

# Wisconsin Chapter National Railway Historical Society

Volume 71 Number 8



October 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](http://www.nrhswis.org)



It appears that the Canadian Pacific is now the "leader" to acquire the Kansas City Southern. On Sunday September 12, 2021 the KCS announced it had accepted the Canadian Pacific bid for the railroad after the Canadian National offer fell through. Photo of westbound CP train at Duplainville on March 1, 2020 by Keith Schmidt

### *In This Issue*

- ◆ *From the Prexy*
- ◆ *National NRHS Convention Highlights*
- ◆ *Do You Know ?*
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# Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



Friday October 1, 2021 Railroad Mayhem with Chris Barney and Dave Nelson (Zoom and in person)  
Tuesday October 19, 2021 Online slide show (Zoom only)  
Friday November 5, 2021 The Weed Route with Alan Freed (Zoom and in person)  
Friday December 3, 2021 David P Morgan's Milwaukee with Kevin P Keefe (Zoom and in person)  
Tuesday December 21, 2021 Online slide show (Zoom only)

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](http://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](mailto:president@nrhwis.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@nrhwis.org](mailto:editor@nrhwis.org).

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## Meeting Summary September 10, 2021

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

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

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### Gathering Time

This was our first hybrid (both in-person and virtual) chapter meeting. Wisconsin Chapter President Mike Yuhas ran it from our usual pre-pandemic meeting site in the basement of the North Shore Congregational Church, at 7330 North Santa Monica Boulevard in Fox Point, Wisconsin.

Members and guests started gathering, both in person at the above site, and in the Zoom meeting room, about 7:00 pm (the usual timing).

### Introductions & Announcements

Wisconsin Chapter President Mike Yuhas began the actual meeting, and started recording on Zoom, at 7:30 pm. There were then 26 devices connected via Zoom, including the master station in the church basement. Mike Yuhas counted 29 people there in person (on the master device). Initial total attendance was therefore at least 54. Mike welcomed all of the attendees.

We signed up three new members since our last meeting on June 4. All three were with us tonight. Two were present in person: Marshall W. Beecher of Grays Lake, Illinois, and Sal Ciofani of Whitefish Bay. Doug Potthoff of Richfield, Minnesota, was with us on Zoom.

Nine Wisconsin Chapter members attended the NRHS National Convention in Milwaukee from Monday, August 23 through Saturday, August 28. President Mike Yuhas read their names. (They are listed elsewhere in the October issue of *Sparks & Cinders*.) Three members received membership anniversary pins. All three were in attendance (one in person, and two via Zoom):

Thomas Hoffmann—50 years  
Gary A. Johnson—50 years  
Jerrold F. Hilton—60 years.

Our next meeting will be on Friday, October 1. It will also be a hybrid (in person and virtual) meeting. The subject will be Railroad Mayhem presented by Chris Barney and Dave Nelson.

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## Presentation

Tonight was Members Favorite Slide Night, per our usual tradition for September. We started with eight digital presentations from:

Keith Schmidt—June 2021 trip to BNSF (former Santa Fe) Transcontinental Line across New Mexico.

Al Baker—recent photos—mostly from August 2021.

Mike Yuhas—Aerial Drone Shots from both sides of Mississippi River—Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Dave Nelson—older material—a number of Milwaukee Road shots.

Rob Pfeiffer—pictures from 2020 and 2021

Marshall W. Beecher—Metra and other Chicago-area subjects

Jerry Krug—Kansas City Southern in Mississippi—first week of July 2021.

Dan Grudzielanek—365 Times 5—a variety of subjects from the last 5 years.

Zoom attendance peaked at 36 devices (total attendance of at least 64) during the above presentations.

There was a short break / intermission. That was followed by an auction of selected railroad books and timetables, donated from the estate of local railroad enthusiast Leroy James Burlingame. More of those will be auctioned at further Chapter meetings.

Traditional slides followed. There were three presentations of those from:

Tom Hoffmann—a mix of old and new subjects.

Jeff Haber—lots of traction material. Much of it from East Troy Electric Railroad.

Bob Baker—mostly older subjects.

These presentations, and the meeting, ended at 9:59 pm.

There was no informal discussion room on Zoom this time.

Respectfully Submitted

Thomas W. Marcussen

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## Friday October 1, 2021 Night of Mayhem

Join the Wisconsin Chapter NRHS for a "Night of Railroad Mayhem" with Chris Barney and Dave Nelson. First up is Chris Barney, who has spent years researching the 1924 St. Francis Avenue grade crossing collision. His program is entitled "Delivering very bad news." Even after nearly a century, reading the account of this tragedy still elicits great sadness. It was Friday, February 8, 1924, and seven "newsies" - Milwaukee Journal carriers - were being driven home by a supervisor when, attempting to cross railroad tracks not protected by a signal, warning lights or a watchman, their truck was rammed broadside by a speeding C&NW passenger train, killing the driver and six of the seven newsboys. The massive loss of life sparked an inquest and a renewed call for safer crossings.

The second half of the meeting will feature former chapter president Dave Nelson presenting a program recounting another tragedy. In South Milwaukee at 6 pm of the evening of November 13, 1907, Chicago & North Western No. 18, a fast train heading for Chicago, plowed into a crowd of workers from the Bucyrus steam shovel factory who had left work, killing six (one of whom was a 10 year old water boy at the factory). Five others were injured, one woman evidently fatally, by being hit by flying body parts. "Men Ground to Pieces" was one newspaper headline. Dave has spent years trying to sort out the conflicting versions of this tragedy found in contemporary newspaper accounts, and will try to reconstruct as much as possible the scene of the incident using old and new(er) photographs of the scene.

## From the Prexy

In late August, nearly 200 rail historians arrived in Milwaukee for the annual convention of the National Railway Historical Society. Attendees were treated to tours of the National Railroad Museum, the East Troy Electric Railroad, the Illinois Railway Museum, the Christopher Transportation Museum (on the grounds of the Christopher Farm and Gardens in Sheboygan), and a rare-routing circle trip on Metra. In addition, seminars rounded out the evenings. The following Wisconsin Chapter members attended:

Kevin Keefe  
Douglas Potthoff  
Keith Schmidt  
Steve Thomas  
Dick Tollefsen  
Neal Wegner  
Cathy Wegner  
Tony White  
Mike Yuhas

A good time was had by all.

On September 10, we held our first in-person meeting in 1.5 years. This was our first attempt at serving both the in-person audience, and the remote audience, and by all accounts, the digital image portion of the program came off well. On the other hand, we did experience technical issues while presenting the "legacy media" (slides), as was expected. Hat tip to the presenters who made the evening a success. Look for Secretary Marcussen's synopsis elsewhere in this issue.

Please join me in welcoming new member Sal Ciofani, of Whitefish Bay.

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

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## KCS accepts Canadian Pacific Merger Offer

Kansas City Southern on Sunday accepted Canadian Pacific's \$300 per share merger offer, spurning Canadian National's higher bid due to its regulatory obstacles.

In a midday press release, KCS said its board had determined CP's revised offer constituted a "Company Superior Proposal" as defined in the agreement with CN.

CP extended the offer on Aug. 10, and had given KCS until Sunday to accept.

Canadian Pacific said it "stands ready to execute a definite merger agreement" after completing negotiations with KCS.

"We are pleased to reach this important milestone and again pursue this once-in-a-lifetime partnership," CP CEO Keith Creel said in a press release. "As we have said throughout this process, CP remains committed to everything this opportunity presents. This merger proposal provides KCS stockholders greater regulatory and value certainty. We are excited to move forward as we work toward making this perfect match a reality."

CN will have five days to respond. If CN doesn't sweeten its offer, KCS's merger agreement will be scrapped and KCS's deal with CP will go into effect. *Courtesy TRAINS Newswire*

## Looking for Photos

I received this message on the Chapters Facebook page. An architectural firm is looking for interior photos of the Baraboo Depot. If you have any photos or possible information on where to get some let me know at [kschmidt626@gmail.com](mailto:kschmidt626@gmail.com). They have already contacted the CNW Historical Society, Circus World and Wisconsin Historical Society.

"Hello, We are a historic preservation architecture firm working with the Sauk County Historical Society to rehabilitate the historic Chicago & North Western Depot and Division Office in Baraboo, Wisconsin. We would like to accurately restore the first floor of the depot and I have been searching through archival repositories for historic interior photographs of the building and unfortunately have been coming up empty - we only have three photos from the second floor."

Again if you can help with this or have any ideas of where photos might be available let me know at [kschmidt626@gmail.com](mailto:kschmidt626@gmail.com) Thank You !!

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### Consider running for chapter leadership

The next chapter leadership election takes place February 4, 2022. If you would like to help chart the future of this organization, please consider running for an officer or board position. Send a note to chapter president Mike Yugas to discuss. All member input is solicited!

## October 19th Informal Slide Night

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

See [www.nrhswis.org](http://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](mailto:president@nrhswis.org) to receive all notifications.

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## Model Train Show and Swap Meet Kettle Moraine Ballast Scorchers

When - Sunday October 10 2021 9am to 3pm

Where - Washington County Fairgrounds

Hwy 45 and Hwy PV

Cost - \$3.00 Donation Kids 12 and Under FREE

Military with ID FREE

See operating model train layouts in N and HO Scale plus other scales.

Buy model trains to expand the collection or get started in the hobby.

For more information <http://www.kmbsrrclub.org/index.html>

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## First In Person Meeting Since March 2020

Friday September 10, 2021 was the first in person meeting of the Chapter since the March 2020 and the beginning of the pandemic. It felt good to get back so to something normal. Many in attendance were the regulars that had attended pre-pandemic. Here are some photos from the evening.



Tom Hoffmann receives his 50 Year Certificate and Pin from Mike Yugas.



# 2021 NRHS National Convention Milwaukee, WI

August 24th to August 28th the NRHS held its national convention in Milwaukee. The convention hotel was the Double Tree Hilton in Downtown Milwaukee. Events included trips to National Railroad Museum in Green Bay, East Troy Railroad, Illinois Railroad Museum and a Metra chartered train. About 170 people attended. Below are photos from some of the events. Photos by Keith Schmidt



# Do You Know ?

by Dave Nelson

Before air brakes and before the Janney automatic coupler, railroading ranked with coal mining as America's most dangerous occupations: brakemen had to run atop moving, swaying, and (in winter) ice-covered freight cars to tighten enough handbrake wheels to bring the train to a halt. Failure was common, and disastrous. To couple cars together or to a locomotive, a crewman stood between the rails out of view of the engineer, holding a metal link so that it could be inserted into a narrow slot in the approaching car or locomotive, and drop the pin to hold it in place at exactly the right moment. Any miscalculation could cost the crewman fingers or his entire hand; if the oncoming car or locomotive failed to stop, the crewman could be crushed or run over. Few experienced crewmen still had all ten fingers in the link and pin era. Links and pins were brittle iron; trains readily broke apart, increasing the danger. Death and maiming and derailments were considered costs of doing business.



The air brake hose connections and couplers still used today are essentially compatible with George Westinghouse's air brake patents of 1869 and 1872 and Eli Janney's knuckle coupler patents of 1873 and 1879. These inventions existed to make railroading safer, but weren't broadly adopted and the carnage continued for decades. The vast numbers of freight cars needing to be changed, and a desire to retain the easy interchange of all rolling stock, were strong disincentives to such fundamental changes. Finally the US Congress stepped in with safety appliance legislation in 1893 which mandated the Janney coupler, air brakes, and grab irons on ends and sides of cars for trains and equipment in interstate commerce.



These changes were to be gradually phased in. As of 1898 locomotives were to be equipped with air brakes and the ability to apply a train's air brakes from the cab; a train had to have a "sufficient" number of cars equipped with air brakes that the engineer had full control of the train without having to rely on brakemen setting brakes on a moving train. Knuckle couplers and air brakes were required on newly built cars after 1900. 1903 amendments applied the requirements to any locomotives or cars on a railroad that was in interstate commerce, even if a given car or locomotive was not (such as a work train car). In 1910 the Interstate Commerce Commission ordered that a train had to have 85% of its cars under control of the engineer and the locomotive's air brakes. Cars without air brakes presumably had to be located at the rear of a train. That meant the crew in the ca-

boose lacked control over the air brakes of that train.

Because the link and pin and Janney couplers co-existed for a period of time, a transition version of the Janney coupler was made, with a slot to hold the link and an opening for the pin. The delicate task of coupling up using a link and pin was becoming less frequent, but no less risky.



Dangerous aspects of the job remain today: a crewman still has to stand between cars to fasten the air brake hoses, and sometimes to adjust the alignment of the Janney coupler, both out of view of the engineer. The technology exists (and is used in other

contexts such as light rail) to eliminate these risks, but once again the railroads would face an overwhelming and expensive task if all existing rail cars had to either be retro-fitted with new technology and improvements, or be scrapped. Railroads are unlikely to make such fundamental changes themselves unless forced to.



As a result, astonishing as it seems in this era of technological change, an American locomotive built after 1900 could (and does) readily couple up to a train of today, charge up the air brakes, and get underway.

# From the Archives

## October 1956 - 65 Years Ago

The steam power capital of American railroad-ing has been tentatively designated the site of the 1957 NRHS Convention to be held at the N&W-owned Hotel Roanoke. All delegates will receive rooms overlooking the N&W main line (we hope). Roanoke: 4-8-4s, 2-6-6-4s, 2-8-8-2s; the Jawn Henry; Virginian electrification, which by convention-time will have new electric locomotives; wonderful mountain scenery; all of this at next year's convention, Labor Day weekend, September, 1957....The CSS&SB has just opened up a nice new stretch of track paralleling the Indiana Turnpike in a by-pass around East Chicago, Indiana.

## October 1961 - 60 Years Ago

Comments from General Chairman Carl Solheim regarding the recent NRHS National Convention in Chicago, hosted by Wisconsin Chapter: "The railroads involved, the Burlington, Grand Trunk, South Shore, and North Shore, did a superior job in furnishing us with equipment and services during the Convention. Many others furnished literature, maps, historical booklets, pencils, matches, etc. Among the friend railroads who helped were CNW, UP, NP, Reading, RI, ACL, B&O, SP, WP, EBT, as well as those we actually rode. The Milwaukee Road and the Santa Fe printed, at their own expense, the note pads which were an excellent memento of the Convention, as well as a symbol of the healthy relationship between the railroads and their allies, the organized railfans and historians."

## October 1966 - 55 Years Ago

The C&NW's Butler yards had lots of action over the Labor Day weekend. Ex-LS&I 2-8-0 No. 38 came through destined for someplace in Florida. It stayed at least one night outside the diesel house. Eight new SD-40s for the CGW went through on an evening freight, and the ex-RI Aerotrains stopped briefly enroute to the museum in Green Bay. In addition, Mid-Continent museum is working on an ex-TMER&L steeple cab there.

## October 1971 - 50 Years Ago

Amtrak has released the makeup of its roster of 1200 cars to be taken from various railroads for the startup of service. The majority of cars were selected from ATSF (447), SCL (276), BN (196), and UP (124).... A late bulletin announced additional Amtrak service in the Milwaukee-Chicago corridor and plans for through Milwaukee-St. Louis service

## October 1976 - 45 Years Ago

MidRail '76, held in Kansas City, was a great success....AT&T installed its first private Morse telegraph line in 1887 and on June 15, 1976, disconnected its last remaining DC telegraph line. The line connected the Milwaukee Road depot in Eau Claire with Durand and Wabasha, Minnesota. The line was leased from AT&T in 1959 after the Milwaukee Road discontinued its own line.

## October 1981 - 40 Years Ago

Chicago, Madison & Northern and the Wisconsin DOT have worked out an agreement whereby the CM&N will be able to go ahead with a \$150,000 interchange to connect the two lines of the railroad at Monroe. The ex-IC line from Freeport to Madison and the ex-Milwaukee Road line from Janesville to Mineral Point never had a physical connection at Monroe....Al Paske, the Milwaukee Road agent at Brookfield, has retired after 40 years of service. Al could always provide train location information and aided in the taking of many photos at Brookfield.

## October 1986 - 35 Years Ago

Construction of the connection between the Soo Line (ex-Wisconsin Central, now CN) and Milwaukee Road (now CP) is well under way at Duplainville....The ICC has granted permission for the C&NW to abandon its Fond du Lac-Ripon line....Effective September 20, 1986, Soo Line discontinued all passenger service between Neenah, Gladstone, and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, ending the era of caboose riding on the Soo....In the UP 8th St. Yard in Omaha, 248 cabooses sit rusting away.

## October 1991 - 30 Years Ago

The WISE Division of NMRA has established a hobby SIG on the Safe Harbor BBS located in Waukesha. (This was before the days of easy access to the Internet — ed.)...The Tri-State High Speed Rail Study was recently released by Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. The preliminary study concludes that the Chicago-Milwaukee-Twin Cities corridor offers a "significant potential" for high speed rail in terms of ridership, revenues, and economic benefits....The Lake Michigan Car Ferry Service Co., Inc. plans to resume twice-daily car ferry service from Manitowoc, Wisconsin to Ludington, Michigan

## October 1996 - 25 Years Ago

The Chicago Tribune reports that Amtrak is studying the possibility of running transcontinental trains through Chicago with only a service stop. One possible combination is the Capitol Limited and Southwest Chief....UP 4-8-4 No. 844 paid a visit to Butler on August 31. It powered a fantrip from Chicago to Butler and return via the C&NW New Line (UP Milwaukee Sub.)....The WC is removing rail from the former street running line through Oshkosh. This project has been going on for most of the past summer....Metra North service is now operating via the WC from Antioch, Illinois, to Chicago, on a Monday through Friday schedule.

## October 2001 - 20 Years Ago

The Wisconsin Chapter web site [www.nrhswis.org](http://www.nrhswis.org) made its debut on the internet. It was designed and is being maintained by Jim Yanke's son Jim....Trains Magazine, Canon cameras, and Fuji Photofilm combined to sponsor a railroad photography workshop on September 8 at Rochelle Railroad Park in Rochelle, Illinois....On September 7 the Surface Transportation Board approved Canadian National's \$1.2 billion acquisition of Wisconsin Central. The deal is expected to close on October 9....Amtrak ridership increased 17 per cent in the aftermath of 9/11....Amtrak has dropped plans to extend one of the Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha Service trains to Fond du Lac citing a failure of mail and express business to materialize....Amtrak's Chicago-Janesville Lake Country Limited made its last run on September 22.

## October 2006 - 15 Years Ago

A Photo Clinic sponsored by Trains Magazine and Wisconsin Chapter was held on September 9. Fifteen participants and six instructors shot photos from the CP crossings at Grange Ave. and Waterford Ave. The Milwaukee Amtrak depot, opened in 1965, the last intercity railroad depot built before Amtrak, and now owned by Wisconsin DOT, began its long-awaited makeover. The \$15.6 million remodeling will result in an intermodal facility for both train and bus passengers. It is expected to be completed in August 2007....UP rescinded its ban on photography from Metra platforms on August 28th.

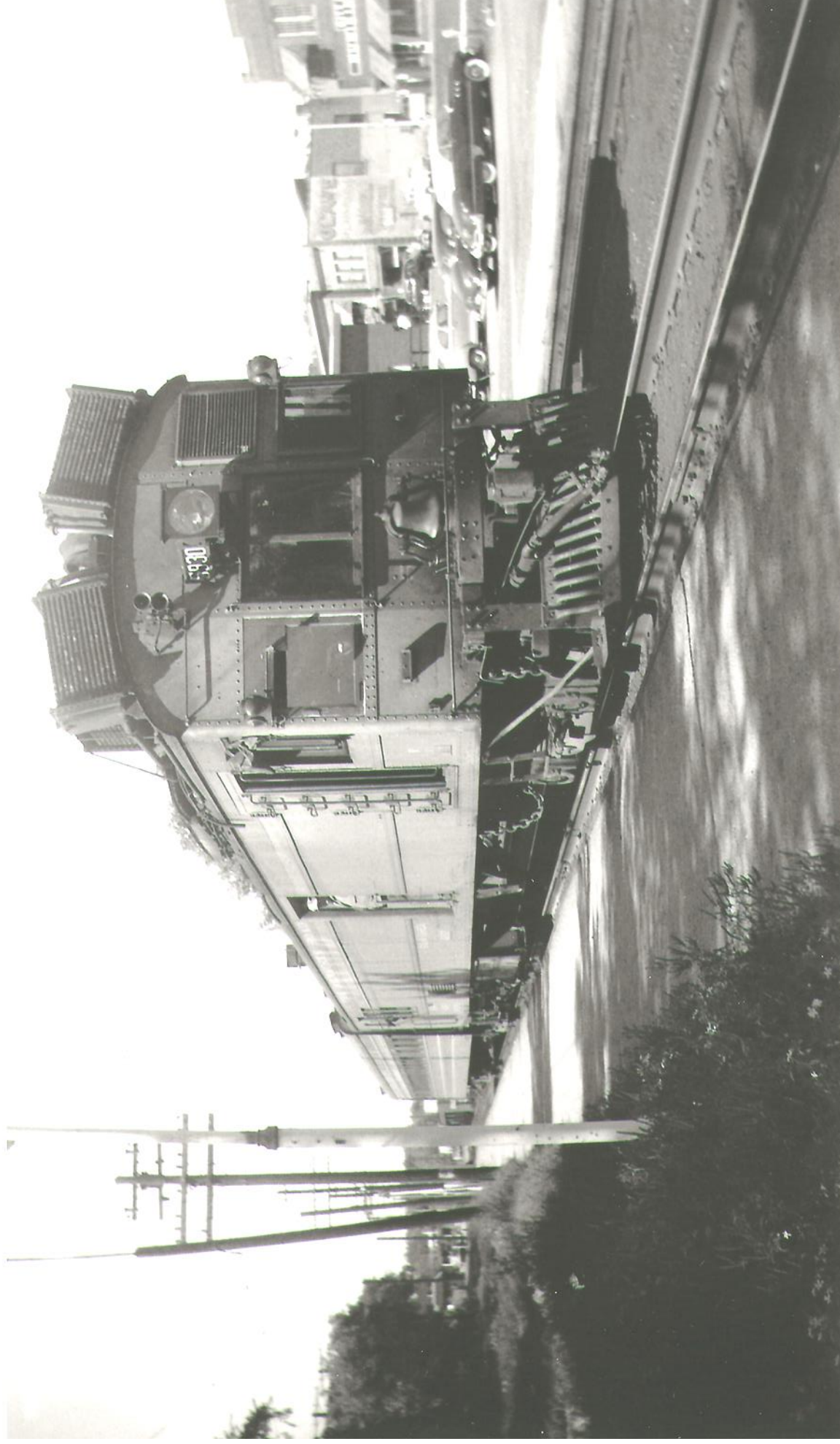
## October 2011- 10 Years Ago

On August 27th the Chapter toured the WSOR Horicon Shop Complex. 25 members took part in the tour that had been rain delayed twice before. Canadian National announced its intent to merge the Duluth Missabe and Iron Range RR (DM&IR) and Duluth, Winnipeg and Pacific (DW&P) into the Wisconsin Central operating umbrella.

## October 2016 - 5 Years Ago

Six freight rail projects in Wisconsin will benefit from \$37 million in state funding. Gov. Scott Walker recently announced the appropriations through the state's freight railroad assistance program. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is distributing \$29.6 million in grants through the freight railroad preservation program and an additional \$7.4 million in loans will be distributed through the freight railroad infrastructure improvement program. Four projects on the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad will benefit from the state funding. The Port of Milwaukee has also received a \$1.7 million grant to reconstruct more than a dozen grade crossings within the port and replace rail within the grade crossings. The project will include replacing grade crossing surfaces and installing new 115-pound rail. The port is contributing more than \$440,000 to the project

# The Big Picture



Train #308 from Janesville, WI on March 18, 1949 in Wauwatosa, WI. Milwaukee Road #5930 Gas Electric did the honors that day. Photo by Ray Haber father of chapter member Jeff Haber.