

Wisconsin Chapter National Railway Historical Society

Volume 71 Number 4



April 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



CN #5518 and BCOL #6001 pose in Tumbler Ridge, BC Canada in August 1989. This photo is a sample of the shots that Bob Gallegos will be showing as he "Takes Trips a Second Time" on Friday April 2nd. Photo by Bob Gallegos

In This Issue

- ◆ *From the Prexy*
- ◆ *Do You Know - Steam and Steel*
- ◆ *Daytime UP Local Run*

Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



April 2, 2021 - Taking Trips the Second Time - Bob Gallegos

April 20, 2021 - Informal Slide Show - 5 Presenters

Mike Del Vecchio - TBA

Steve Glischinski- "Midwest Railroads in the 1970s"

Keith Schmidt - "Steamed Rice", "Diamond Facets" and "261 Special"

Tom Danneman - "Off the Beaten Path: BNSF's Casper and Cody Subdivisions"

John Taibi - "63 Years of Railroad Photography: a Prequel"

Monthly meetings are usually held in the lower level of the North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point, but for now, we are meeting virtually, via the Zoom platform, during the coronavirus pandemic. The virtual meeting room will open by 7:00 pm, and the meeting will be called to order at 7:30 pm. 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@nrhswis.org. Appropriate notice will be given (in Sparks & Cinders, on the chapter's website, and through the chapter's email announcement list) when we resume in-person meetings. For the latest, check the chapter's webpage at www.nrhswis.org

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

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yuhas, President (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 (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 March 5, 2021

Gathering Time

Member Gary Rumler, retired engineer on the Chicago & North Western and then the Union Pacific, now living near Red Wing, Minnesota, attended his first Chapter Zoom meeting. Robert Hofmann reported temperatures in the 70s in North Las Vegas, Nevada today. Ward Wells said Riverside, California, was in the low 80s.

Introductions & Announcements

The Board was advised to start thinking about how we will handle meetings after the pandemic ends. We have a large number of new remote members, attending via Zoom, who will not be able to attend in-person meetings in Fox Point. Therefore some form of hybrid format will be needed. Member Joe Diecidue said that the Boston Chapter is thinking the same way. He warned us that Boston-area meeting venues are pulling back because of concerns about liability and insurance. President Mike Yuhas said we have a good working relationship with the North Shore Congregational Church, and they are looking forward to our coming back, when we can do so safely.

President Mike Yuhas started recording, marking the beginning of the actual meeting, at 7:31 pm. There were then 57 devices connected.

Tony White, National Vice President, announced that both the Washington State and Delaware Rail Camps had been cancelled on Monday, March 1. Most Rail Camp activities do not allow for social distancing. There was much concern that Covid-19 levels would not be low enough for them to proceed safely on the dates that they had been scheduled. Moving to later dates was not feasible. Planning for the National Convention in Milwaukee, on August 23-28, is moving forward. They will be looking for local volunteers. More details will be forthcoming. We have three upcoming Wisconsin Chapter virtual events, on: Friday, April 2—regular April meeting. Member Bob Gallegos will present a brief sampling of the large number of vintage and current slide that he digitized during the corona virus pandemic. This should be a good one. Tuesday, April 20—our bi-monthly
-summary continued on Page 3

From the Prexy

-summary continued from Page 2

slide show. The list of presenters is still being finalized at this time.

Saturday, May 8—Joint meeting with North West Illinois Chapter. Erik Rasmussen and Jay Peacock will present the railroad photography of John Dziobko. Many of those photos go back a long time. This should be a good one.

Today is Vice President Keith Schmidt's birthday. He turned 57 today.

President Mike Yuhas introduced 10 new members. Most or all of them were in attendance.

The Los Angeles Railroad Heritage Foundation will be holding a virtual Rail Fest on May 4-6. They are currently actively looking for presenters.

Secretary Tom Marcussen reported that his March Sparks & Cinders had arrived with the protective envelope opened (otherwise undamaged). The issue inside was intact and undamaged. No one else reported any issues with S&C.

Member Cate Kratville-Wrinn reported that her husband Jim Wrinn, the editor of Trains magazine, was diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer about 2-3 weeks before the meeting. He is in a clinical trial at Froedtert Health. His family is cautiously optimistic about the situation.

The February 16 slide shows have been posted on the Chapter You Tube link, for re-viewing. The October 20 slide shows, and all of the virtual meetings except September, remain available there. We are still having problems recovering the December 15 slide shows.

The number of computers connected climbed steadily through the above times. We had 70 when the presentation started. A number of those had two people watching. Our Zoom license is limited to 100 devices.

Presentation

Our presenter Edward M Koehler, Jr. of Long Island, New York, took over at 7:45 pm. He gave us two presentations. The first was on the rail lines started and built by Otto Mears. Most of these were in SW Colorado, including three short lines generally north of Silverton, and the legendary 162-mile Rio Grande Southern. All of the above had a narrow gauge of 3 feet. He also built the standard-gauge Chesapeake Beach Railway, running east from Washington, DC, to the west shore of Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. The urban western part of that one survived until recent times as the East Washington Railroad. The second presentation started at 8:34 pm. It was on the popular Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway, a preserved part of the Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow-gauge system. The C&TS operates 64 miles between Chama, New Mexico, and Antonito, Colorado. We also got some historic and current pictures of the former dual-gauge line going north out of Antonito to Alamosa, Colorado. The second presentation ended at 9:02 pm.

A question and answer session followed. Tour and tourist operator Iowa Pacific filed for bankruptcy. Their local (south central Colorado) subsidiary San Luis & Rio Grande is operating freight service under trusteeship.

President Mike Yuhas turned off the recording a 9:14 pm. He left the meeting room open for an informal discussion group, covering a wide range of railroad topics, which continued until after 10:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Thomas W. Marcussen

Wisconsin Chapter Secretary

It's April! We have two strong events scheduled for this month; I hope you can join us online for Bob Gallegos's presentation on April 2, and the multi-presenter slide show on the 20th. Find the details elsewhere in this issue and on our website.

Looking ahead, allow me give you a little advance notice of a very special event. The Wisconsin Chapter is holding its first-ever joint online meeting with the North West Illinois Chapter on Saturday, May 8. Each year the NWI chapter presents a program devoted to the railroad photography of John Dziobko. Frequently referred to as "The Godfather," Mr. Dziobko has been photographing trains since the 1950s, primarily on expertly exposed Kodachrome. These annual programs have become one of NWI's most popular meeting topics, and this year, they're sharing with us. More info will follow in next month's newsletter, but for now, please make a note of the special Saturday date.

The rate of new coronavirus infections has slowed, people are being vaccinated, and the pandemic's grip on society is slowly weakening. That means that soon (weeks? months?) we'll begin thinking about meeting in person again. When we do, the chapter's goal is to continue our wildly successful online streaming, to serve our far-flung members. If you have thoughts on the subject, please share with president@nrhswis.org.

Please join me in welcoming the following new members:

Ron Burkhard, Fond du Lac

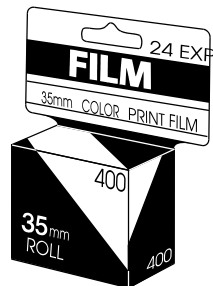
Stephen Quigley, Babylon, N.Y.

Thank you for helping preserve railroad history through your membership in the Wisconsin Chapter. Stay safe and healthy!

April meeting (via Zoom) - Friday, April 2nd 7:30pm

Bob Gallegos presents Taking trips for the second time. Bob has made numerous journeys across North America taking photographs of railroads. What's a guy to do during a pandemic, when travel is ill-advised? Simple - scan slides of 1980s, 1990s and 2000s railfan trips and turn 'em into a program for the Wisconsin NRHS. Bob has used this hiatus to scan over 25,000 slides. He promises not to show you more than a couple hundred of the best ones tonight. A great variety that will keep you wanting for more.

By the way, as a security measure, Zoom meeting connection information is sent to all members via email within 24 hours of meeting start time. If you haven't received a meeting announcement, it may be that we don't have a valid email address on file for you. Please keep us up to date - send any changes to president@nrhswis.org.



April online slide show - Tuesday, April 20, 7:30 pm

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. At press time, the presenters for tonight's event are:

- Steve Glischinski - "Midwest Railroading in the 1970s"
- Keith Schmidt - "Steamed Rice", "Diamond Facets" "261 Special"
- John Taibi - "63 Years of Railroad Photography: A Prequel"
- Mike Del Vecchio
- Tom Danneman - "Off the Beaten Path: BNSF's Casper and Cody Subdivisions"

See www.nrhswis.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@nrhswis.org to receive all notifications.

Milw #261 Conversion to Oil being Investigated

The Friends of the 261, the non-profit organization that owns and operates Milwaukee Road S-3 class 4-8-4 No. 261, has launched a study to consider converting the locomotive from coal to oil firing. Friends of the 261 President and Chief Operating Officer Steve Sandberg said the group is conducting a feasibility study and cost benefit analysis for the possible conversion. It could cost up to \$200,000 to convert NO. 261 to burn oil, Sandberg said.

If the group decides to proceed, it would not be the first time an S-3 has been changed to burn oil. Milwaukee Road owned ten S-3s built in 1944 and they worked exclusively in the Midwest. The outbreak of the Korean War brought an acute motive power shortage to the railroad as traffic boomed. In 1950, S-3s Nos. 262, 263, 267 and 269 were converted to burn oil and moved to the Idaho Division. The Milwaukee Public Library has some of the original Milwaukee Road engineering drawings on file from the S-3 conversions, and long-time Friends volunteer and 261 fireman Ed Selinski has been working with the library to obtain copies of the drawings. The Friends has also solicited input from other steam operators who have done conversions in the past. Union Pacific Senior Manager Heritage Operations Ed Dickens, whose team converted UP Big Boy 4014 to burn oil, is a technical advisor for the project.

In addition to studying oil conversion, other work is being done on the 4-8-4. Rail wheel manufacturer ORX has shipped three new wheel sets to the Friends shop in Minneapolis where they will be installed under No. 261's tender. Sandberg said while there was nothing wrong with the old wheels, they were last rebuilt almost 30 years ago, in 1992. They were the thinnest of the original wheels and for safety reasons it was decided to upgrade them at this time, Sandberg says. "Thanks to our donors, the 261 organization is using the time during COVID to make improvements to the 261 as well as our fleet of rail cars," he said.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the 1991 signing of the lease agreement between the National Railroad Museum of Green Bay, Wis., and North Star Rail, Inc. North Star returned the engine to service in 1993, with the non-profit Friends of the 261 taking over operation in 1995. The group purchased No. 261 from the Museum in 2010. The Friends plan to have No. 261 back in operation this fall pulling excursions on the Twin Cities & Western Railroad Oct. 2-3, depending on pandemic restrictions. This year also marks the 30th anniversary of TC&W's 1991 founding.

Courtesy TRAINS Newswire Kalmbach Media

Amtrak Announces 50th Anniversary Paint Schemes

Amtrak fans across the country may soon spot a few freshly painted locomotives featuring new anniversary logos rolling down the tracks as America's Railroad® celebrates 50 years of service this year. The first of six different commemorative 50th anniversary locomotives has already entered service on the national network.

"We chose locomotives already budgeted for new paint as part of our life cycle preventative maintenance program and used the opportunity to celebrate this significant milestone on the most iconic component of our business," said Amtrak President Stephen Gardner. "The locomotive designs uniquely honor our heritage and our vision of connecting communities, economies and families nationwide."

The commemorative locomotive list includes:

P42 #46 in "Phase V 50th" - The standard Amtrak livery for the past two decades with our "Connecting America for 50 Years" slogan including a large golden yellow 50.

P42 in "Midnight Blue": An all new one-of-a-kind paint scheme celebrating the dedication and commitment of our employees moving people around the clock and across the nation.

P42 in "Phase VI" - The first adaptation of the latest Amtrak livery phase on a P42.

P42 in "Phase I" - A rendition of Amtrak's first livery phase dating back to 1972.

P42 in "Dash 8 Phase III" - The award-winning livery designed for the Dash 8 locomotive fleet in the early 90s, adapted for the first time to a P42 locomotive.

ALC-42 #301 in "Day 1" scheme - A historic throwback to the unique design created for the first day of operations on May 1, 1971, applied to Amtrak's newest locomotive.

Each P42 locomotive is being painted and overhauled at the Amtrak Beech Grove shops in Beech Grove, Ind., rolling out over the coming months and entering service across the national network. Employees will also ensure that these locomotives are maintained to high performance and safety standards. ALC-42 #301 is currently being manufactured by Siemens in Sacramento, Calif. and is expected to be delivered in April to undergo testing in the Northeast Corridor before entering service on the national network.

From Amtrak Media Center - Amtrak.com



Do You Know - Steel and Steam

Story and Photos by Dave Nelson

By the early 20th century a few huge mills dominated the steel industry, but the invention of the electric arc furnace allowed smaller companies to effectively compete. Compared to the complex intermediate steps and varied raw materials of "primary" steel production, electric furnace mills use scrap steel as the feedstock, and electric arc furnace mills can be shut down and restarted more readily than the traditional primary steel mill.

Northwestern Barbed Wire Co., was a "primary" steel mill founded by Washington Dillon in 1879 in Rock Falls, Illinois.



Dillon moved the firm to Sterling, Illinois, in 1912. Dillon's son, Paul (1883-1980) was in charge when he installed the Company's first large electric furnace in 1936; in 1938 the firm changed its name to Northwest-

ern Steel & Wire (NS&W) and the product line extended to wire, baling strap, and nails. The plant was served by the Chicago & North Western and the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. As early as the 1930s steam locomotives (and outdated Pullman cars) were a major source of scrap steel for NS&W. Even in 1960 the Illinois Central, Chicago Burlington & Quincy, and the Grand Trunk Western, were still sending vast numbers of recently-retired steam locomotives to NS&W. With its holding tracks filled with retired steam locomotives (over 100 were still on the property in 1962), NS&W always had a "free" supply of shop switchers. Paul Dillon liked steam and saw no need to purchase diesel switchers for his mill complex.

In 1960-61 NS&W received sixteen Grand Trunk Western 0-8-0 locomotives built between 1923 and 1929, and NS&W realized these powerful and well-maintained locomotives were a better choice to work the plant than the ex-CB&Q 0-6-0s (some converted from old 2-6-2s) they had been using. Two of the GTW locomotives were set aside for parts; the other fourteen were all steamed up and used. To the surprise of many, NS&W, rather than merely squeeze a few remaining years out of them, maintained the engines, converting them to oil at one point. NS&W began to become a destination for steam-starved railfans, because the former GTW 0-8-0s continued to be the only locomotives on the property, and often four or five would be in steam and used on any given day (one had been scrapped as "early" as 1970). And the NS&W plant became ever larger, as Paul Dillon installed enormous electric furnaces in 1968, 1971, and 1976.

Around 1979 my friend Ken Thompson suggested we needed to make our own steam pilgrimage to Sterling, IL. We went to the main



office, which welcomed and expected railfans, to register and fill out the required waiver and permission form. With just a few words of caution to be careful and

not get near the tracks, we basically had access to many of the rail-served portions of the sprawling mill. There was also good photo access from public property, including the interchanges with the C&NW and Burlington Northern, where one could see the surprising sight of the most modern diesels swapping loads and empties with half-century old 0-8-0. I recall that four steam locomotives were running that day (the mill was a large one; in 1979 NS&W had 4,678 employees), and evidently at Mr. Dillon's dictate, every movement was fully whistled -- the sounds of steam railroading were all around you. And the NS&W engineers were not afraid to pull back on the throttle and make the locomotives bark as they worked hard. In fact one engineer got so enthusiastic (perhaps to show off to us?) that a minor derailment sent some empty ingot mold cars toppling over. At one point during the day a black Ford sedan drove by, and an elderly gent in the passenger seat gave us a military style salute. Only later did we figure out that it was Paul Dillon himself.

Of course I regretted, and still regret, having just an old and faulty Brownie camera to take the pictures seen here; I didn't get a 35mm camera until 1980. Paul Dillon died in February 1980 and NS&W soon leased a C&NW NW2 diesel-electric switcher to supplement the dwindling steam fleet. Just five 0-8-0s were in serviceable condition when the last steam locomotive banked its fires on December 3, 1980.

Mr. Dillon's beautiful old home has been made into a museum in Sterling, and one of the 0-8-0s has been repainted and mounted on the grounds of that museum. One was scrapped in April 1980; two more in 1982. The rest were donated to the Illinois Railway Museum, but were stored for years at a siding near Galt, IL (where I photographed some of them). Where they deteriorated rather badly, and only one of them has found a home at IRM. The



Museum traded five of the 0-8-0s to a Chicago scrap yard which was holding CB&Q 2-8-2 No. 4963, which is now at the Museum. The IRM sold one to Bandana Square in St. Paul, MN. Another of the IRM locomotives ended up in Independence, Iowa where I saw it, nicely

Painted, near the preserved Illinois Central depot there. Another was sent to Geneva, Nebraska.

As for Northwestern Steel & Wire, the steel industry suffered a depression in the 1980s and by 2000 NS&W filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy; it closed its doors in May of 2001. One year later a portion of the mill reopened as Leggett & Platt's Sterling Steel Company. It makes wire rod in its electric furnaces. From scrap of course.

A Saturday Run on the Clyman Sub.

Story and Photos by Dan Grudzielanek

In 2020 the Union Pacific modified the operations of every local train operating in southeast Wisconsin. Local service on the Clyman Subdivision between Clyman Jct. and Fort Atkinson was no exception. Previously the industries along the Clyman Sub. were served by the LPA18 job based out of Jefferson Jct. With the changes that went into effect last year, local service is now provided by the LBU53B based out of Butler Yard in Milwaukee and normally operates on Tuesday and Friday nights. Because of its nocturnal schedule, opportunities to view and photograph train movements along the Clyman Sub. are limited.

That is why when I found out that the LBU53B of Friday, March 12th was going to be making its run the following day - in daylight - I immediately began making plans to view and photograph the train. The train departed from Butler Yard on Saturday afternoon with one locomotive, UP GP60E No. 1107, and one boxcar for a customer in Jefferson. The train followed its normal route along the Adams Sub. to Clyman Jct. and then down the Clyman Sub. to Jefferson.



Left: The UP 1107 has no problem making track speed on the Adams Subdivision with just one car in tow as it crosses West Shore Dr. near North Lake, Wisc.



Right: The LBU53B is southbound on the Clyman Subdivision as it passes the semaphore signal near Watertown on March 13, 2021



Left: The LBU53B crossing the Rock River in Jefferson. The lone boxcar in the train is destined for an industry just south of the river.

From the Archives

April 1951 - 70 Years Ago

Milwaukee Chapter – NRHS celebrated its first birthday....Excursion No. 2. Milwaukee Chapter will run a fantrip on the North Shore's 2:00 p.m. Electroliner to Kenosha and return via the North Western's Sunday local from Chicago. The C&NW train is usually operated with the new Budd RDC cars. There will also be an opportunity to photograph some C&NW steam locomotives, as Kenosha is the northern terminus of the Chicago suburban district. The cost of the trip will be slightly over \$2, including cab fare between the depots in Kenosha. For further details call HI2-2676 and come to the April meeting

April 1956 - 65 Years Ago

The Transport Company is now getting ready for the Milwaukee Braves baseball season. All regular cars have been cleaned and inspected so they will be ready to go when the season starts. Five cars which were in storage at KK Station have been prepared again for operation. Cars at National Station have also been cleaned and groomed for the coming baseball season. Several 930- and 940-class cars are being used as trippers on Wells Street to get them back into good operating condition.

April 1961 - 60 Years Ago

Walt Bubbert and Bill Englehorn took a "streetcar" ride from Milwaukee to South Bend recently. They left on the 8:00 a.m. North Shore Electroliner, made a seven minute walk from the "L" to the IC station, and boarded the South Shore. The IC track was a bit rough but things smoothed out a bit at 115th Street when the big orange car moved onto South Shore track....Trains magazine for April notes that a Milwaukee Road bi-polar electric locomotive has been donated to the National Museum of Transport at St. Louis, Missouri....Railroad Model Craftsman for April 1961 featured an article by Russ Porter about changing a Mantua General into a 4-4-0 inspection Locomotive. GB&W has purchased a second DL-640 from Alco....The Milwaukee Road has sold two streamlined coaches to CGW.

April 1966 - 55 Years Ago

The old Milwaukee Road depot (at Third and Everett Sts.) came down as follows: January 24: the concourse was the first to disappear, followed by the baggage room (west end of building). February 19: the west quarter of the building completely torn down, part of the roof and part of the south wall of the second and third floor demolished. February 27: both ends of the building are nearly down on the street and track sides. March 4: everything west of the tower demolished; about half of the east end is down. March 11: demolition begins on tower. March 18: tower completely down, ending demolition of the building.

April 1971 - 50 Years Ago

A watershed in the provision of rail passenger service in the U.S. was scheduled to begin on May 1 with the startup of Amtrak. Locally, it was learned that the Chicago-Seattle service would operate via Milwaukee....The new Gateway Center Building, constructed over the site of Chicago Union Station, was topped out on February 18....The now-legendary story of the "borrowing" of 277 Penn Central freight cars by the LaSalle & Bureau County Railroad had just occurred and was reported in S&C.

April 1976 - 45 Years Ago

Jim Scribbins reviewed the new Amcoaches on Train 301 to Joliet....On May 8 Wisconsin Chapter will host the Metropolitan Regional Convention of the Wisconsin Council for Local History

April 1981 - 40 Years Ago

Amtrak will remove the last GG-1 electric locomotives from service in May, ending their lengthy tenure on the electrified portions of the former Pennsylvania Railroad lines east of Harrisburg.

April 1986 - 35 Years Ago

Exceptionally heavy traffic was reported on the Soo/Milwaukee system in the area....In 1986, ex-C&NW steam locomotive No. 1385 will make its only Milwaukee appearance on the Circus Train on July 8 and 9....Flooding in the Reeseville Marsh has forced rerouting of rail traffic (including Amtrak).

April 1991 - 30 Years Ago

The City of Brookfield is unhappy with malfunctioning crossing gates on the Soo Line in the city and has threatened to impose "user fees" of \$75 for the first 15 minutes and \$25 for each additional 15 minutes for crossings blocked by malfunctioning gates. There were 27 incidents reported in 1990....After studying bids from several manufacturers, Amtrak has decided to purchase 52 new diesel-electric locomotives from General Electric. All will have DC propulsion systems. Amtrak had requested bids for both AC and DC systems. The bid price for the AC units was approximately three times higher than the DC bid price.

April 1996 - 25 Years Ago

About 1,700 residents of Weyauwega began returning to their homes on March 19, two weeks after the derailment and subsequent burning of propane-filled tank cars in a Wisconsin Central train. A total of 37 cars derailed and the flames were so intense that siding was buckled on a house 350 feet from the accident scene....The UP is interested in selling a section of isolated former C&NW track running north from Duck Creek in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

April 2001 - 20 Years Ago

Citing the failure of mail and express service to develop as anticipated, Amtrak will discontinue the Chicago-Janesville Lake Country Limited on September 24. It was reduced to Saturday-only service on March 24....Amtrak announced a fare reduction on multi-ride tickets between Milwaukee and Chicago. A monthly ticket will be reduced from \$508 to \$280 and a 10-ride ticket from \$158 to \$150..Former Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson will step down from his post as Amtrak Chairman of the Board. He has been appointed Secretary of Health and Human Services by President George W. Bush. UP is applying a smaller version of its winged shield to standard-body units after its re-introduction on wide-body units.

April 2006 - 15 Years Ago

Ex-Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 No. 261 will make its first appearance in the area since returning to service in 1993. The first trip on June 21 is a positioning trip from Minneapolis to Milwaukee. Friday, June 23, will see a round trip dinner excursion to Sturtevant. Saturday June 24 and Sunday June 25 will see round trips to Wisconsin Dells....The proposed commuter rail extension from Kenosha to Milwaukee is moving along. The newly-constituted Regional Transit Authority held its first meeting on February 20.

April 2011- 10 Years Ago

Canadian National Railway is outlining plans to replace a swing bridge over the Fox River on its Chicago- Winnipeg, Man., main line, the Oshkosh Northwestern has reported. Under CN's plan, a new lift bridge would be constructed over the course of three years approximately 40 feet to the east of the existing bridge. The current bridge is 112 years old and is "at the end of its useful life," said Patrick Waldron, a CN spokesman. "It's time to replace it." The current three-span bridge, built by CN predecessor Chicago & North Western, limits train speeds to 25 mph. Its condition could force speeds to drop to 10 mph. CN wants to begin construction of a foundation for the new bridge starting this fall and replace utilities in early 2012. Final work would occur in early 2013

April 2016 - 5 Years Ago

According to the March 10, 2016 issue of North Shore Now, a railroad theme lighting display is planned for the new Oak Leaf Trail pedestrian bridge over Capitol Drive that replaced the original C&NW railroad bridge. Using LEDs, the display will create the illusion that the C&NW's famous "400" is running at speed over the bridge, while a sound system recreates the impression of the fast moving train. The "northbound" ghost train will appear at 6:30 pm and the "southbound" will be seen at 8:30 pm. The times may be adjusted during the longer days of summer. Traffic lights will be synchronized so that traffic will be stopped during the 30 second light shows. Pedestrians and bikers on the bridge itself will not see the light show but will hear the train noises. According to the article, 90% of the cost of the project has already been raised. The Capitol Drive bridge is near to a cut-off that routed some C&NW trains directly from the main line through Whitefish Bay

The Big Picture



Former UP SD9043ACs, now lettered for Canadian Pacific, are dead in tow on BNSF's H-GALGFD1-16A (Galesburg-Grand Forks) train. The units are two of 35 SD9043ACs stricken from the Union Pacific roster on January 18, 2021, rumored to be candidates for Canadian Pacific rebuild. Seen at Trempealeau, Wisconsin, March 17, 2021. Photo by Mike Yuhas.