

# NRHS

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

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December 2022

## 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 72 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage [www.nrhwis.org](http://www.nrhwis.org)



Amtrak Hiawatha with a Charger leading departs Sturtevant depot heading north towards Milwaukee. Photo by Al Baker

### *In This Issue*

- ◆ *From the Prexy*
- ◆ *Do You Know ?*
- ◆ *Helpful Website*

# Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule

## Upcoming chapter events

Friday December 2, 2022 Three short programs by Al Baker

Tuesday, December 20 - Online Slide Show

Friday, January 6, 2023 - Tom Hoffmann's 20-year look back

Friday, February 3, 2023- From the Lake States Railway Historical Association collection (and chapter annual business meeting)

Tuesday, February 21, 2023 - Online Slide Show

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](http://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](mailto:president@nrhswis.org).

If you have a program idea please contact Program Chair Dave Nelson at [engine1385@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:editor@nrhswis.org).

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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](http://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 [president@nrhswis.org](mailto:president@nrhswis.org) (or via USPS at PO Box 070758 Milwaukee, WI 53207).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yuhas, President ([president@nrhswis.org](mailto:president@nrhswis.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@nrhswis.org](mailto: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.

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## Meeting Summary November 4, 2022

Tom Marcussen being unable to take part in the meeting, the undersigned was drafted to set down these highlights.

Chapter President Mike Yuhas began the event promptly at 7:30 by welcoming the audiences: your scribe noted 22 folks in person, and 43 took part via Zoom total of 65 total. President Yuhas welcomed several new members to the Chapter: rail-roader Edward Burkhardt (our banquet speaker), Drew Halverson (a graphic designer who formerly worked for Trains magazine, had his own video series on Model Railroader Video Plus, and who recently provided a newly designed logo for the Wisconsin Chapter); Mark Duchow and Andy Laurent, a past presenter for the Chapter.

President Yuhas also reminded the audience that now is the time to renew membership in the Chapter as set forth in the latest Sparks & Cinders. He also said that he will be stepping down as President at the February Annual Meeting.

President Yuhas noted that it was proceeds from the recent book auction that enabled the Chapter to print the November issue of Sparks & Cinders in color and he thanked editor Keith Schmidt for assembling yet another fine issue. He further reminded the audience of programs coming up: December 2 is Al Baker with recent drone photos and images from his archives; December 20 is another on-line "slide show;" January 6 is Tom Hoffmann's traditional 20-year look-back; February 3 is the Annual Meeting of the Chapter and Paul Swanson showing images from the collection of Lake States Railway Historical Association (including newly acquired images by a Chapter member, the late Harry Evans); and another on-line "slide show" on February 21. *continued on Page 3*

continued from Page 2

With these preliminaries out of the way, President Yuhas turned the microphone over to guest Bill Christopher who introduced and then showed his prepared presentation including narration and music of a May 1982 journey he took with three railfanning (and railroader) friends, driving a van from Illinois to the West Coast to document the last of the Western Pacific before it was taken over by the Union Pacific. The trip including much railfanning along the way, including out-and-back rides on Amtrak, and the presentation itself represented the best of the 47 rolls of Kodachrome Bill took, along with images taken by his friends. The presentation ended around 8:20 pm, and the in-person audience chatted a bit and then disbursed.

Respectfully submitted  
David Nelson

## Canadian Pacific Holiday Train 2022

The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train is back in person for 2022. The train will be making stops in Wisconsin this year after a two year break due to Covid. The train will have entertainment. The beautifully lit train is run to raise money for local food banks. Donations are accepted at each stop.

Thursday December 8, 2022

5:10pm to 5:40pm Viking Middle School Gurnee, IL  
6:45pm to 7:30pm Amtrak Station Sturtevant, WI  
8:00pm to 8:45pm County Road G Caledonia, WI

Friday December 9, 2022

4:00pm to 4:45pm Harwood Ave Wauwatosa, WI  
5:30pm to 6:15pm Cottonwood Ave Hartland, WI  
6:40pm to 7:15pm Silver Lake Street Oconomowoc, WI  
7:50pm to 8:30pm Brandt Quirk Park Watertown, WI  
9:05pm to 9:45pm Amtrak Station Columbus, WI

BE CAREFUL !! These are real trains. Remember SEE TRACKS THINK TRAINS !!



## From the Prexy

I hope you had an opportunity to watch Bill Christopher's "Western Pacific Boogie" presentation at our November meeting, because it was truly one of the most engaging stories we've seen in recent memory. If you missed it, or want to watch it again, check the chapter's YouTube channel, youtube.com/@NRHSWis.

You'll notice a new Wisconsin Chapter logo on page 2 of this newsletter, and also on the chapter's website. The previous Wisconsin-outline-&-steam-engine logo, designed by Jim Yanke, has served the chapter well for a couple decades, but it has been retired, replaced by our crisp new mark designed by Drew Halverson. When I worked at Trains magazine, I got to know Drew as one of the magazine's most skilled graphic designers. He's since relocated to the Seattle area where he heads marketing communications for a large engineering firm. He graciously volunteered his talents to our project. Thanks, Drew!

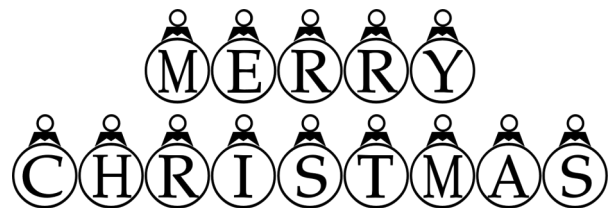
Stay current! This is a quick reminder to renew your Wisconsin Chapter membership for 2023, which you can do easily at [www.nrhwis.org](http://www.nrhwis.org), or by handing twenty bucks to our treasurer at the next meeting, or by sending a check for \$20 to Wisconsin NRHS, PO Box 070758, Milwaukee, WI 53207. We will not be sending printed renewal notices this year, but we're trying to be so obnoxious with these little notes throughout the newsletter that you take care of the year's most important business without undue fuss. As info, your chapter membership expiration date is printed on this newsletter's address label. Thank you to all the early-bird overachievers who have already renewed!

The chapter board met, remotely, on November 7. Unapproved minutes of this meeting are available for your review on the chapter's website.

Chapter elections will be held at our annual business meeting February 3. If you are interested in serving on the chapter's board of directors, or as an officer, drop me an email at [president@nrhwis.org](mailto:president@nrhwis.org) and you'll be placed on the ballot. Remember - you must be a member of the national NRHS and this chapter in order to hold a chapter board or officer position. Several incumbents are running for re-election, with the notable exception of your president. This means we have an opening for a capable person to serve as prexy - please consider helping move the chapter forward by your candidacy.

Please join me in welcoming our newest chapter members, Drew Halverson of Milton, Washington; Andy Laurent of Madison; and Mark Duchow, of Sheboygan.

Thanks again for your support of the Wisconsin Chapter, NRHS!



## Dues are due

To maintain your membership in the Wisconsin Chapter NRHS, and to support our programs and to continue receiving Sparks & Cinders, renew for 2023 today! Send \$20 to Wisconsin Chapter NRHS, PO Box 070758, Milwaukee WI 53207. Or pay \$20 in person at our next meeting. Or conveniently pay \$21 at [www.nrhwis.org](http://www.nrhwis.org) (click the join/renew link). As a membership organization, the Wisconsin Chapter depends on your annual support. (Please remember that NRHS national dues are paid directly to the national organization.) Thank you for your membership.



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## In case of foul weather

If severe weather threatens on the day of our meeting, be sure to check the chapter's website, [www.nrhwis.org](http://www.nrhwis.org), for up-to-date information on potential meeting cancellations. In many cases, a canceled in-person meeting will still go on, remotely, via Zoom. Official information will be posted by 4pm on the day of the meeting, or earlier if it looks like we're in for an enormous shellacking.

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## Notice of Annual Election

The Wisconsin Chapter, NRHS, Inc., will hold elections for board and officers at its annual meeting, Friday, February 3, 2023.

Although nominations may be made from the floor, persons seeking office are encouraged to let their intentions be known by contacting president Mike Yuhas at [president@nrhwis.org](mailto:president@nrhwis.org), or by phone at 414-698-6625. Only members of both NRHS and the Wisconsin Chapter are eligible to run.



## Al Baker presents Three Short Programs

Longtime railroad photographer Al Baker will present a program in three parts. The first portion will cover photo sites on the modern-day Canadian Pacific (former Milwaukee Road) between Chicago and LaCrosse. Part 2 will cover Al's introduction to and experiences with drone railroad photography over the past six months. In this program, Al shares some of his work and describes his experiences with photographing trains from an entirely new perspective. In the final segment, Al will share a 1982 trip to Green Bay, to show how much things have really changed in the last 40 years. Photo by Al Baker



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## IRM Acquires CNW SD50 #7009

Former Chicago & North Western Railway SD50 No. 7009 is headed to the Illinois Railway Museum after two benefactors provided the funds to purchase the locomotive from the dead line at National Railway Equipment in Silvis, Ill.

IRM says the locomotive is the first SD50 to be preserved by a museum.

The six-axle locomotive rolled off the Electro-Motive Division assembly line in LaGrange, Ill., in November 1985. It was one of 35 SD50s ordered by the CNW for use in the Powder River coal pool, followed by an order for 55 SD60s in 1986. These were the last EMD locomotives ordered by CNW prior to its merger with Union Pacific in 1995.

Externally, the locomotives were identical except for the winterization hatch on the SD60 order. The SD50 gained a reputation for engine failures with its 3,500-hp 645F prime mover; the SD60 featured the new 16-cylinder EMD 710G3A, and a computer-controlled electrical system.

"The 7009 is a very significant acquisition for us," said Jamie Koloanowski, IRM's curator of diesel locomotives. "Not only is it representative of one of Chicago's legendary railroads and built by Electro-Motive right here in Chicagoland, but it is also in remarkably original condition, not having been rebuilt with aftermarket upgrades. It even still wears its original C&NW paint applied at the factory. Its historic fabric is extremely complete."

The museum said in a press release that the SD50's acquisition comes as other locomotives of the model continue to operate in common-carrier service on a variety of regional and short line railroads. At IRM, 7009 will be the seventh C&NW locomotive and the 26th EMD locomotive in the Museum's diesel collection, considered by many to be the most comprehensive in preservation.

*Courtesy of TRAINS Newswire Kalmbach Media*

# A helpful website

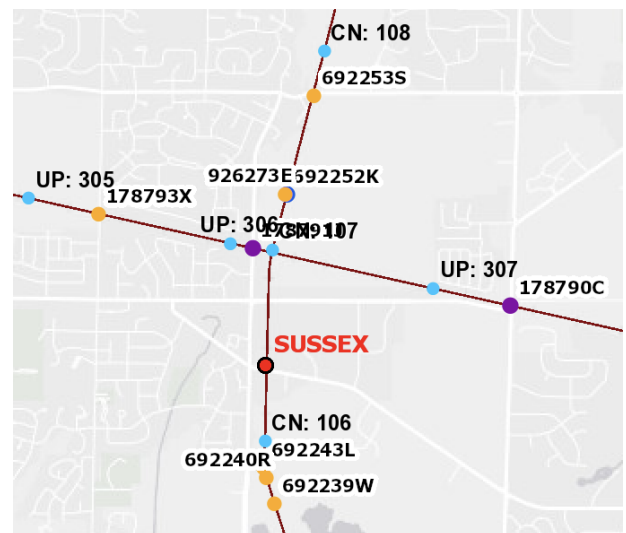
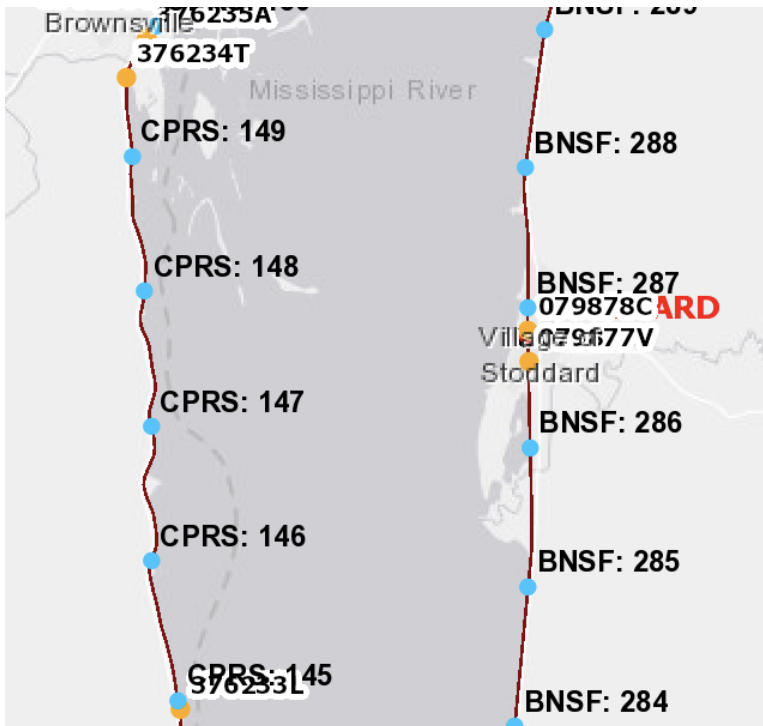
Suggested by Mike Yuhas

The other day a chapter member asked me about the BNSF Aurora Subdivision on the west side of the state, specifically, "where is milepost 285?" Easy, it's just south of the village of Stoddard.

The answer was quickly found on the Geographic Information Service website of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRAGIS), known as the FRA Safety Map, at <https://fragis.fra.dot.gov>. This helpful tool is available to the public, and contains all manner of information of use to modern railroad enthusiasts and railroad historians. Perhaps most important are the light blue dots representing mileposts. Note, though, that some lines do not show the blue dots, and some others are incorrect. There's a workaround for these situations, though. Current railroad lines are shown, as well as those abandoned after about 1969.

The other important data points are the red dots and station names (such as STODDARD), and railroad crossing inventory numbers. FRA began inventorying all US highway-railroad crossings, at grade and separated, in 1969. Each crossing is identified with a unique code consisting of six numerical digits plus one letter. A click on the number will provide more detail, with links to the current FRA data on every single crossing. Notable info in that dataset includes railroad name, railroad subdivision, the correct milepost, location given in latitude and longitude coordinates, detailed information on crossing apparatus, average number of trains per day, and lots more. FRAGIS provides links to the most recent crossing inventory form, and links to FRA accident reports pertaining to rail vs. highway incidents at that particular crossing.

Elsewhere on the FRA's site are all previous revisions of the crossing information forms, going back to 1969. Thus, if your research project includes looking up recent previous owners of a railroad line, the historical inventory forms are one way to learn or confirm. Using the FRA crossing ID, find the info at <https://safetydata.fra.dot.gov/OfficeofSafety/PublicSite/Crossing/Crossing.aspx> and at other related pages.



Canadian National and Union Pacific around Sussex.

BNSF and Canadian Pacific along the Mississippi River.

# Do You Know ?

## Railroads and Curves Part 2

By Dave Nelson

Because the forces pushing on the outer rail on a curve also tend to push that rail out of gauge, it is not uncommon on tight curves on slow speed sidings to use gauge rods to hold the rails to gauge on sharp curves. Because rail wear on a curve can be so extreme as to effectively widen the gauge, it has



been common to remove rail where one edge is badly worn and re-use it so that the undamaged other edge is now the inner edge. When both edges become worn the actual width of the top of the rail is likely now too narrow to permit use anywhere.

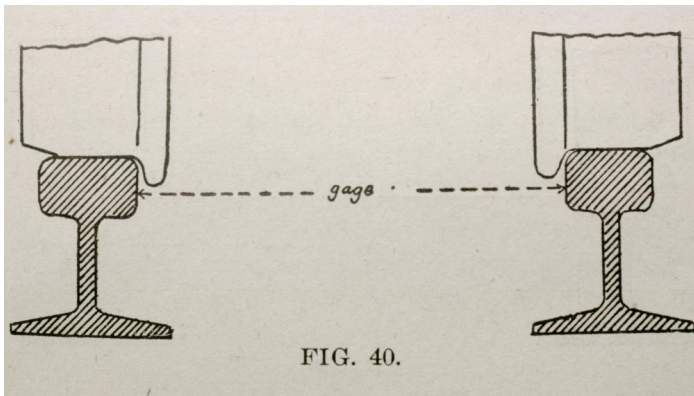


FIG. 40.

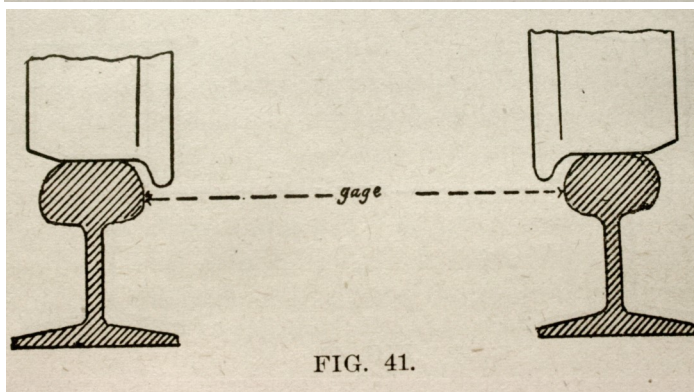


FIG. 41.

One very high-tech way to address the problem of curves and speed is familiar to the Wisconsin Chapter: the proprietary and patented "Talgo" technology which aims to insulate the passenger car bodies themselves from the forces being placed on the wheels. This permits a Talgo train to operate on



sharp curves at speeds that would be uncomfortable or dangerous for ordinary trains because it masks the impacts of centrifugal force for the passengers, although the crew in a conventional locomotive pulling a Talgo trainset will still feel those forces at work. The proprietary technology is why Wisconsin chose Talgo as a way to bring higher speed passenger service without having to rebuild existing right of way (such as that west of Watertown). Concerns over trade secrets explained why at our Chapter's first visit to Milwaukee's Talgo plant only Eric Godfrey was permitted to take photographs and Talgo personnel reviewed his digital camera's entire contents before we left. No such concerns seemed to exist for our subsequent visits.



Sources for this article include W. Raymond, H Riggs, and W. Sadler "The Elements of Railroad Engineering" (5th ed. Wiley & Sons 1937); F. Allen "Railroad Curves and Earthwork" (7th ed. McGraw-Hill 1931); J. Kindelan "The Trackman's Helper" (1900); and E. Lewis "12,000 Days on the North Western Line (CNW Hist. Soc. 2005).

# From the Archives

## December 1957- 65 Years Ago

Steam-seeking tour by Ted and Phil Borleske: August 25: "We followed the North Western's Park Falls branch, Draper to Raddison, not expecting to see anything, what with their three days-a-week service. However, at Winter we discovered an NYC baggage-storage car and west of town met a Geep leading four Pullmans. Returning to Winter, we beat the train by seconds. Here the Geep was added to the train. We found, according to the trainmen, this was a special operating into Park Falls to pick up a load of girls from a camp to be returned to Chicago and "intermediate points." August 27: Spending the night in a tourist home (Two Harbors, Minnesota), we could hear the low, sad whine of the whistles of those spectacular Yellowstones (2-8-8-4, DM&IR)." August 28: "While we were looking the scrap line over (Staples, Minnesota, NP) an Alco diesel switcher came up and snatched two Mikes, switched one out, and took it off to the graveyard. Odd, however, was the way in which the drivers of the 2-8-2 turned only occasionally on the wet, weed-covered rails, as if trying to postpone the inevitable.

## December 1962 - 60 Years Ago

Electric operations in Wisconsin (excluding North Shore Line) compiled by Jerry Hilton: Municipality of East Troy (7 mi.) two ex-Milwaukee Electric Lines motors - operating; Wisconsin Electric Power Co., Port Washington, one box motor (possibly more) - operating; WEPCo, Milwaukee, Lakeside power plant, five electric locos - operating; Solvay Coke Co., Milwaukee, one narrow gauge electric steeple cab - operating (At one time there was a steam locomotive (possibly narrow gauge) this might still be on the property.); Transport Co., Milwaukee, 4000 W. State St., one electric crane, one line car - operate infrequently.

## December 1967 - 55 Years Ago

The Chapter by-laws were scheduled to be adopted at the December meeting since it was discovered earlier that the Chapter articles of incorporation, due to an oversight in the Secretary of State's office, had never been legally filed. Since the Articles are now legally filed, the Chapter by-laws must now be adopted once again.

## December 1972 - 50 Years Ago

Jerry Hilton was elected NRHS Central Region Vice-President at the NRHS Board of Directors meeting in Philadelphia on November 12....Treasurer Don Reck reports Chapter profit from November's Auction was \$103....The Soo Line has repainted caboose No. 104 "Wisconsin Central" in honor of the centennial of the founding of the WC in Menasha....Arnie Burchardt reported that MILW freight No. 82 arrived from Green Bay on November 11th with nine units; Fs 106A, 101A, 120B, 104B, 113B, 126B, Geep 314, switchers 706 and 709....Amtrak reported that the Denver Zephyr turned a profit of \$151.08 in June.

## December 1977— 45 Years Ago

A lengthy article about the special collections of railroad material at the Milwaukee Public Library, written by Orville Liljequist, Humanities Coordinator, highlighted many of the unique items in the collection. The library is currently featuring a display of some of its railroad materials....Tom Hoffmann provided a trip guide for railfanning on the Milwaukee Road River Division....The Milwaukee Road announced that it had donated one of the first electric locomotives on the railroad to the Lake Superior Museum of Transportation in Duluth. The loco was in service on the Milwaukee Road from 1915 until 1974

## December 1982 - 40 Years Ago

After a tortured series of legal proceedings that reads like a Walworth County soap opera, the effort to save the C&NW's Lake Geneva branch ground to a halt in October when local interests seeking to purchase the line failed to come up with the purchase price set by the ICC....The ex-North Shore Line Electroliner arrived at the Illinois Railway Museum at Union on May 4th and was successfully unloaded, under its own power, on July 4th. There is a considerable amount of work to be done to restore it to its former glory.

## December 1987 - 35 Years Ago

Tom Hoffmann inaugurated his "Twenty Years Ago" slide show series at the December meeting....Wally Neumeister re-ported on activity at Portage and North Freedom....Brisk sales are reported for the Chapter's latest publication, "Wisconsin Rails."

## December 1992 - 30 Years Ago

On November 10, the ICC granted preliminary approval for Wisconsin Central's proposed purchase of the Green Bay & Western and Fox River Valley from IteCorp. President George Bush's campaign train "Spirit of America" operated from Burlington to Chippewa Falls on October 31....Metra is planning new commuter service on the WC from Chicago to Antioch.

## December 1997 - 25 Years Ago

UP has put the former CNW business train power up for sale to the highest bidder. The six units (3-F7A; 3-F7B) are being sold as-is, where-is. The crew dormitory car is also for sale....CP completed the remodeling of the Grand Ave. area. Signals west of Grand Ave. have also been re-spaced and converted to 3- color light from the old searchlight style. WSOR has installed a bumper post at Holton Ave. on the old Beer Line to indicate the end of track. All trackage east of that point has been removed. WC has drawn up plans for double tracking of Byron Hill. The project is expected to be completed in 1999....The WC/WSOR diamond at Slinger will be replaced with a pair of power switches....As of November 1, WC and CN have a haul-age agreement for intermodal trains. This means that more CN power will be running through.

## December 2002 - 20 Years Ago

Amtrak news: In October Amtrak added a seventh Milwaukee- Chicago round trip Monday through Saturday. The Sunday schedule remains at six round trips....An Amtrak test train hit 109.6 mph between Normal and Ballard Siding, Illinois, on October 31 to test positive train control on the proposed 110 mph line between Springfield and Dwight, Illinois.

## December 2007 - 15 Years Ago

Amtrak Hiawatha ridership is up over 2% and is approaching the 600,000 mark. Wisconsin and Southern RR painted a 50 foot boxcar pink for Breast Cancer Awareness. Bill Gardner President of WSOR said the car was painted and dedicated in memory of his late wife Lucy Stone-Gardner who died of cancer in 2004. The car included the familiar Pink Ribbon.

## December 2012 - 10 Years Ago

Jerry Hilton was presented with the Chuck Zehner Award. Jerry had been a member of the Chapter for 52 years. Rob McGonigal Editor of Kalmbach's Classic Trains presented the award at AMRC All Star Railroad Night on November 9th. Mid-Continent is proud to announce the we have recently brought on Steve Sandberg to serve as a consultant for the resto-ration of CNW #1385 steam locomotive. Mr. Sandberg is well known throughout steam restoration circles for his role with the Milwaukee Road #261. He will no doubt be a great asset to our Steam Task Force as we move forward on the #1385's restoration.

## December 2017—5 Years Ago

An In Memoriam for chapter member Dave Mudge was printed. Dave was a familiar face at chapter meetings and events. He had love for Lionel trains and the CSX. Dave was 79 years old.

Mike Yugas gave a presentation on use of drones for railfanning. The presentation including his DJI Phantom 3 drone. Mike highlighted the current rules for hobby drone operations. This was followed by photos from several others that use drones for rail photography. A question and answer session followed including a member saying they saw an ad for a anti drone shotgun. The shotgun shoots a net to entangle the propellers.



**Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year**

# The Big Picture



The Canadian Pacific #2816 leads Milwaukee Road #2616 rounding the curve at Winona MN on July 3 2004.

Photo by Dave Nelson