

# Hoosierland Flyer

## Editorial—Goodbye!

This May 2018 meeting of the Hoosierland Chapter, NRHS is probably the last one I will attend! I have to admit to some strong feelings of regret—I have thoroughly enjoyed associating with a very competent and professional group of railfans! (Otherwise known as “foamers”).

I got started in railfanning in the UK when I was about ten or eleven. My Grandparents lived across from a small, but fairly active, railyard in Foleshill, a suburb of Coventry. A footpath crossed the yard on an iron footbridge and the way to my cousin's home lay across the footbridge. You could stand up there with a pocket full of small stones and drop them down the funnel of the steam locomotive that was shunting in the yard.

My cousin and I became well known to the driver and fireman working the yard, in fact we even got a footplate ride one slack afternoon!

Even though I'm a Mechanical Engineer I never really wanted to work on the railroad—I was always interested in any mechanical contrivance but my professional interests lay more at the interface between electronics and mechanics. Still, in the early 1980's I was driving in the country outside Chicago, just having moved to Libertyville, IL, when I saw a steam engine (in US talk a steam locomotive) alongside the country road I was driving on. It was IRM's #1630—and a love affair began!

I learned to fire, drive and maintain steam loco's at IRM, under Tom Schneider, the Steam Department curator. When I moved to Indiana I started in the Hoosierland Chapter, NRHS and am very deeply involved in NRHS now! Just don't get the hands-on that I used to!

*Chris Burger 1973*



Our late "springing spring" made me think of this photo taken outside the Oelwein, IA locomotive shop on May 3, 1973.

I had been Assistant Superintendent of CNW's Missouri Division (the former CGW) since June 1971 and was supposed to be in Green Bay, WI to begin my new assignment on the Lake Shore Division on May 1 '73. In the days before weather alerts, warnings, advisories, radar, satellites, etc., we didn't have much warning of impending severe weather and the night before I was to fly from Waterloo to Green Bay an unanticipated and heavy snow storm hit the region, closing roads and airports and stranding trains in snow drifts at several locations, especially on our north/south main line. My move was postponed for a week or so to help get things back to normal and the photo is of the power from train 161 (Minneapolis to Kansas City) which had been dug out of a drifted in cut near Sumner, Iowa. The crew had been rescued via snowmobile by folks from a nearby farm and I remember them saying they were only a car length or two from breaking out of the snow when they stalled. I think the engines ("motors" on the CGW), were all still running.

## IRM Report

I just got the Spring 2018 issue of "Rail & Wire" the house magazine of The Illinois Railway Museum. It is getting bigger and better all the time! This issue is 48 pages of high quality, glossy paper, well filled with articles, photos and descriptions of the restoration work going on there.

One of the latest electric cars to be finished is the "Northwestern Elevated Railroad #24". The car, built by the St. Louis Car Co. in the late 1800's, ran on the Northwestern Elevated in Chicago and then later on several other lines in the Chicago area. This issue covers the completion of the restoration and its first operation at IRM.

IRM is also the home of one of the last four Baldwin Diesel loco's from the VO series. This series was built with diesel engines from I. P. Morris & DeLaVergne Co., a company that became a Baldwin subsidiary in 1931. These were 6 cylinder VO model diesels that produced 660HP, the series was introduced in 1939 and 138 were built before production of the type ended in 1946. None of the four VOs is operational. In the steam area the museum is working on the restoration of Tuskegee Prairie 101, a Baldwin 2-6-2 as well as the UP 428. The Frisco 1630 requires some maintenance every year and the Shay is just about finished with the installation of a complete new smokebox.

Other current items are the completion of a B&O box car, the start of the restoration of a unique "Coach/Caboose" Green Bay & Western 109. This was a standard heavyweight car that was modified to have one end made into a caboose for the Conductor to ride.

## NRHS Update

The Society has begun an active Membership Recruitment program. We're handing out brochures at swap and "railroadiana" meets all over the country. I've already signed up over 200 new members in 2018.

The Society is now up to 4,472 members and we hope we'll continue to grow. We're already ahead of last year and we hope that many Chapters will continue active recruiting programs.

The monthly newsletters by e-mail and the Bulletins that Jeff is doing such a great job of getting out are all encouraging members to renew and new members to join.

Our one lack is the poor communication with those who don't use e-mails. I do use the USPS when I need to but it is reluctantly! I have to print the letter, write the envelope and then put a stamp on it and carry it to the mail—much harder than a simple e-mail! We mail out two or three newsletters each year—each is smaller than the normal e-mailed one—but it still costs us about \$10,000 to print and mail—the e-mail version is almost free. An issue of the Bulletin costs about \$50,000 to print and mail.

## WHITEWATER VALLEY

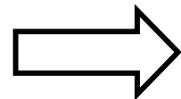
As always at this time of year I am relieved when my sources at WVRR let me know that the North Pole is no longer in place south of Connersville! It takes about three months to build up the home, workshop, Hobo Camp and the other artifacts at the "North Pole" and then, when the show is over, another three months to take it all down again. The components are all stored in a Refrigerator Car in Connersville yard so they are ready and available for construction to start again for next year (actually this year—the 2018 season).

Here's a picture of the typical local train in Foleshill in the early to mid 1950's. They were generally side tank loco's with a coal bunker at the back of the cab. They had surprisingly good acceleration out of the station and up to about 20–25mph, but that was about all they had, too!

Remember, this is the UK—track deteriorated from heavy war use—and frequently from bomb damage—so high speed just wasn't possible. The track didn't really get much attention until most of the actual dam-

aged track had been fixed. Then, in the period from 1956–1976 the railways got downsized again and it wasn't until Network Rail took over that track really got the attention and investment it needed.

Now there are several high speed lines (still only 125–150mph) and there is the new Chunnel (the tunnel under the Channel) which is rated for up to 186mph when above ground—I don't know what the speed limit is in the Chunnel.

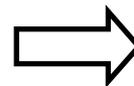


## Japan Railways—The Ugly Duckling?

And you thought you couldn't make an ugly steam locomotive!

Well—here it is! I guess the Japanese can do anything better than us—even make ugly loco's.

You're right—it is steamed up and was to pull a train later that day. I'm not sure why they did it—but I really wish they hadn't!



## WVRR Rules and Safety Tests

WVRR ran their annual Rules Test on April 7th, followed immediately by the "on-track" Safety Review and exam. These are required for anyone who wants to operate on the WVRR this year. Volunteers can help with non-railroad jobs as Car Hosts, Loading Attendants, and jobs in the store but even there some knowledge of rail safety is really helpful.



## May Meeting—May 17th, 2018 6:30 PM

### Meeting night Dinner

Since we're at the Library this month the dinner meeting will be at Sirloin Stockade, instead of the Hodson Dining Commons! I plan on eating about 5:00PM since the meeting is earlier than usual, at 6:30PM instead of 7:00PM.

Our meeting this month will be in the Marion Library at 6:30PM on Thursday, May 17th. We meet earlier when it is at the Library since they close at 8:00PM and we need to be out of there fairly promptly.

Leland and Bonnie Gamson will be presenting a showing of a movie on the Verde Canyon Railway in Arizona and then will be talking about the operation.

They have a winter home in Arizona and are familiar with the operation.

Lee and Bonnie, of course, are long time members of the NRHS and of the Chapter and are enthusiastic train riders whenever they get the chance.

I would also like to approve a payment to Taylor University from the remaining Chapter funds and then authorize the transfer of any final balance to the new "Hoosierland Railway History Society". I will also have a small bill for the four issues of the Hoosierland Flyer that we've published so far this year.

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