

DANVILLE FLYER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, INC,

The *DANVILLE FLYER* is published monthly by the DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER of the NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY for its members and other interested persons.

The DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, NRHS, is a not-for-profit corporation organized to preserve the history of railroading in Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana and operates a museum located in the former Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad depot on East Benton Street in Rossville, Illinois. The museum is open weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day, noon to 4 PM, and features many railroad displays plus a large operating HO model railroad.

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading. Dues per year are \$12.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$17.00 for NRHS membership. Meetings are held on the third (3rd) Thursday of each month (except July, August and December) at the Cooke Business Forms, N. Vermilion Street, next to the Central Illinois Bank, Danville, Il. beginning at 7:30 PM Central Time.

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Volume 29

January 1997

Number 1

Coming Events

January 16, 1997

Monthly meeting beginning at 7:30 PM at Cooke Business Forms, 2500 N. Vermilion St in Danville.

February 9, 1997

Wheaton, IL - Great America Train Show - DuPage Co. Fairgrounds, 10-4, \$5.

February 23, 1997

Springfield, IL - Springfield Model Railroad Club's 7th annual show at Ill. Bldg, Fairgrounds, 10-4, adm \$2

March 1, 1997

Indianapolis, IN - Model Railroad and Toy Show - St. Joseph Church, 1375 S. Mickley Ave. \$2.

April 5 & 6, 1997

Model Train Show and Swap Meet - Lincoln Square Mall, Urbana, IL 10-6 on Saturday, 11-5 on Sunday.

April 19, 1997

Watseka, IL - C&EIHHS Annual Meeting at Watseka Depot. Meeting, swap tables, displays, dedication of museum room and annual meeting.

June 25-29, 1997

NRHS Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be January 16, 1997 at Cooke Business Forms, 2500 N. Vermilion Street, Danville, Illinois. Business meeting will begin at 7:30 PM with the program starting around 8:15 PM.

On December 8, 1996, member Raymond Goodling of Bondville, Illinois passed away of a heart attack. Ray was not known to many of our members as he joined the chapter about 2 years ago after being an associate member for several years. Ray and his wife Kay were very active in the Monticello Railway Museum. He will be missed by that fine organization. Our sympathy goes out to Kay and his family.

We hope that you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Years. As we start another year we look forward to the coming of



spring and the opening of the museum, vacations and railfanning. Make your plans now for the model show in Urbana, the C&EI meeting in Watseka and the NRHS convention in Utah.

Conrail

Conrail in October set a new monthly record for intermodal volume, transporting 162,000 trailers and containers during the month. For the first ten months of 1996 Conrail handled 1.32 million intermodal units, an increase of five percent over 1995.

Conrail and Guilford Rail System last month announced the imminent startup of DownEast Express, a joint intermodal service linking Guilford's soon-to-open terminal at Waterville, Me with major markets in the Midwest and Southeast.

Conrail and Union Pacific have begun their Northstar double-stack container service from the Texas-Mexico border to the Northeast via the St. Elmo (IL) gateway.

Conrail reports that it removed 38 overhead signal bridges as part of its double-stack clearance project across Pennsylvania last year, replacing them with ground mast signals. The Bucks County Courier Times in October carried an article describing several highway underpasses in Lower Bucks County which are proving to be choke points for truck and auto traffic trying to squeeze through them. Most of the "tunnels," as the newspaper calls them, were built of stone early in the century to support the PRR's Trenton Cut-Off, now Conrail's Morrisville Line, but they "remain so sturdy PennDOT officials don't want to disturb their structures." And the police like them because they slow down traffic!

Conrail has purchased the two SD80MAC demonstrator units, 8000 and 8001, from EMD. They have arrived at Juniata Shops for repainting and installation of cab signals and most likely renumbered 4128 and 4129. Conrail is expected to take delivery of additional AC-drive locomotives.

Via Philadelphia Chapter, Cinders

Chapter Home Page

Over the last year you have been aware of the home page on Internet that was created by member Doug Nipper. For those of you that have access to the Web I hope you have checked it out along with other sites. In late December Doug spent a Sunday afternoon rebuilding the page and I must say it looks great.

We ask that you check it out and give us

1997 Dues

Last month we sent your renewal notice for 1997 dues. This included renewal notice for the NRHS and the museum.

The NRHS renewal form is a two-part form plus it includes your 1997 membership card. Remove the top portion and return to Allen Cooke with your check for \$29. Donations to the chapter, and/or the NRHS, are appreciated. For museum members please return the form with your check. Remember, all 1997 dues are due by the end of March. The last issue of the newsletter you will receive will be the March issue, unless you have paid your dues.

We look forward to having you as a member again in 1997.

your opinion. At the same time we are proposing a new feature in the page. Doug has recently acquired a slide scanner and Cooke Business has a flat top scanner for prints. The new feature, to begin this spring, will be an album of photos taken by members of the chapter. We invite you to send your slide or print of a recent railroad subject. The item will be scanned and placed in the album for the world to see. This is a way to get your photo "published", however, don't expect payment. You will get the gratification that railroad fans across the country will be able to see your work.

We request that your photos be properly exposed, preferably in sunlight. How-

ever, shots in bright cloudy days sometimes make better photos. They must be clear. We have the capability of scanning and then cropping the photo to take out the unwanted portion of the photo (side poles, other railfans or daisy pickers).

Send your photo or slide to the chapter at the post office box. Photos may be standard size, be sure to put cardboard around to prevent bending. We will list those that are posted in the issue of the newsletter. We hope to put 4-5 photos on line each quarter. If you want to see your photo, and don't have access to a computer on line, come to the meeting and Allen or Doug will get on line at Cooke's and let you look.

In addition to getting the photos on line we now have a better capability of getting your photo in the newsletter. At the same time we are looking at improving the quality of the newsletter, providing your editor has the time. Look for the changes to occur this spring.

Rick

UP Sells Lines to BNSF

Omaha, December 19 -- Union Pacific Railroad today announced the sale of 190 miles of its rail line in Louisiana to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe as part of the agreement made to preserve and intensify rail competition as a result of the UP/Southern Pacific merger.

Union Pacific also sold its intermodal facility and the Southern Pacific rail yard in Avondale to the BNSF as part of the package. UP will transfer its intermodal operation to the SP facility in Avondale and SP rail yard operations will be transferred to the Union Pacific facility also in Avondale. A rail yard in Lafayette, Louisiana was also sold to BNSF.



Union Pacific will continue to operate trams over this line through a trackage rights agreement with BNSF. BNSF trains will operate over Union Pacific

under a trackage rights agreement between Houston, Texas and Iowa Junction, Louisiana.

Union Pacific conductors and engineers who work on this line should see no changes because of this transaction. UP employees who work on signals and track will become BNSF employees following the negotiation of the necessary labor agreements.

[Via UP Home Page](#)

Goodby CP Rail - Hello I&M Rail Link!

Pending approval by the Surface Transportation Board, the new operator of more than 1100-miles of CP Rail trackage will begin operation around February 3, 1997. The new railroad will be called the "I&M Rail Link", evidently the "I"

Kansas City Southern Improves Service on 1-20 Rail Corridor

Kansas City, Mo.--- The Kansas City Southern Railway (KCS) recently increased train speeds to 55 mph and reduced transit times on its 529-mile transcontinental rail corridor between Meridian, Miss., and Alliance, Texas, to expedite peak season intermodal train movements and to accommodate increased traffic.

KCS' intermodal trains are delivering improved transit times between Meridian and Alliance with increased train speeds up to 55 mph. KCS provides intermodal service between Atlanta, the Dallas/Ft. Worth area and the Southeast and Southwest in conjunction with Norfolk Southern (NS) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) through its Meridian gateway.

KCS began upgrading its line between Meridian, Miss., and Shreveport, La., when it acquired the Mid South Railway in 1993. Since then, the company has made significant capital improvements to upgrade the line with continuous welded rail, new tie installations, ballast, bridges and appropriate grade crossing warning devices. These improvements, along with the construction of 13 new sidings, have enhanced fluidity on this route while simultaneously increasing capacity.

"Just a few years ago there were hundreds of speed restrictions on this line and average speed limits often to 25 mph," explained KCS' Senior Vice President of Operations Ab Rees. "KCS invested in improvements to replace rail and ties, realign curves and remove switches so we could run our trains at faster speeds necessary to service this important rail market."

According to Bill Graham, KCS' Senior Vice President-Marketing & Sales, faster more reliable service has contributed to double-digit growth on the Meridian intermodal corridor over the past three years and prompted the recent opening of a new KCS intermodal facility in Jackson, Miss.



"The improvements further establish KCS-NS-BNSF intermodal service as the preeminent transcontinental rail route in the United States," said Graham. "With these new improvements and additional train starts, we expect to continue our positive growth trends."

In conjunction with the line improvements, KCS opened up a new intermodal facility in Jackson on Dec. 1 to accommodate increasing demand for intermodal service in the Southeast region. The TOFC/COFC facility features a travel lift and sideloader and is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

[Via KCS Industries Internet Home Page](#)

stands for both Iowa and Illinois and the 'M' stands for both Missouri and Minnesota. The new line will have its corporate offices in Davenport, IA at the River Plaza building. Tentative plans call for all crews to be based out of Nahant Yard in the Quad Cities.

The new operators held informative meetings around the early part of December to talk with the present CP Rail employees. Most of the 700-or so employees are expected to be offered positions with the new operator. The new rail line is to be "customer driven". Which means that they will actively pursue new traffic and try to win back old customers (like General Motors in Janesville, WI). CP Rail portions that were described previously: Chicago to Kansas City, the Davis Jct to Janesville branch, Marquette to Sheldon, IA; Sabula to LaCrescent, MN; Mason City, IA to Comus, MN and Austin to Jackson, MN. The new line will also have trackage rights between Marquette, IA and the Twin Cities. The dispatchers will initially use the CP Rail's new dispatching center in Minneapolis, MN but will eventually move to the Washington Corporation's (Montana Rail Link) offices in Missoula, MT.

[Via North Western Illinois Chapter](#)

Pennsylvania in the Winter

By Rick Schroeder

After Christmas I usually take a four-plus day trip to watch trains. This started back when Roy Scrivner and I took trips dating back to about 1977. This year I approached Bob Gallippi about taking a trip east to watch Conrail and follow the ex-PRR line from Pittsburgh to Altoona. Bob thought a minute and said yes.

We left about 3 AM the morning after Christmas. Our first stop was to Conrail's Pittsburgh office where I visited with the area engineer and meet some of the employees I have worked with over the phone. We spent about an hour and looked at some great color aerial of the east side of Pittsburgh. Vic also gave us a 1991 track chart (had the 1996 with

us). We headed east to Pitcarin yard plus Bob wanted to visit his former home and his father's grave site.

We ate a late lunch near Pitcarin and then headed east. With this being the day after Christmas not many trains were running. Even though the day was overcast we found some great photo locations - curves - overpass, etc. However, the trains weren't cooperating. We missed Amtrak and RoadRailer but did see some country side.

West of Latrobe there is a cut with a bridge overhead. The cut is about 75-100 feet deep with a steel truss spanning the cut. The long sweeping curve would make a great shot - for an hour there were no trains, story of the day. We went into town and then back to Greenburg where we spent the night.

The next morning was cloudy and cool. We went to Latrobe and then headed east along the main line to Derry. We caught one train from the overpass but missed one while we were changing locations. The town has two cabooses located near the track, one PRR and one bay-window ex-NYC painted Conrail. The two are headquarters for a small museum and gift shop that hosts Railroad Days.

From this point we headed northeast to Gray's, a small settlement at the base of the mountain and one of 5 grade crossings on the line. We waited about 15 minutes and caught Amtrak plus one westbound freight. One of the local residents came by and told us more about the area. He was also a model railroader with a layout in the basement - small world.

On to Torrance and another overpass. This was a great location. The track curves to the east under the bridge and parallels the Conemaugh River. To the southwest there is CP Pack with the always lit home signals. We caught two trains at this location.

We had to go north across the river to Blairsville on the Conemaugh Line and then headed east on Route 22. About 8 miles we turned south to Robindale and Bolivar. Robindale in on the north side of the river where the Conemaugh Line

leaves the mainline and crosses a bridge. At Bolivar, on the south side of the river, the track curves northwest along the river. This was a great small town with neat homes and a small freight house. A half-hour wait produced no trains or talk on the detectors.

We headed back to Robindale and then on a back road to Conpit Junction. Near Lockport you leave the main road and come to a lookout that is about 300 feet above the town. We saw a westbound RoadRailer from the hillside as the train crossed the river. Down the hill, (similar to Frog Hollow Road - Randy) we came into town, turned south and paralleled the railroad to Conpit Junction.

At Conpit the double-track mainline is about 100 feet away from the road. The Conemaugh Line comes in from the west and continues east to the Sang Hollow Extension (track 3 - this line runs to Johnstown). A crossover connects the Conemaugh Line to the main and another crossover connects the main to the Sang Hollow Extension. Crossovers also allow movement between tracks 1 and 2. A large power plant is located to the east at New Florence and the stacks are in line with the tracks. The sun had come out and the rising steam was bathed in sunlight. Great shot - no trains for an hour. We decided to head east to Johnstown.

As we arrived in Johnstown we caught a westbound leaving town, crossing the bridge that was famous during the Johnstown flood. At the Conemaugh and Black Lick we shot two units behind the engine house. This railroad is almost dead as most of the steel mills are shut down. We did see a lot of new hopper cars built by Johnstown America. We went through Johnstown and headed for Summerhill. On the way we spotted a eastbound stack train, however, they had a easier climb than we did and they left us in the dust.

There is a good overpass at Summerhill. We waited about a half-hour and no trains. On to Cresson and the engine terminal, a stop at Gallitzin and the tunnels and then to the top of Tunnel Hill. Still no trains. At Tunnel Hill we

went to the overlook on the east side and shot the track to the east, then headed to Horseshoe Curve. The road that goes under the curve was closed and we had to backtrack to old Route 22.

After a short tour of the streets of Altoona we were headed for the curve, arriving about 3:30. We had paralleled a westbound train and thought we could see it on the curve. Upon arriving we discovered the area is no longer free and had to wait to pay to get in. Also, we had to "be off the grounds" by 4:30 PM. We paid our \$3.50 and spent an hour watching a couple of trains as the sun set over the mountain. We decided to come back in the morning.

We went into Altoona and found Alto tower. We spent some time watching a couple of trains until the light of day was gone. The next morning we went to Juniata Shops to see what was around. There was a lot of deadline power plus 4 of the new Amtrak P42DC units in primer paint. From the shops we went back to the overpass at Alto tower and caught some traffic. At 10:00 the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum opened and we spent about a half-hour visiting the displays. They have a lot of equipment in the yard but due to fog and time we did not go outside to visit. We left and went to the curve, arriving about 11:00. Business was quiet for the first 30 minutes or so, then several trains did come past. We had two go past at once but never got the three trains at one time. The weather was cloudy and the fog was about 200 feet above us. A few railfans were there and some general public, but not the crowds of summer. We left about 1:30 and headed west. As we topped the mountain on Route 22 we hit warmer weather and some sunlight. We went directly for South Fork, site of the valley where the flood water came from that destroyed much of Johnstown. This was a great location, overhead bridge, former bridge locations, nice curve and great backdrops. We spend the rest of the daylight hours here, catching about 6 trains.

We spent the night in Johnstown and headed west in the morning. We followed a westbound out of the city and paced it most of the way to Conpit Junc-



The date is July, 1948 and C&EINo. 1011, a 4-6-2, leads the mail train out of Danville station across the Wabash Railroad at North Yard. This photo is part of Ray Curl's collection acquired by the C&EIHs and Rick Schroeder

tion. We arrived as a westbound TV train was going through the control point. The dispatcher ran the train off the Sang Hollow Ext onto No. 2 track. About 15 minutes later we had an eastbound TV train come off No. 1 track onto the Extension. Finally we had one eastbound come off the Conemaugh Line onto No. 1 track.

We headed west to Bolivar and the "freight house curve". However, our first train, thanks to the scanner, was an eastbound coal train coming on the Conemaugh Line over the river bridge - great shot. We did finally catch one westbound at Bolivar.

On to Torrance to check out the bridge again. This time the rain had set in and by the time we arrived was fairly heavy. We saw 4 trains along with an Amtrak. Great place - downpour of rain. On to Derry and additional business. We shot the cabooses and headed west to Latrobe. We spent about 2 hours at the overhead bridge and caught a train plus Amtrak. The sun had come out for some of the time, however, usually not during train time.

The last shots were from an overhead bridge east of Greensburg. This was tangent track to the east and two trains were caught, all deadhead power. The final train of the day was Amtrak 276.

We went into Greensburg and headed south to I-70. The weather did not cooperate most of the time, however, both of us enjoyed action that we did see. The

next time we will probably plan for a different time of year with hopefully more sun. At least in the winter the weeds and leaves are gone. Come to the February meeting and take a look at our trip.

BNSF Sells lines in Four States

FORT WORTH, Texas, December 17, 1996-- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation (BNSF) today announced it has sold four line segments in Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas to an operating subsidiary of newly-formed, Bedford, Texas-based North American RailNet, Inc. (NAR). Terms of the sale were not disclosed.

The 416 miles of railroad sold by BNSF includes a 225-mile segment from Sterling, Neb., to Holdrege, Neb.; a 133-mile line from Orleans Junction, Neb., to St. Francis, Kan.; a 26-mile line from Flynn, Neb., to Alma Junction, Kan.; and a 30-mile segment from Oronoque Junction to Oberlin, Kansas. Nebraska, Kansas & Colorado RailNet, Inc. (NKCR), a shortline railroad created by NAR to serve customers on these lines, began operations today.

NKCR's connections with BNSF will be at Orleans and Holdrege, Neb., and Sterling, Neb. BNSF will retain pricing and routing authority. BNSF coal trains moving to Nebraska Public Power District's Gerald Gentleman facility will move over the NKCR, operated by the

shortline's crews.

The lines purchased by NAR were offered by BNSF as part of its ongoing asset evaluation program. Including this transaction, approximately 1,900 miles of track have been sold in 1996 thus far.

[Via BNSF Home Page](#)

The I&O Operation of the DT&I:

On December 31, 1996, the Indiana & Ohio Railway (IORY), a subsidiary of the RailTex Corp, will take over the operation of six trains per day on the former "DT&I" line from Canadian National Railways. The purchase of the DT&I track and trackage rights from the former Grand Trunk, now part of Canadian National, described in last month's article, covers the line from RR Junction in Cincinnati to Diann Junction in Michigan (where the DT&I crosses the Ann Arbor RR). The 23 miles between Diann and CN's ex-DT&I Flat Rock Yard, outside of Detroit, will be covered by trackage rights over CN. In Cincinnati, the I&O will continue to use trackage rights on CSX to reach Queensgate Yard, where all CSX/ I&O interchanges will take place, while the I&O will use NS trackage rights to reach Gest Street where all NS/ I&O interchanges will occur.

For the non-DT&I trains, McCullough Yard in Norwood will continue to be I&O's Cincinnati terminal, with auto racks still being stored in Undercliff Yard. To the three ex-GTW trains each way per day over the DT&I line, I&O plans to add a fourth, a local from Undercliff and McCullough to Flat Rock. The crew change point for all DT&I trains will be moved from Maitland to Lima. In 1997, I&O plans to spend between \$6 and \$8

million on track refurbishment, mostly tie replacement, to bring almost all of the line up to 45 MPH by the end of the year. To cover motive power needs, I&O will lease 33 locomotives, all 4-axle EMD power, for about six months, while they acquire additional power of their own. In Springfield, the DT&I trains will continue GTW's occasional service to Ohio Warehouse and will enter Springfield Yard for interchange with local I&O traffic. The I&O also plans to retain the freight office in the yard. (from Jim Nobbe and Ron Maifeld, I&O).

Via Dayton Ties and Tracks

Better Head-End Revenues coming for Amtrak

Better exploitation of mail and express opportunities is a big part of Amtrak's move to improve the economics of long-distance trains. Amtrak's gross mail and express revenues in fiscal 1996 were \$66 million-\$2 million over budget, \$5 million over 1995, and a 340% increase over 1982 (which was \$15 million).

Amtrak has created a large network of trucking subcontractors to handle mail, much as Thruway buses handle passengers. The first truck deal let Amtrak keep Texas-New England mail when the *Texas Eagle* was cut from daily to triweekly in late 1993 (trucks handle the St. Louis-Fort Worth segment four days a week). In 1995, when bad *Empire Builder* on-time performance jeopardized the much bigger Seattle-East Coast mail business, Amtrak shifted to trucks west of St. Paul, with stops in Fargo and Billings. Thanks to poor reliability, the *Coast Starlight* mail contract was lost in 1994.)

Initiatives in fiscal 1997 include:

The Postal Service loves the RoadRailer van services from

Philadelphia to Jacksonville, Silver Palm, and to Chicago. Three *Palm* vans per trip carry first-class mail (which used to fly) from Pennsylvania and northern New Jersey to Tampa, Orlando and Miami. The Chicago route was cut back from St. Louis so the Florida runs could expand quickly. Amtrak is hauling its new Missouri mail in regular rail cars until more vans arrive. The RoadRailer vans are being hauled on the rear of the train while normal "headend" cars are being used on the end or behind the motive power.

The *Sunset Limited*, despite its tri-weekly schedule, will get regular head-end revenues for the first time in January.

Amtrak hopes to partner with freight railroads, taking advantage of their marketing skills, to carry high-value freight on Amtrak trains. Amtrak President Tom Downs told a *Railway Age* conference in Washington on November 8 "The host railroad furnishes the infrastructure, while the



passenger train - which operates on fast, reliable schedules - handles the high-priority material .. Amtrak can be a partner of its

host railroads, sharing both the infrastructure as well the revenue." This would give freight railroads, who control dispatching for most of Amtrak trains away from the Northeast Corridor, another incentive for keeping Amtrak trains on time.

From NARP News - December 1996

Web Page Creation

By Doug Nipper

Rick asked if I could describe what it takes to put the web pages together. That's a tall order, but I'll take a shot at it:

The "pages" are nothing but computer text and image files on the Prairienet Unix Web server. The "Web" refers to the "World Wide Web", an aspect of the Internet that allows text, graphics and

sound to be combined, then downloaded and viewed by a program on your computer known as a "browser".

The text you see in your browser, what I have written to illustrate a certain aspect of the Chapter, is only a small part of all of the text contained in a "page". The rest of the text is contained in "tags". Tags tell the browser where to place graphics, how to format and place text, and can turn text and images into "links" to other pages, images or sounds. These links can refer to data on our site or on sites hundreds of miles away.

The language used to compose these pages is called "Hypertext Markup Language" or HTML. The tags I described above "mark up" the text, thereby the Markup part of the name. You can write this code with a simple text editor, providing you know all the possible tags. Most people don't, so they use a special HTML editor that either partially or completely automates the tagging process. If you want to see the code behind our pages, choose the "View Source" option on your browser. I use a popular editor called WebEdit.

The graphics are a mixed bag. The dividing lines, background images, and mailbox icon on our pages are "clip art" that I've retrieved, for free, from various sources on the Internet. With most browsers, you're one right-click away from stealing any image you can see on any page you visit. That's kind of the downside of this business; there is no way to protect copyrights. If you have an image you want to retain copyright on, don't post it on the Web!

The rest of the graphics, excluding photographs, are made with a combination of programs including Page Maker, Photoshop, Corel Draw and Gif Construction Set. In some cases, like the NRHS logo, the image has been scanned in and then combined with text and backgrounds in Photoshop. The animated graphic on the "Slide Show" page was done with three different programs!

The photographs that I have included so far are just a start, since I now have a Polaroid Sprint Scan slide scanner. It can scan 35mm positive or negative trans-

parencies up to 2700 dpi (dots per inch). Some of the photos were done on a flatbed scanner, and some with another slide scanner, but with this latest tool I can produce high-quality images from any slide or negative. I use Photoshop to acquire the image from the scanner, then adjust brightness, contrast and sharpness to get the best quality. I am by no means a graphics artist, but it is amazing what you can do with these programs. I just never have enough time!

It takes about eight solid hours to create a page from scratch, assuming I'm also going to include some custom graphics. As you get farther along with it, you find yourself doing new things out of necessity to make the page look that way you want. I just started working heavily with tables a month ago, and now I find them indispensable.

If you'd like to see another animated graphic I created, look at my personal home page. (I'm not sure if the browser for AOL can display animated gif images) It's located at: <http://www.soltec.net/~djnipper>

Editor: I ask Doug to give us a thumbnail sketch of the work involved in producing a Home Page for the chapter. For those of you that have seen what he has produced I am sure you are impressed, especially if you have checked out the Home Pages of major industries. Doug is still updating the pages and will have more on the Web soon. Note the article on Page 2 about the additions of photos - send some in and become known around the world. WDNL calls getting the morning question right "Cheap Thrills". We could call posting your photo the same.

Wheel Report

OPERATION LIFESAVER WORKING? Through the end of November the state has seen a 39% decline in fatalities and a 22% drop in fatal crashes at rail crossings compared to 1995. If this continues through the end of the year 1996 will have the lowest number of deaths at grade crossings in

more than a decade. Perhaps the tragic bus/train collision in Chicago last year has made the public aware that they must obey the warning device at a grade crossing.

HORSESHOE CURVE During a recent visit to the famous curve your editor learned that the park service is now charging \$3.50 to enter the site. Also, the hours are now 10 AM to 4:30 PM in the fall months. Hopefully this will change in summer months. Apparently the site was losing money and volunteer help. With the new charging system comes paid personnel.

Each person entering has a wristband placed on their wrist and they are given two tokens to ride the incline. No entry is allowed without paying - no free walking up the stairs. We were disappointed at the closing hours as Bob and I arrived about 3:45 and had very little time to spend on the curve. The next morning we had fog and the 10 am opening did not present a problem except we had time to kill in town. Had the sun been out we wanted to be at the curve early to get the most shots possible.

The curve is still a great place to watch Conrail struggle up the hill. This is the one location that the general public can see firsthand how the railroads conquer the mountains in this country.

OPERATION LIFESAVER has a 1997 calendar to celebrate its 25th anniversary. The historic rail-highway safety posters from the 1920's to 1940's adorn the calendar. Norfolk Southern granted OL permission to reproduce the posters. A copy has been sent to the chapter and will be placed in the museum. The calendar can be obtained for \$10 from OL, Inc., 1420 King St, Suite 401, Alexandria, VA 22314.

The NRHS BULLETIN, Vol. 61, No 5/6, 1996 has arrived and features articles about Chicago's stations and the fight for the transfer business in the Windy City. In addition, the center features the pre-registration for the summer convention to be held beginning on Monday, June 23 and ending on Friday, June 27, 1997. If you plan to attend be sure to send in the registration card.

BID RAIL SERVICE? On Monday, January 6, the Illinois House approved a proposal that would allow the state to take bids on passenger train service in Illinois. Under the measure, IDOT would be authorized to negotiate with rail-service providers other than Amtrak to operate state-subsidized routes. The measure went to the Senate on a 111 to 2 vote.

Three main routes run out of Chicago. One to Champaign and Carbondale, the second to Springfield and on to St. Louis with the third going to Galesburg, Macomb and Quincy. The state is wanting to control the expenses for providing rail service to these communities. Two years the annual cost was about \$5 million and reached \$7 million in 1996. This legislation will be used if talks with Amtrak fails to produce an agreement.

Midwest Rail Initiative Announced

Wisconsin officials unveiled the Midwest Rail Initiative on December 3 at Milwaukee's Amtrak station. It is aimed at creating a Midwestern network of both high-speed and conventional rail service radiating from a Chicago hub.

Wisconsin Transportation Secretary Charles Thompson said that the MRI is being proposed as "the next logical step to make sure we retain train service in the Midwest." He also said the Midwest deserves some of the federal dollars that is going for rail studies on the East and West Coasts.

A study is presently underway on the construction of a high-speed rail line to link Chicago to Milwaukee, Detroit, St. Louis and Minneapolis-St. Paul. A high-speed rail network based in Chicago could create 15,260 construction jobs and 2,090 operating jobs according to a University of Illinois study.

Via Wisconsin Chapter Sparks & Cinders