even got the pump and handcar and crash into the bumpers. It was a great day.

The chapter partnered with our great friends at the East Troy Railroad Museum for a Wisconsin Chapter Day. Chapter members were able to ride for free that day. We asked the museum to bring out the newly restored North Shore Merchandise Car #228 and setup it up for an afternoon photo session. Thanks to the museum we were able to get a local resident with his classic Chevy truck to come and recreate loading and unloading the merchandise car.

That evening the railroad ran a special excursion for the chapter with two Wisconsin cars. North Shore #761 and Sheboygan Car #26. Chapter members and guests were able to ride either car to and from Mukwonago. One the way back to East Troy a local farmer was driving by in his 1956 Chevy Biscayne. We flagged him down and got some great shots with the classic car. It was great day for the museum and the chapter.

On Saturday August 23 the chapter partnered with Steam Locomotive Heritage Association and the Soo Line #1003 to run a public excursion with the #1003. The #1003 pulled a short train from Hartford to Horicon and then onto Burnett WI. In Burnett a couple of photo runbys were done and coal was added to the tender. Then the train headed back to Hartford. The trip was made to give local residents a chance to see and experience railroad history running. Plenty of people came out to check out the #1003. Close to 200 people were in Burnett. It was a great day. Thanks to everyone that made it possible.

Presidents Message continued from Page 2

Saturday October 4th the chapter held its 75th anniversary banquet at the Polish Community Center. The banquet was also part of the NRHS National Fall Conference that was held in Milwaukee that weekend. Close to 80 people attended the banquet. It was nice to visit with chapter members but also to meet NRHS members from all over the country. Some of them are frequent visitors on Zoom with the monthly chapter meetings. It was great to talk to them in person and shake their hand. The food was excellent and the fellowship was great. We had a special 75th anniversary sheet car with the anniversary logo and congratulations written on it.

NRHS President Tony White was in attendance and presented the chapter with a 75th anniversary banner. Mike Yuhas was presented with the chapter's President's award for his work over the years.

Arlyn Colby, Wisconsin author and railroad historian was our speaker. Arlyn highlighted photos from his books of Wisconsin branchlines. His presentation was very well received. The evening ended with handing out some door prizes donated by generous donors including East Troy Railroad Museum, Cratville Publications, Arlyn Colby, Ward Wells, Wisconsin Chapter NRHS and Neal and Cathy Wegner.

Each table at the banquet was decorated with a great centerpiece done by Tara Grudzielanek and Cathy Wegner. The guests at the table had to decide who got that.

It has been a great 75th anniversary year. A BIG THANK YOU !! to everyone that has helped out with the planning and making these events happen. Let's look forward to another 75th years.

Keith Schmidt



Not the Usual Meeting Room

Due to the historic flooding in the Milwaukee area North Shore Congregational Church basement was flooded and damaged. The church was still willing to host the Friday evening meeting on September 5th. So we had it in the very comfortable "Friendship Lounge". Those in attendance enjoyed nice seating and carpet. Thanks to Dan G for bringing portable screen and sound bar. Things worked out nicely. As of right now I'm not sure where we will be meeting in the church for November. Please come and visit anyways.



Trainfest 2025 is right around the corner

Do you enjoy talking trains with people? If so, the Chapter is looking for you. The Wisconsin Chapter NRHS will be hosting a table at Trainfest 2025 Saturday November 1st and Sunday November 2nd. This year's show is at the Baird Center in downtown Milwaukee. The show's hours are 9am to 5pm Saturday and 9am to 4pm Sunday. We would be grateful if you could help us staff the table at any time during the show. There are no specific shifts or minimum time required. Unfortunately, we do not have any free passes to the show, but if you buy online, you can save a few dollars. If you are interested in helping out please contact Ward Wells at wwardw@hotmail.com.



In Memoriam Gary Children Past Wisconsin Chapter Member and President

Gary E. Children (June 21, 1942 -- August 30, 2025)
Survived by two children.

Gary graduated from Boy's Tech and worked 44 years as a machinist at Falk. He was an active member at East Troy, 25 year worker including on the restoration of Sheboygan car 26.

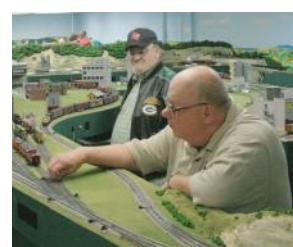
Gary was a long member and volunteer with the Wisconsin Chapter of Operation Lifesaver and did numerous presentations in and around southeast Wisconsin.

Gary was a long-time S scale model railroader and a wood-worker.

Gary was a member of the National Model Railroad Association for over 50 years. He served on WISE Division and Trainfest boards, and Midwest Region, where he served as Superintendent. He volunteered at numerous NMRA national conventions around the country. He received the NMRA President's Award and the Region's Volunteer award. He volunteered for 45 years at Trainfest.

He was Member of Indianhead Lines model railroad club for over 40 years and worked on Soo Line 1003 crews for Waukesha excursion and the Christmas with Santa at Plymouth.

Gary was a member of the Board of the Wisconsin Chapter National Railway Historical Society and was President of the Chapter 1995-96. He served on the Board of his church, Divine Shepherd Lutheran where he worked as greeter every Sunday.



Friday November 7 2025
Beyond the Frozen Tundra with Rob Pfeiffer

Join us as Rob gives his presentation titled "Beyond the Frozen Tundra." It begins with Green Bay area railroads and then includes images of the lines from Green Bay north to Marinette/Menominee, Escanaba, and Iron Mountain.

We'll see images of railroads past including C&NW, UP, WC, and MILW, as well as E&LS and CN. Images range from the 1970s to the present and include diesels from Alco, Baldwin, Whitcomb, GE and EMD wearing a multitude of paint schemes. Even a bit of steam is included.

This often-overlooked region has been a railfan's Paradise, and still includes some interesting action and scenery.

We'll be at our usual meeting place, the North Shore Congregational Church, 7330 North Santa Monica, Fox Point. For those unable to travel to Fox Point, the meeting will also be streamed, via the Zoom platform. Information regarding the Zoom meeting link will be sent out a week or so before the meeting. To register for the Zoom meeting or to become a member of the Wisconsin Chapter and support these presentations check out www.nrhwswis.org.



CNW #1697 at Marinette WI by Art Paris



GBW "Homer McGhee" at Norwood Yard Green Bay WI



WC #6531 at Pembin WI Both photos by Rob Pfeiffer

In Memoriam Burt Mall
Co-Owner of the Soo #1003 Steam Locomotive

Burt Mall passed away on October 10 2025. Burt was one of the founders of Steam Locomotive Heritage Association and co-owner of the Soo Line #1003 2-8-2 Mikado steam locomotive. Burt along with Karen and Gary Ostrand owned the #1003 were a big part of getting the locomotive moved to southeastern Wisconsin.

Burt's involvement with the Soo #1003 began in the 1990's during the initial rebuild of the locomotive and subsequent operation in the Duluth MN area. In 1999 Burt helped created 1003 Operations LLP and the subsequent transfer of ownership to the LLP. In 2010 the 1003 went a mandatory FRA rebuild. During this a non-profit was created. Steam Locomotive Heritage Association (SLHA) and Burt was President. SLHA took over operation and maintenance of the #1003. Under Burt's leadership, the #1003 continues to operate in southeast Wisconsin for younger generations to learn about steam railroading and a bygone era.

Burt is survived by his wife of 58 years Tina and three children Derek, Dane and Danielle. Also eight grandchildren.

Burt belonged to several railway preservation societies and served on the board of Lake States Railway Historical Association starting in 2022.

Memorials to the Soo #1003 (Steam Locomotive Heritage Association) are appreciated.

Burt was in attendance at the Wisconsin Chapter #1003 excursion on August 23rd. I didn't get a chance to talk to him but he was making sure things were running smooth.



Chicago & Northwestern Historical Society
Central Wisconsin Meet
Saturday November 8 2025 10am to 3pm

Smiley's Banquet Hall 4020 County Rd R, Plover, WI 54467 Just northeast of the intersection of I-39 and Hwy 54

Company store – Displays – Door prizes Please bring models/photos of C&NW and predecessor roads to display for all to enjoy
Lunch (except beverages) provided by Smiley's included in the registration COST IS \$37 PER PERSON (same price for non-C&NWHS members)

Presentations

Jim George: Wisconsin Rapids and the Chicago & North Western
Rich Peters: C&NW in Marshfield and central Wisconsin
Arlyn Colby: C&NW's western Wisconsin branchlines

C&NWHS archives building update & society news

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT Dave Mikelson
952-484-3596 Davem1385@Comcast.net



Chapter 75th Anniversary Banquet

On Saturday October 4th the Wisconsin Chapter NRHS celebrated 75 years with a banquet filled with good food, fellowship and some fun. The chapter was joined by national NRHS members attending the NRHS Fall Conference being held in Milwaukee and hosted by the chapter.

The evening included NRHS National President Tony White presenting the chapter board with a 75 year anniversary banner. Chapter President Keith Schmidt presented the "Presidents Award" to Mike Yuhas for his service to the chapter over many years. Our guest speaker Arlyn Colby gave a great presentation on shortlines in Wisconsin based on the books he has written.

The evening ended with giving away some door prizes provided some gracious donors including, East Troy Railroad Museum, Arlyn Colby, Cratville Publications, Neal and Cathy Wegner, Ward Wells and the Wisconsin Chapter NRHS. THANK YOU TO ALL !!



Guests arriving from NRHS Conference



Enjoying some stories and fellowship before the banquet



All seated as the banquet begins



Keith Schmidt and Tony White making a point it appears



National NRHS President Tony White presents the Wisconsin Chapter Board of Directors with a 75th anniversary banner



75th Anniversary Banquet Saturday October 4 2025



A view from above at a great dinner with great friends old and new. Photo by Cate Kratville-Wrinn



The Guenzlers from Missouri enjoying some of the food served at the Polish Community Center. Photo by Cate Kratville Wrinn



Our guest speaker Arlyn Colby sharing his stories of branchlines in Wisconsin. Great presentation. Photo by Cate Kratville- Wrinn



Keith Schmidt with Mike Yuhas. Mike received the chapter's Presidents award for all of time and efforts. Photo by Dawn Holmberg



Each table at the banquet was adorned with a beautiful center-piece put together by Tara Grudzielanek and Cathy Wegner



A table of door prizes given away at the banquet. The door prizes were donated by several great supporters of the chapter.

From the Archives

November 1955—70 Years Ago

On November 19th the last Santa Claus Parade will be run by the Transport Company for Schuster's Department Store. The parade will start at 38th and Vliet Streets, proceed around downtown on Route 18, and end at the 27th and National station. The parade is scheduled to start at 7:00 p.m. (This was to be the last such parade due to the announced conversion of Route 18 to buses on November 27.)...Rumors of a monorail system for Milwaukee are floating about. The Common Council Utilities Committee mentioned the term frequently at a recent meeting and then adjourned to view a movie of the eight-mile Wuppertal in Germany

November 1960 - 65 Years Ago

John Ford, president of RHSM (a predecessor of the Mid-Continent Railway Museum) will present an unusual program at the November meeting. A tape recording of steam motive power will be one part, 3-D slides will be the other. Special 3-D glasses have been obtained at extremely modest cost so that we may have the feeling of depth in this presentation. Among John's subjects will be: a CB&Q fan trip, the WC-NRHS 1954 Milwaukee-Madison fan trip using No. 171, and our recent Milwaukee-Baraboo C&NW jaunt....Jim Scribbins announced that the Chapter fantrip on the C&NW to Baraboo was a success. The seven-car train (maximum length for one diesel unit) accommodated 464 people with 448 seats

November 1965 - 60 Years Ago

The last remnant of the Southwest Limited disappeared the night of October 6-7, giving Nos. 25 and 26 (250-251 between Milwaukee and Sturtevant) the dubious distinction of being the first train to be discontinued after the opening of the new Milwaukee Road depot.

November 1970—55 Years Ago

The last westbound RPO run on MILW No. 57 was made on September 18. Also, the last runs of MILW Nos. 1 and 4, the Pioneer Limited were made on September 7 and 8. The Pioneer Limited operated for 97 years....A Milwaukee Journal editorial lamented the impending death of rail passenger service, noting that when the new Union Station had opened five years before there were 30 passenger trains operating daily out of the station but that currently there were only nine; five on the Milwaukee Road and four on the North Western.

November 1975—50 Years Ago

The East Troy Trolley Museum is back in action under new management "after suffering from various near-fatal wounds." Paul Fischer is the new President....Chapter members were advised to photograph pre-Amtrak passenger equipment now, since much is due to be re-placed soon. The Wisconsin Chapter is the 16th largest Chapter in NRHS, with a membership of 129.

November 1980 - 45 Years Ago

Chapter members are gearing up for Mid-Rail '80, scheduled for November 7, 8, and 9....The Cannonball commuter train running between Milwaukee and Watertown was revived for a two week demonstration from October 13 through 24 utilizing Budd SPV-2000 equipment. Under special agreement with the UTU, it was operated with a two man crew—engineer and conductor

November 1985 - 40 Years Ago

In recognition of the 50th Anniversary of NRHS, Chapter Vice-President Dorothy Wiener is collecting photos of all Chapter members which will be placed in the Chapter archives....A complete roster of the C&NW business car and locomotive fleet was published.

November 1990 —35 Years Ago

AT&SF has developed a five-unit articulated hopper car approximately 160 ft. long. It has 125-ton trucks at the four articulation points and 70-ton trucks at the ends....A route change for the Broadway Limited and the Capitol Limited will be implemented on November 11. The new route for the Broadway is via CSX from Chicago to Pittsburgh and the Capitol will run via South Bend, Toledo, and Cleveland to Pittsburgh.

November 1995 —30 Years Ago

The Broadway Limited passed into history on September 9-10. The train and its predecessor, the Pennsylvania Special, operated for 92 years. The train was named, not for the famous New York thoroughfare, but rather for the Pennsy's four track "broadway."...The UP is contributing a 19-car train to carry the Olympic flame across the U. S. on its way to the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. A specially-built "cauldron car" will carry the flame....The WC has completed removal of the ex-FRV/C&NW line through Neenah

November 2000— 25 Years Ago

Ed Burkhardt, the ousted founder of Wisconsin Central, Ltd., filed documents with securities regulators on October 20 indicating that he intends to initiate a proxy fight to regain control of the company....Amtrak Chairman of the Board Gov. Tommy Thompson took a look via helicopter at a potential site for a high-speed rail station near Mitchell International Airport on October 20. The proposed station would be on S. 6th St. near where the CP Chicago-Milwaukee line crosses under the Airport Freeway Spur....In a ceremony at Washington Union Station on October 18, Amtrak announced that the 150 mph Acela Express will begin service between Washington and Boston on December 11.

November 2005 — 20 Years Ago

If current predictions hold and world shipping trends continue, train traffic on Canadian National's main line through Waukesha should double in the next 10 to 15 years, state Railroad Commissioner Rodney Kreunen (note R Kreunen passed away in Oct 2015) said in a recent interview with the Waukesha Freeman....CSXT has made arrangements to purchase ballast from Michels Materials in Waterloo and have it delivered to CSXT via the Chicago gateway using Wisconsin & Southern Railroad cars and locomotives....Sources indicate that freight service on the East Troy Electric Railroad has been discontinued because the track structure cannot support the weight of freight cars currently in use, especially 100-ton cars.

November 2010 — 15 Years Ago

The East Troy Railroad Museum took delivery September 26 of five historic Chicago South Shore & South Bend interurban railcars. The museum plans to cosmetically restore the cars and employ them on its excursion and dining car operations. The five cars were built between 1926 and 1929, and operated on South Shore's route between Chicago and South Bend, Ind., until 1982. The National Park Service, the cars' most recent owner, restored one to its 1929 appearance. They've been stored at Arcelor Mittal's steel mill at Gary, Ind. Canadian National agreed to move the cars free of charge from Gary to the East Troy Electric Railroad interchange at Mukwonago. CN GP38-2 9579 moved the cars as a special train. Museum Executive Director Beverly Bobholz said the cars will undergo work in carbarns at East Troy.

November 2015 — 10 Years Ago

At about 5:30pm a UP rail train was making some moves on the wye track near where the old St Francis tower stood. At the same time a UP coal train destined for the power plant in Sheboygan was coming northbound on the Kenosha sub. Just north of St Francis Avenue the coal train collided with the rear of the rail train. The rear power car of the rail train was pushed off the tracks. The rest of both trains stayed upright and on the tracks. No one was injured. With the Kenosha sub being the former "Passenger" line it has several grade crossings. All of the crossings from St Francis Ave to just north of Layton Ave in Cudahy were blocked until about 5am on Wednesday September 30th

November 2020 — 5 Years Ago

J David Ingles former editor of TRAINS Magazine and Classic Trains staffer passed away at his home on October 9. JDI was a lifelong rail enthusiasts. He joined the TRAINS staff in 1971 and became editor in 1987 and held the post until 1992. He had the nickname "Diesel Dave". JDI had the ability to retain much of what he learned so that he could recall the layout of a certain junction or the sequence of moves made by a certain train.

The Big Picture



On Sunday September 21 2025 the UP #6936 DD40 pulled an excursion on the Iowa Interstate from Silvis IL to Bureau IL and back. The #6936 was donated to RRHMA at Silvis by the Union Pacific Railroad. This is its first excursion. Just behind #6936 is Iowa Interstate #513 Heritage Unit. Just east of Tiskilwa IL. Photo by Keith Schmidt