

Wisconsin Chapter National Railway Historical Society

Volume 71 Number 7



September 2021

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 71 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage www.nrhswis.org



July 31st was great day to “Get Reacquainted” at the East Troy Railroad Museum. 24 members and guests take part in the morning activities. The Museum rolled out the red carpet for the group. We used the newly restored North Shore Car #761. Our group included members from Illinois, Missouri, California and of course Wisconsin. See more information and photos inside. Photo by Mike Gramm, our conductor

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Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



Friday September 10, 2021 - Favorite Slide/Digital Photo Night

Friday October 1, 2021 - Railroad Mayhem - Chris Barney and Dave Nelson

Monthly meetings are being held in the lower level of the North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point 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.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. We are also plan on offering livestream via the Zoom platform. Zoom meeting 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@nrhwis.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@nrhwis.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.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 Mike Yuhas president@nrhwis.org (or via USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yuhas, President (president@nrhwis.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@nrhwis.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 ©2021, Wisconsin Chapter, Inc., NRHS.

Virtual Meeting Summary June 4, 2021

Gathering Time

Members and guests started gathering about 7:00 pm, as usual Somebody saw Norfolk & Western 4-8-4 #611 being moved to the Strasburg Railway Museum in Pennsylvania, where it will be spending most of this summer.

Introductions & Announcements

Wisconsin Chapter President Mike Yuhas started recording, marking the beginning of the actual meeting, at 7:32 pm. There were then 42 devices connected via Zoom. Attendance was down somewhat because of the good weather outside, which is typical for June. Mike welcomed all of the attendees.

This will be our last regular meeting until September 10 (2nd Friday because of Labor Day weekend). We are going to try for at least a hybrid in-person and on-line meeting. Members will have a choice of attending either way. Whether that happens, and exactly what it will look like, are dependent on the course of the pandemic, how our technology options work out, and our joint planning with the church. We plan to have our usual "Favorite Slide (or Digital Image) Night," giving multiple members the opportunity to show a few of their favorite images. Each person is asked to limit his show to about 5 minutes so that a large number have the chance to participate.

Mike read a list of new members since our last meeting. We will also have our regular bi-monthly slide show on Tuesday, June 15, at 7:30 pm Central Daylight Saving Time. We currently have five presenters lined up for that:

Edward M. Koehler—Silverton, Colorado

Ron Burkhard—Favorite Slides from 1958 to 2018

Rob Pfeiffer—Butler and Beyond—C&NW's Last Decade

Mike del Vecchio—Norfolk Southern 1700—Authentic Heritage

Mike Sosalla—Passenger Trains—Part 1

There are currently no plans to do a bi-monthly slide show in August.

Members Favorite Slide Night

- continued from Page 2

The NRHS National Convention will be held in Milwaukee from Monday, August 23 through Saturday, August 28. The headquarters will be at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Milwaukee Downtown, at 611 West Wisconsin Avenue. Full details are now available on the NRHS National web site. National now expects to fully staff all events with their own personnel. They are not currently asking for any local volunteers. Wisconsin Chapter members will be free to attend and enjoy all events without being expected to work. (That being said, we can still add a lot to the experience of people who are not familiar with our local venues and railroad scene.)

Presentation

Arlyn Colby introduced our presenter. Brian Sykes, recently retired from Norfolk Southern, took over at 7:41 pm. There were then 51 devices connected.

Brian presented Communications & Signaling (the focus of his career)—Then and Now. Most of the subject matter covered from the steam transition era of the 1940s and 1950s up to the new Positive Train Control Systems mandated by the US Federal Government. What we have now is a lot more reliable and lower maintenance, and more useful and informative, than what we used to have.

A few more computers connected in. We reached a peak of 56 during the presentation. There were two or more people on some of those devices.

The presentation ended at 9:10 pm. A question and answer session lasted until 9:27 pm.

Wisconsin Chapter President Mike Yugas turned off the recording at that time. He left the meeting room open for an informal discussion group, as usual. That ended early at 9:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Thomas W. Marcussen
Wisconsin Chapter Secretary

Friday, September 10 marks the return of Wisconsin Chapter in-person meetings, and by longstanding tradition, the September meeting program is "Member's Favorite Slide Night."

This year both digital media and traditional analog slides can be presented. The first portion of the meeting will be digital. We'll then take a break for a short live auction (see "Railroad Book Auction," page 4), and then we'll proceed with legacy slide media. Due to limitations in available technology, online meeting participants might not be able to experience the full brightness, richness, and resolution of the slides.

The subject matter is up to you - what you did on your summer vacation, a few shots of a unique or out-of-the-way railroad operation, steam action from back in the day, railroads in transition in the 1980s, recent pics of trains or photos from deep in your vault. This is your chance to shine!

Members may share their digital images directly from their computer, or provide a program in advance

- You may use a presentation software (such as PowerPoint or Keynote) or show loose pictures
- If using a presentation software, avoid transitions such as dissolves, etc. (they don't work well due to Zoom's limited bandwidth)

You may narrate in real-time or provide a soundtrack

If you wish to show slides, bring them to the meeting in a Kodak carousel

- The images you show should be predominately railroad-related, any era
- Please limit your presentation to approximately five minutes
- If you are a member in good standing who would like to present, please email president@nrhswis.org by September 7.

From the Prexy

Hi there! It seems like forever ago that I last wrote a prexy column, so that means this one will be two or three times as long as a normal note, right?

Our biggest news is that we're aiming to resume Fox Point meetings on Friday, September 10, a year and a half since our last gathering there. It's our traditional annual MFSN (member's favorite slide night). In addition to the in-person church basement component, we will also stream the meeting via Zoom, for those who find it impractical to travel to Fox Point. Face masks won't be mandatory, but they are strongly encouraged, as well as appropriate social distancing. There's an article about the meeting elsewhere in this issue.

The chapter has received a donation of railroad books and timetables. We will be offering them for sale to chapter members via live auction at our upcoming meetings. All proceeds go to the chapter to fund our occasional expanded Sparks & Cinders, our own philanthropic efforts, and other railroad preservation activities. Look for details elsewhere in this issue.

One of the reasons this edition of Sparks & Cinders is so gigantic is because of a large feature on a modern tie gang. By necessity, the many photos had to be run relatively small. If you're not a fan of the small pictures, a large-picture version has been posted at www.nrhswis.org/index.php/2/84. Those photos can be enlarged simply by clicking on them.

Our "Get Reacquainted Special" on the East Troy Electric was a huge success. The railroad treated us like royalty, and at the conclusion, we donated \$500 to East Troy to help keep their trains running. See the feature elsewhere in this issue.

As I write this, I'm getting ready to spend a week with a couple hundred of my closest friends at the annual NRHS convention in Milwaukee. It'll be my first national convention in years, and I'll report on it at our next meeting.

Please join me in welcoming the following new members:

Marshall W. Beecher, Grayslake, Ill.
Douglas Potthoff, Richfield, Minn.

We appreciate your membership in and support of the Wisconsin Chapter, which helps preserve railroad history. Thank you, and tell a friend about our group!

Stay safe and remain healthy,
Mike

In-person meeting status

Our chapter realized unprecedented membership growth during the pandemic, likely due to the ease of meeting online. As we move forward, our plan is to meet in-person as often as possible, subject to public health concerns and presenter availability. This means that not all meetings will be held in Fox Point - some will remain online-only. Notification of meeting format will be made in Sparks & Cinders, www.nrhwis.org, and email communications to members and friends.

The September and October 2021 meetings are confirmed to take place in-person, at our time-honored meeting location at the lower level of the North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point. Face masks are not required, but, due to the close proximity of people in the enclosed space, *face masks are strongly encouraged*. This guidance is subject to change, so please be prepared to "mask-up" if requested.

In order to properly serve our newest far-flung members, we will also stream the meetings in real time, via Zoom. Connection details will be sent via email a few days prior to the meeting. If you would like to be notified, send your email address to president@nrhwis.org.

Railroad Book Auction

The chapter has received a donation of a small library of railroad books and timetables. Our benefactor, Mary Lou Findley of Chenequa, describes her late husband, Leroy James Burlingame, as a "life long railroad fan." The books and timetables will be offered for sale at auction during the next couple meetings. In-person and online meeting participants may bid. All proceeds will benefit the Wisconsin Chapter, NRHS.

These are all hard cover books below
Highball "A Pageant of Trains"

Milwaukee Rails	RP Olmsted
Train Wrecks	Robert Reed
Milwaukee Road West	Charles and Dorothy M Wood
Commuter Railroad	Dorin
Railways	C Hamilton Ellis
A Locomotive Engineers Album	Abdill
Trains of Wisconsin	
The Railroads of America	
History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad	Stover
Some Classic Locomotives	
The Roddis Line	Harvey Huston
Thunder Lake Narrow Gauge	Harvey Huston
Mainline of Mid-America	
The Railways of Britain	O.S. Nock
Golden Age of Railway Posters	JT Shackleton
The World of Steam Locomotives	Reder
Railway Development in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1914	

These are softcover books below.

Train to the Russian River	Fred Stinot
Steam Powered RR Atlas - Great Lakes West 1996	
Milwaukee Road in its Hometown	Jim Scribbins
Wisconsin Rails 1	Bob Baker
The Railroad Station	Carroll LV Meeks

As far as timetables there is a timetable for almost every railroad. Most of the timetables are from the 1940's some are older some newer. All of them are Passenger timetables. So if you have an interest in a certain railroad let me know and I can see what might be available. There is usually only one timetable per railroad some have multiples from different dates. The timetables are also in fair condition. They are showing signs of wear.

Also available are Official Railway Guides for March 1947, November 1955 and February 1971.

Also available are some TRAINS magazines. These magazines in fair condition. Some of the show some signs of slight water damage. The TRAINS magazines available are

1947 January, June, August and September
1948 Jan, Feb, April, July, Aug, Sept and Dec
1949 Jan, Mar, April, May, June, Sept, Oct, Nov and Dec
1950 All year but May
1951 Entire Year

This is a list of books and timetables to be sold via live auction at the September 10 meeting

Milwaukee Rails	RP Olmsted
Train Wrecks	Robert Reed
Commuter Railroad	Dorin
A Locomotive Engineers Album	Abdill
History of the B&O Railroad	Stover
Mainline of Mid-America	
Steam Powered RR Atlas GLW 1996	
Milwaukee Road in its Hometown	Scribbins

Timetables will be for railroads listed below

Ann Arbor	Chicago Burlington and Quincy
Algoma Central	Canadian National
Alton Railroad	Canadian Pacific
Atlantic Coast Line	Chicago Northwestern
Bangor and Aroostook	
Boston and Maine	
B&O Railroad	
Boston and Albany	

October online slide show

Join us for the Chapter's online slide show! Less formal than a regular meeting, these online events feature the work of five railroad photographers, each presenting a 15-minute slide show on a variety of railroad subjects.

Our next show is set for Tuesday evening, October 19. If you'd like to present a 15-minute program, send an email to president@nrhwis.org.

See www.nrhwis.org for up-to-date info. Zoom connection details will be sent to members via email within 24 hours of this event. If you have not supplied the chapter with a valid email address, please send it to president@nrhwis.org to receive all notifications.

“Let’s Get Reacquainted”

by Keith Schmidt

“Let’s Get Reacquainted”. This phrase is unfortunately something that has been common after all of the events of 2020 and 2021 with the pandemic, lock downs and social distancing. On Sunday June 27, 2021 I was invited to the inaugural run of the North Shore Car #761 at East Troy Electric Railroad. The car had gone through a complete restoration and was ready to go. After the car trip I was talking to Neal and Cathy Wegner at the depot. I mentioned that it would be great to have a get reacquainted charter with #761. They agreed that it would be nice to do that. Then while enjoying some cake and punch I was talking with Ryan Jonas, President of East Troy Railroad, and I mentioned a get reacquainted charter. He also liked the idea so things were coming together.

I got home that evening and sent an email out to Chapter President Mike Yuhas and he also liked the idea and said let’s do it. So we decided to do it sooner rather than later. Saturday July 31st. We would ask to use North Shore Car #761. We would also like to have a photo runby and a shop tour. So it was time to plan.

I got in touch with Ryan, who put me in touch with Jim Feyerherm ,Operations Manager. Everything was coming together. An email was sent out to all members announcing the trip. Invitations were also mailed to members that didn’t have an email address. 24 people were in attendance on Saturday July 31st. It was a great weather day. Our Conductor was Mike Gramm. Our motorman was Jim Feyerherm. THANK YOU to everyone at East Troy for a great day. After the charter was completed, Mike Yuhas presented Ryan Jonas with a donation of \$500 from the chapter. After the charter many of the participants headed over to LD’s BBQ to enjoy some food and fellowship.

Below are some photos from the Let’s Get Reacquainted charter. More photos are on page 10.



Photo Run By at Cemetery East of Hwy 20 Tom Hoffmann



Waiting to Depart East Troy Keith Schmidt



Rolling Along Hwy ES Eastbound Keith Schmidt



Eastbound at Army Lake Road Keith Schmidt



Door to Door service at the Shop Tom Hoffmann



At Speed along Hwy ES Keith Schmidt

Do You Know

by Dave Nelson

For years private passenger cars were a familiar sight on Amtrak's long-distance trains, and sometimes even on the Hiawatha Service inter-city trains. The 2017-2020 tenure of Richard Anderson as Amtrak CEO sharply curtailed the hauling of private cars, even though they made revenue for Amtrak (Armstrong cited the delays that sometimes resulted when private cars were added at intermediate stops). Whether the new CEO, William Flynn, will revisit those policies towards private cars remains to be seen.

Prior to the Anderson-initiated restrictions, however, the private car "Pine Tree State" was a fairly common visitor to Wisconsin on the Empire Builder. Pine Tree State is a Pullman Standard six double-bedroom/buffet/lounge, built at Pullman's Worchester MA factory and delivered to the New York, New Haven & Hartford in January 1955. The New Haven had ordered four such cars in 1953, the so-called "State series" which also included Bay State, Keystone State, and Nutmeg State. These were the last sleeping cars purchased by that railroad; Pullman operated the State series cars under contract with the New Haven. They were assigned to the New Haven's Montreal and Maine trains in summer and to the Boston-to-Washington "Federal."

The New Haven's "State of Maine" train was discontinued 1961, so Nutmeg State and Pine Tree State were then used on the Montrealer and the Washingtonian. The Montrealer ended in 1965. Penn Central then used the State series cars on the Broadway Limited and other trains. In 1968 the Long Island leased Nutmeg State and Pine Tree State for parlor car service on its Advance Cannon Ball train, replacing older parlor cars. When Amtrak was started in 1971 the State series cars were used on Florida trains. Pine Tree State was retired by Amtrak in July, 1981.

The State series had an unusual configuration. They were designed so that double bedrooms A&B, C&D, and E&F could be joined. The lounge had 24 seats, and could serve liquor and light breakfasts in addition to the kitchen's charcoal broilers preparing steaks, fish, and hamburgers. Triangular tables offered seating against wall; there was also the usual table seating where passengers faced each other. The Pullman Company operated the food and beverage service for the New Haven.

Here is a summary of State series owners and numbers:

Bay State NH 550; PC 4434; Amtrak 3211

Keystone State NH 551, PC 4433, Amtrak 3210

Nutmeg State NH 552, PC 4436, Amtrak 3213

Pine Tree State NH 553, PC 4435, Amtrak 3212.

In October 1999 I was railfanning in La Crosse WI and Pine Tree State was part of the consist of that day's No. 8, the eastbound Empire Builder. Because the locomotives needed to take on fuel, the train stopped short on the platform, leaving the end of the train, including the private car, far away from the paved station platform. A very elderly gent asked for assistance walking on the rocky and weedy terrain to board the Pine Tree State, so he took my arm as I carried his suitcase. Helping him aboard the car I was able to quickly take a "grab shot" of the interior -- pleasant and neat but by no means opulent. I did not see the bedrooms. The then-current owner had nicely restored the New Haven lettering but the car had subtle lettering: "PPCX 800236." There are indications on Internet web sites that more recently Pine Tree State is or has been on display at the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

Some information for this article came from a Thornton Waite article, "History in a Click," in the NMRA Magazine for June 2014.



Documenting a tie replacement project

by Mike Yuhas

It's been said that the typical wooden crosstie used on a mainline railroad has a lifespan of about 10 years. Renewing them becomes a pretty large project when you stop to consider that a mile of track contains about 3,249 ties, based on a standard 19.5-inch spacing.

According to the Railway Tie Association, US railroads installed 16,145,483 ties in 2018.

This summer BNSF is spending over \$25 million to maintain its mainline on the western edge of Wisconsin. According to BNSF, "most of this year's plan in the state will be dedicated to replacing and upgrading ballast and more than 70,000 ties." This calls for a "tie gang made up of nearly 90 people... replacing ties on Main 2 from just north of Prairie du Chien to La Crosse and Main 1 from just south of Fountain City to La Crosse."

Tie gangs are fascinating to watch in action. Michael McGinley, Senior Track Engineer with Advanced Rail Management, says "In our classes we called it an 'upside down assembly line' where the product stayed stationary while the 'factory' moved across it."

From my porch along the BNSF St. Croix Subdivision in Trempealeau, I was fortunate to have a front-row view of the action as tie production gang TP04 worked its way eastward from Fountain City.



The gang arrived at milepost 317.6 at 9:22 am on Friday, June 25. The first machines are spike pullers. This line of machines was moving from right to left. Piles of new ties are at foreground.



On June 2, 2021, the work train showed up with the tie distribution crew. That's a fairly standard backhoe with tricked-out outriggers and a bracket on the front bucket to allow it to rest (and be moved upon) the top chords of the tie hoppers. The excavator is equipped with a grapple instead of the typical digging bucket.



An anchor spreader slides anchors away from the ties marked for replacement. The anchors remain attached to the rail. This machine was built by Racine Railroad Products, of Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin. Racine has built anchor spreaders and adjusters since the 1970s. This is a model DASP - Dual Adjuster Spreader with Plate - the latest iteration of this machine, which allows the anchors to be spread with the tie and tie plate still in place (earlier versions required the tie to be removed first).



The first tie remover pulls the old ties partway out from beneath the rail. In this step, the rails are lifted so the tie (and tie plate) may be easily slid out. The bulging pile of ballast hints at the amount of force this machine exerts on the tie.



Another tie crane places new ties on the ballast shoulder adjacent to the empty crib. Note the ties piled up in front of the machine - they are pushed along the top of the rail to be used ahead. If there are more ties than cribs, the excess are placed on the trailer dragged behind the tie crane. Likewise, if an operator runs out of ties, a few can be taken from this reserve.



A couple workers equipped with long hooked rods manually remove the tie plates. These will be reused when the new ties are inserted.



Nordco tie inserters (three of them) slide new ties into the empty cribs. For speed and efficiency, there are multiple machines of the same type handling each task: the first one moves far ahead and works a certain number of ties, the second works a like number, and the third handles the remaining ties. If a machine were to develop a problem, there are a couple others nearby so production can continue, albeit at a reduced rate.



The second tie remover pulls the old tie out completely. The empty space left by the tie is known as a crib. This equipment was manufactured by Nordco, of Oak Creek, Wisconsin.



A tie handling crane removes the old ties off the roadbed



This is a multi-purpose tie aligning machine. The first unit, at left (obscured by shrouding), is a ballast broom. If any fine tuning of the tie placement is necessary, the second unit on this machine accomplishes that. Finally, a rotating broom brushes any ballast off the tie ends.



A worker manually removes any remaining ballast. This final cleaning step is important because the tie plate (next step) needs to rest on a clean tie surface.



This tamper squeezes ballast under the ties to provide a strong and stable foundation for the track structure. This machine did not appear to be working, at least not in front of our reviewing stand.



Workers pick up the tie plates and manually place them on the tie ends.



The spiker fastens the tie to the rail. Spike drivers are generally equipped with mechanical arms to shift the rail into proper gauge and hold it when inserting the spikes.



The tie plate inserter raises the rails and slides the tie plates into position, and lowers the rails onto the tie plates. Racine Railroad Products developed its first tie plate inserters in the early 2000s; this, the Advanced Tie Plate Inserter (ATPI) was introduced in 2017.



The Racine DAA (Dual Anchor Adjuster) pushes the rail anchors tight up against the new ties. This machine rides on a chassis similar to the DASP seen earlier. The toolheads are oriented to squeeze the anchors, not spread them.



Used "OTM" (on track material) is picked up with an electro-magnet and transported off the job site for recycling .

Now that the ties secured to the rail by spikes and anchors, the remaining machines in the gang concentrate on track surfacing.



The ballast regulator seen in this photo pulls the ballast shoulder up in the area disturbed by the tie installation.



Another ballast regulator plows shoulder ballast up and into the track gage to fill spots left empty by the tampers.

This step conclude the gang's day, at 1:48 pm. All machines secured their tool heads and transited back to their temporary base near Fountain City.



After the weekend, work resumed on Monday morning, June 28. Another multi-function machine. The first unit, a double broom, sweeps ballast off the tops of the ties. The second unit is a track stabilizer. Following tamping work or ballast bed cleaning, not all ballast stones are lying in a consolidated and stable position. This machine applies a horizontal vibration, crosswise to the track. This is transmitted to the ballast bed achieving a rearrangement of the ballast stones to produce a denser structure. Without it most railroads are required to operate for several days at reduced speeds in order to "traffic tamp" the newly disturbed track. This is especially important when surfacing welded rail because the ability of the track structure to restrain the rail against thermal expansion is based on the interlocking of the ballast with the ties.



Self-raising and lining tamper. The main unit lifts (at left in lower photo) and lines track, clamping and tamping alternate ties. The drone unit (right) tamps the ties untamped by the main unit. The gear out in front of the tamper/surfacing machine is the projection buggy and spacer carts. Beams of light are projected back to the tamper. There are shadowboards attached to the rail clamping/lifting unit within the tamper. As the tamper pulls the rails up, the shadowboard will cut off the light beam, the lifting will cease, and then the tamping tools compact the ballast exactly at the correct height. .



At 10:27 am., old ties are collected and removed from the job site for proper disposal. Photo by Janet Yuhas.

An expanded version of this is available at www.nrhwis.org/index.php/2/84.

The author wishes to thank Lydia Bjorge of BNSF; Brad Kerchof, formerly with Norfolk Southern; Michael McGinley, formerly of Southern Pacific; and Steve Birkholz, of Racine Railroad Products. Recommended reading: The Science of Broken Rails, by Mr. Kerchof, in the September 2021 issue of Trains magazine.

Get Reacquainted Trip More Photos



Our group getting a shop tour. The forklift was a new acquisition. It was just delivered the day before. Keith Schmidt



Indianhead Park Mukwonago, WI Keith Schmidt



Passing under Phantom Woods Road Keith Schmidt



Triple meet at Army Lake Siding Keith Schmidt



Car #761 waits for the regular train at Indianhead Park Tom Hoffmann



Tara Grudzielanek and Mike Yuhas present Ryan Jonas with \$500 donation from the Chapter. Keith Schmidt



Semaphores Still Standing as Sentinels

by Keith Schmidt



Over a span of about 100 miles Semaphore signals still control train movement on the BNSF Raton Sub. The area with the semaphores runs from Raton to Albuquerque, NM. The semaphores seem to be in clusters along the line. The line really is only used by the Amtrak Southwest Chief. Above - The semaphores at MP 706.2 are some of the first on the north end of the line. Here the westbound Chief splits the signals in June 2021.



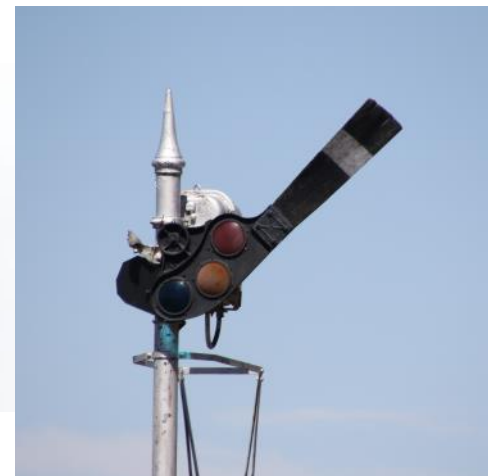
With a monsoon storm in the background the westbound Chief splits the semaphores at Chapelle, NM MP 789.



An on time Amtrak #3 at MP 722.2. Interstate 25 runs along side the tracks much of the way. This makes the chase easier.



Up close and personal with a semaphore. I didn't realize that the blades were wood. The one on the left isn't even painted. Looking up and the signal



From the Archives

September 1956 - 65 Years Ago

In a further attempt to cut costs and put the dining car department closer to the break-even point, the Milwaukee Road is developing an automat car. As yet, it has not been perfected and several problems still exist, e.g., should the car be half parlor and half automat, or full automat with no, or a separate, parlor car? The one or two cars are planned for service between Chicago and Milwaukee and possibly on the Chippewa Hiawatha between Milwaukee, Green Bay, and Channing, Michigan

September 1961 - 60 Years Ago

There was no Sparks & Cinders as such for September, 1961 but rather a combined July-October issue which was basically a report on the NRHS National Convention in Chicago, sponsored by Wisconsin Chapter

September 1966 - 55 Years Ago

There was no Sparks & Cinders for September, 1966. The official meeting notice (on a post-card) announced that the meeting program would feature Bob Bullermann's slides of steam on the Q and other subjects

September 1971 - 50 Years Ago

The Cannonball, Milwaukee's only commuter train, now has its own public timetable – a blue 2 1/2" x 4 1/2" card showing the schedule of No. 12 and No. 23....The Cannonball derailed and overturned at the North Ave. bridge on June 7 after the bridge was hit by a truck shortly before the train was due....A public hearing on the Milwaukee Road's request to discontinue the Cannonball will be held on September 22....A bill to restore passenger service between Milwaukee and Green Bay has been introduced into the Legislature. Passenger service to Green Bay ended with the start of Amtrak on May 1....Amtrak's Turbotrain is scheduled to visit La Crosse, Portage, and Milwaukee on September 2 as part of a 31-state tour which began August 11

September 1976 - 45 Years Ago

This issue of S&C featured a complete C&NW locomotive roster, listed both by model and assignment....Mid Rail '76 is scheduled for September 17, 18, and 19 in Kansas City.

September 1981 - 40 Years Ago

The Milwaukee Road and three utility companies that operate a coal-burning power plant in North Dakota have come to an agreement which will provide an interest-free loan of up to \$1 million to institute immediately a program of additional maintenance on the line between the Big Stone Plant and the Gascoyne Mine in North Dakota....A 10% reduction of Amtrak service nationwide will take place on October 1. Operation of the Milwaukee depot will be reduced to 15 hours daily.... C&NW will institute a new train numbering system on October 1. It will be similar to that used by SP, UP, and Conrail

September 1986 - 35 Years Ago

The Chapter's publication "The Railfan's Guide to Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula" is now available for \$7.95 post-paid....The Soo Line has started construction of the connection between the Stevens Point-Fond du Lac-Chicago line and the old Milwaukee Road Milwaukee-La Crosse line at Duplainville....Work by local railroad artists Russ Porter, Gil Reid, and Mike Danneman is featured at an exhibit entitled "The Art of Wisconsin Trains" at the Milwaukee Public Library through September.

September 1991 - 30 Years Ago

A \$1 million study of possible high speed rail service between Chicago and the Twin Cities, investigating possible 125-185 mph speeds, was announced....The Chicago Transit Authority has contracted with Morrison-Knudsen to supply 256 rapid transit cars for \$207.7 million....Union Pacific is studying the possibility of constructing a tunnel through Oregon's Blue Mountains. The 8.44 mile single track tunnel would bypass 28 miles of existing track

September 1996 - 25 Years Ago

Amtrak announced a major restructuring of its routes and frequencies in light of reduced funding for FY 1997. Some routes had daily service restored while others were discontinued....Metra service on the WC began on August 18 with a press run from Antioch to Chicago and return....Both the Englewood and Union Ave. towers in Chicago were taken out of service during the winter of 1995-96. Englewood tower controlled the former Pennsylvania-NYC-Rock Island junction while Union Ave. tower controlled the former Burlington wye south of Union Station....Ex-CB&Q No. 4960 began a new life on the Grand Canyon Railway after a complete reconstruction (including conversion from coal to oil) in the GCR shops. It began regular service on July 24.

September 2001 - 20 Years Ago

The first Trains Magazine Photo Workshop for high school students was held on May 12....Bob Adams reports from Madison that the city instituted a "no whistling" ordinance effective November 1....WSOR has terminated the Football Specials between Middleton and Madison and the Dinner Train between Madison and Mazomanie....The Lake Michigan Carferry Co. announced plans to overhaul the ex-C&O carferry Spartan for \$10 million, rename it Wisconsin Clipper and operate it between Milwaukee and Muskegon, Michigan....Ex-Soo Line No. 2719 powered its last excursion on WC rails on June 17....WSOR is phasing out its passenger excursions, citing high costs of fuel and maintenance and liability concerns....Amtrak named new GE P42 No. 182 Governor Tommy G. Thompson in honor of the former Chairman of the Board

September 2006 - 15 Years Ago

A new Amtrak station to replace the old former Milwaukee Road facility opened to service Sturtevant on Monday, August 14. The new \$3.2 million facility is one mile north of the old depot, on the west side of the tracks just south of Wisconsin Highway 20. The village of Sturtevant will continue to operate the station, which like the old depot, will have no attendant on duty. The village and Amtrak shared costs on constructing the new facility....Following special unveiling ceremonies Saturday, July 15 at the Ogilvie Transportation Center in Chicago, Union Pacific's Chicago & North Western heritage SD70ACE UP 1995 went into regular service. An increasing number of Chicago-area travelers, especially those from Lake County and northern Cook County, are choosing to fly out of Milwaukee's Mitchell International Airport rather than Midway or O'Hare airports in Chicago, according to a story in the Pioneer Press of Glenview.

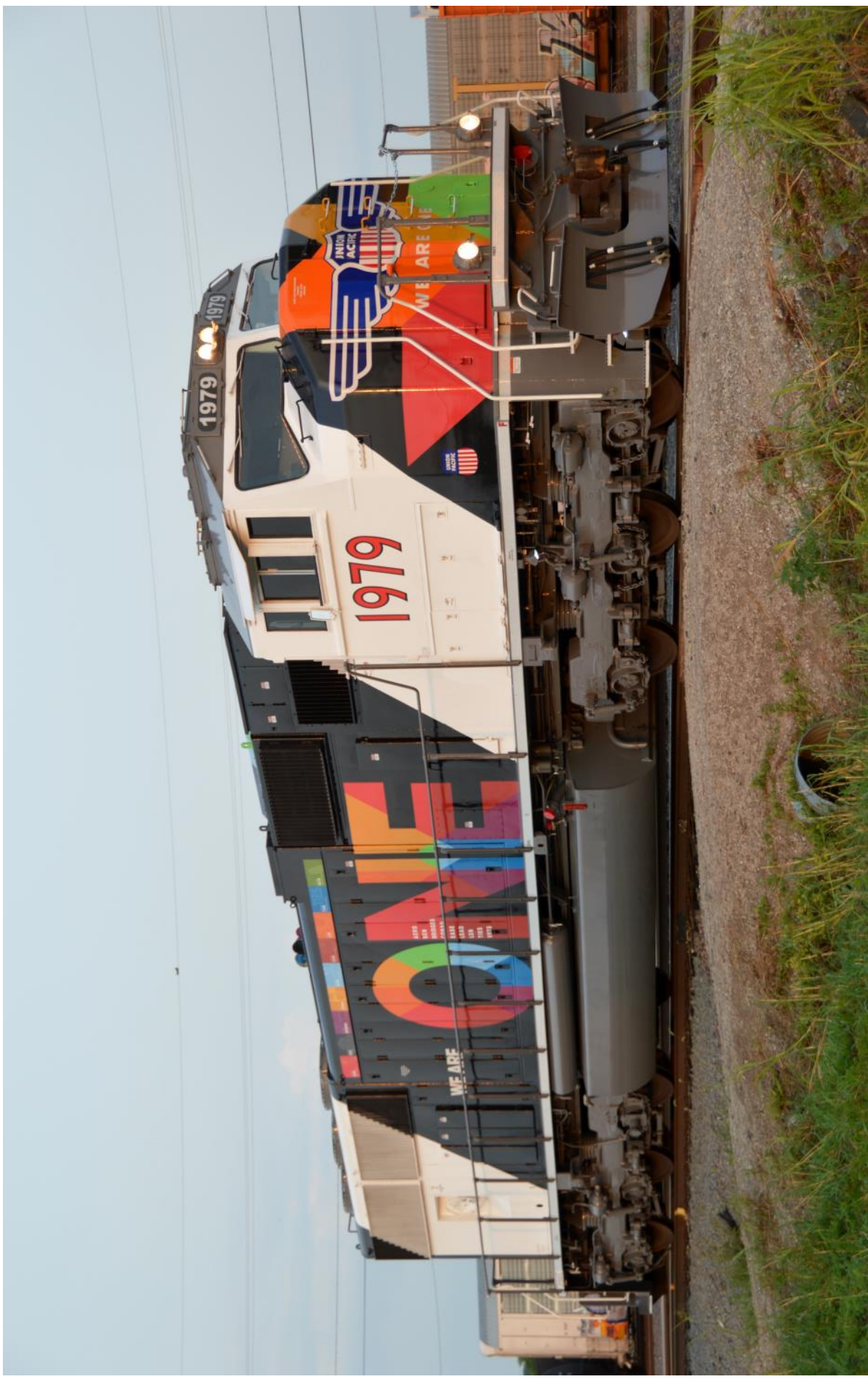
September 2011- 10 Years Ago

A new Amtrak station to replace the old former Milwaukee Road facility opened to service Sturtevant on Monday, August 14. The new \$3.2 million facility is one mile north of the old depot, on the west side of the tracks just south of Wisconsin Highway 20. The village of Sturtevant will continue to operate the station, which like the old depot, will have no attendant on duty. The village and Amtrak shared costs on constructing the new facility....Following special unveiling ceremonies Saturday, July 15 at the Ogilvie Transportation Center in Chicago, Union Pacific's Chicago & North Western heritage SD70ACE UP 1995 went into regular service. An increasing number of Chicago-area travelers, especially those from Lake County and northern Cook County, are choosing to fly out of Milwaukee's Mitchell International Airport rather than Midway or O'Hare airports in Chicago, according to a story in the Pioneer Press of Glenview.

September 2016 - 5 Years Ago

On June 8th former Chapter President Bob McCleod passed away. Bob was the oldest member to serve as President. Bob worked for various local railroads for 42 years. On June 25th the chapter hosted a trip up to the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay. Those in attendance were treated to a special behind the scenes tour plus the regular exhibits. At the September meeting the chapter was able to meet newly appointed Wisconsin Railroad Commissioner Yash Wadhwa. The meeting was interesting with a heckler in the crowd. He left the meeting after speaking his mind. Not sure if he ever made it out the building. Nickel Plate #765 2-8-4 visited Wisconsin in June. Running from Fox Lake, IL to Janesville and return.

The BIG Picture



UP #1979 features a special paint "We Are ONE". The unit celebrates the companies diversity and honors its "Employee Resource Groups. This photo was taken on August 9 2021 at UP Dupo Yard. Photo by Mike Roth