

The BN

Expediter

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RAILWAY



The official publication of *The Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad*, the historical society focused on the Burlington Northern Railroad, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, and the BNSF Railway.

**BURLINGTON
NORTHERN**

News

March 3, 1970

We're



**BURLINGTON
NORTHERN**

At Last!

The cover of the first BN News sums it up. May 3, 1970 - M-Day. Image contributed by Ted Pope.



In 1971 the International-Stanley Corporation devoted an entire issue of its company newsletter, *Inside Story*, to matters pertaining to the Burlington Northern. In the lead-in they say:

"It is not often that we devote an entire issue to a single topic or a single enterprise, but formation of the Burlington Northern through amalgamation of many great railroads is a development of such considerable significance to America's transportation industry that we consider it worthy of the editorial treatment that follows.

The 'great experiment' as it was labeled in the fancies of railroad pioneers before the turn of the century, is being observed and evaluated with considerable interest by all Americans who travel, or ship, or receive vital materials by rail.

We hope this issue of INSIDE STORY, compiled with the generous and thoughtful assistance of Burlington Northern personnel from Chicago to Seattle, captures some of the drama of how America's railroaders, through a complicated and prodigious merger of talent, ideas, facilities and equipment are meeting the challenge of change."

We are reprinting the text (only) of the articles from that newsletter. This issue has articles on BN's second year (below), on three top executives in the early days of the company: John Budd, Lou Menk and Bob Downing, and on the Twin Cities Region. Upcoming in future issues will be articles about each of BN's other regions.

BN—Merger Year Two

A little more than one year ago in New York City—at 11:15 a.m. on March 2, 1970 to be precise—the Burlington Northern, an imposing corporate entity created by the union of four great railroads, became an exciting reality.

The day itself, a historic milestone for railroading in America, followed by exactly one month a unanimous (7-0) decision by the U. S. Supreme Court that silenced last-minute objections and approved the merger of the Burlington, the Great Northern, the Northern Pacific, and the Spokane, Portland & Seattle into the nation's newest and longest transportation system.

For executive architects of the new BN, understandably weary after 15 long and frustrating years of harrowing legal hassles and frequently dashed hopes, it was a moment of mixed emotions.

"If you wonder whether there was jubilation, attended by the popping of champagne corks," John Budd, the first chairman of the BN, told an audience in Minneapolis, "the answer is 'no'. We were too exhausted, and I suspect some of us were slightly numb as a result of all we had to go through to bring it about."

Actually, negotiations began in 1955 with informal meetings between John Budd, then president of the GN and Robert S. MacFarlane, head of the NP. One significant outgrowth of these discussions was an extensive study that provided irrefutable evidence that the merger of the northern lines would improve service to shippers, stabilize employment, and pump badly needed growth capital into railroad coffers. Pre-tax savings of about \$40 million a year, to be reached in about the fifth year of the merger, were envisioned.

A study of such an optimistic cast couldn't help but stimulate an upsurge of action, and after months and years in which the principles hammered out an equitable merger plan, the northern lines in February, 1961 decided to throw their hat in the merger ring for the fourth time. Even with the facts on their side, they weren't too optimistic. There would be considerable opposition, much of it emotional and

irrational. "It's an Alice-In-Wonderland world where public policies often determine whether private enterprise shall live or die," Budd remarked later. And the old record was dismal. Three tries at merger in 1896, 1901, and 1930—three failures.

Hearings began on October of 1961 at the Old Federal Courts Building in St. Paul, and between that date and July 10, 1962 some 623 witnesses appeared at confrontations in 16 other cities and towns along the route of the proposed new company. Their testimony pro and con filled 15,004 pages of transcript. As expected, vigorous opposition cropped up on all sides. It came from other railroads, from city fathers, labor union leaders, and stockholders all fearful that a merger would somehow work to their detriment. Perhaps the most persistent, last-ditch opponent of them all was the Department of Justice—a governmental body notably prone to argue, as John Budd expressed it, that "big can never be beautiful."

Such adamant opposition kept the merger a cliff-hanger right down to the wire, and the moment of final decision by the highest court in the land. "Rail mergers," Chief Justice Warren E. Burger stated in his 37-page majority opinion, "should not be restricted to combinations by which the strong rescue the halt and the lame."

U.S. involvement in Viet Nam had dented shipments. So had the general malaise of the American economy, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. And a housing slump had reduced demand for lumber products. Compounding the distress was the bankruptcy of the Penn Central, a jolter that temporarily darkened the money market for all railroads.

Add to this the "great problem of running a jet-age enterprise under the constraints of Victorian regulation" to quote Lou Menk, and one can see why Menk confided to one group of business executives that working out the many intricate details of a merger is no "tapestry of roses."

But men like John Budd, Lou Menk, Bob Downing, and the many other top calibre and highly motivated executives of the BN are not men to let a few "thorns" keep them from weaving their "tapestry of roses."

Their dreams of the BN's exciting future won't permit it.

Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad

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A Not-For-Profit Corporation
Registered in the State of Idaho

The Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad (FOBNR) was formed to gather, preserve, and share information about the history, current operations, and future development of the Burlington Northern Railroad and its successors. It follows the evolution of the railroad from its inception in 1970 with the merger of the Great Northern; Northern Pacific; Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy; and the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railroads. We are a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation

The purpose of the FOBNR is educational. We wish to perpetuate the history of the Burlington Northern Railroad and its successors. We seek to collect and preserve any materials which help establish or illustrate the life, conditions, events, and activities of the railroad. We will disseminate this information through the publication of a newsletter, establishment of a web site, by maintaining an archive, and by conducting an annual convention somewhere along the lines operated by the railroad. We may also publish information in other media and may restore and operate historical railway equipment.

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The FOBNR is not supported by, nor affiliated in any way with, the BNSF Railway, its subsidiaries or affiliates.

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Cover Photo: In May of 1976 an eastbound BN freight on the ex-NP "B" line from Northtown is seen rattling the Minnesota Transfer (MTFR) diamonds at Park Junction. The SD45-F45-F45 lashup was one of a wide variety of loco combinations that could be seen on BN mainlines back then. The MTFR or "The Transfer" as it was sometimes nicknamed was a quiet terminal switching line with a small fleet of SW1500's that later became today's busy Minnesota Commercial (MNNR or "The Commercial"). Today the "Commercial" has greatly expanded its operations and route map, and is a haven for vintage Alco/MLW power plus increasingly rare GE Dash-7's and Dash 8's. The northeast quadrant of Park Junction seen in the photo can be viewed today from the parking lot of a business at the end of Hunting Valley Road. Photo by John Hill.

The BN Expediter

The BN Expediter is published four times a year and is included with membership in the Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad. Manuscripts, photographs and information are welcome for publication. Materials are submitted with the understanding that no monetary compensation will be paid upon publication. Items will be returned only if requested.

Anything published in The BN Expediter (including the classifieds), must be focused on the Burlington Northern Railroad and its successors, from the 1970 merger on. Information and/or pictures that give historical perspective or context are acceptable (e.g., premerger road numbers). The disposition of a locomotive, other piece of equipment or property is also acceptable. Further information is available from the Editor.

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FOBNR's First-Ever BN Calendar

For many years the FOBNR has given its sustaining members a free BNSF calendar. The calendars were donated to us by BNSF as their way of supporting our organization. BNSF stopped giving us free calendars three years ago, so we've had to buy them with our own funds ever since.

We have decided that from now on we will produce our own BN (only) calendar using photos sent in by our members, and send this calendar to our sustaining members. We will also sell our calendars through our company store to anyone else who wants one.

We want to use YOUR photos in this calendar. If you have photos or slides of the BN, taken between 1970 and 1995, that show scenic or operational views that would be of interest to our members, then we'd like to consider them for the calendar.

The FOBNR Board of Directors has created a *calendar selection team* to select the twelve photos that will appear in the 2015 calendar. Photos must be submitted to them by November 1st in order for the *calendar selection team* to make their selections and the calendars to be printed and mailed before the end of December. Photos must be submitted digitally, so you'll have to scan them yourself. The resolution must be at least 300 dpi when enlarged to fit an 8.5"x11" page area. Send your photos (one per email) to kent@fobnr.org.

Photographers of the selected photos will get 2 free calendars. Sustaining members will get a free calendar, and regular and youth members will be able to purchase them at a discount (\$10 instead of the list price of \$12).

We are really looking forward to producing a great BN calendar. To the best of our knowledge none has been produced in a long time. Your help in making this happen is essential as a contributor of a some really great historical photos of the Burlington Northern Railroad. Please give it serious consideration.

Editors

Dave Poplawski has agreed to be the editor of **The BN Expediter** for the foreseeable future. To help him the FOBNR Board of Directors has created the position of *associate editor* to assist Dave in obtaining and/or creating content.

Mark Demaline, a member of the FOBNR since 2005, has volunteered to be our first *associate editor*. Mark's interests are in freight cars and business cars. He has also travelled and photographed the BN and BNSF extensively since the late 1970's.

Mark's contact information is shown at the left. Contact him or Dave if you have an interest in contributing toward making **The BN Expediter** be the best railroad historical publication around.

Information/Photos Needed

Starting with this issue we will be indicating our needs for articles in upcoming issues of **The BN Expediter**. We are doing this in order to inspire you to contribute information and photos for those articles. The FOBNR web page (www.fobnr.org) will also have a link to the same information and will be updated in a more timely manner.

October, 2014

BN's Chicago commuter service E-units. We need a few action shots of the E's along the line. We also could use interesting factoids about the units, and if you have modelled one of the E-units, send us photos and a short description of how you did it.

BN's circa-1971 Omaha Region. We need interesting historical photos taken in the early 70's of anything BN related (trains, facilities, etc.) in the area covered by that region—all of Nebraska and South Dakota and the line from McCook to Denver, CO to Longmont, CO and the line from Guernsey to Casper, WY to Bonneville, WY. If in doubt, check the Phase 2 BN employee timetables on the FOBNR website for the exact lines. We prefer shots taken in 1970-71, but anything a few years later will do as long as they don't show anything obviously built later than 1971.

BN's circa-1971 Chicago Region. Ditto above, except the area is all of Illinois and Iowa, northern Missouri, and the line through Wisconsin to St. Croix, MN.

BN's circa-1971 Portland Region. Ditto above, except the area is all of Oregon plus the lines in Washington from Scribner/Cheney to Pasco, Pasco to Yakima, and Pasco to Vancouver to Centralia.

January, 2015

BN's circa-1971 Billings Region. Ditto above, except the area includes most of Montana, plus the ex-NP lines from Jamestown, ND to Glendive, MT and associated branch lines, the line from Huntly, MT through Wyoming to Edgemont, SD, and the line from Laurel, MT to Bonneville, WY.

BN's circa-1971 Seattle Region. Ditto above, except the area includes most of Washington, except the lines in the Portland Region (see above), plus the line from Conkelley (Whitefish), MT to Spokane.

BNSF's oil train business. We need photos, especially of loadouts in North Dakota and Montana, new trackage, including the double tracking of the line from Minot, ND to Glasgow, MT, and of course trains (anywhere, even on non-BNSF trackage, like in east coast states and thereabouts). We also need interesting information/data about operations and equipment.

At the Heart of Operations...

**INSIDE
STORY**
SPRING/SUMMER • 1971

Like the ancient Colossus of the sun god Helios straddling a harbor passage at Rhodes with one massive marble leg planted on each shore, the Burlington Northern in the Twin Cities area has one immense segment of its corporate body in St. Paul, another giant appendage in Minneapolis.

This corporate straddle of some 10 miles between the two great metropolitan centers of Minnesota is not without purpose. The BN cherishes and cultivates the good will of both communities. It also has unlimited faith in the futures of each as growing centers of transportation and industry.

St. Paul, of course, is home base for the BN. Minneapolis was chosen as the headquarters city of the lines' widespread and traffic-rich Twin Cities Region.

The Region itself extends far beyond the confines of the metropolitan area. Its 6,439 miles of rail tap large areas of North Dakota, northwestern Iowa, northeastern Montana, and all of Minnesota, including such prolific freight-producing regions as the iron ranges of the Mesabi and the fertile Red River Valley.

This vast area, comparable in size to territories served by many of the nation's railroads, comprises approximately one-fourth of the BN's total trackage and provides a challenging sales and operational arena for some 11,000 employees—nearly a fourth of the BN's total payroll.

Managing such an extensive enterprise requires headsup management, and these responsibilities on May 1, 1971, were turned over to Wilburn R. Allen, since M-Day the corporate vice president—trucking. Rendering support to Allen at the executive level are two topnotch assistant vice presidents—Chuck Moehring (Marketing) and Bob Shober (Operations).

Tanned, debonair, and ruggedly handsome, Allen's dossier shows some 35 years in railroading and the interesting fact that he is an active brigadier general in the U. S. Army Reserve. He is a strong advocate of the systems approach to problems and procedures, and just as firmly believes that there must be a strong interface between all sales and operating regions of the BN. There may be six regions, he points out, but there is only one railroad, and its success is the ultimate goal.

Born on Feb. 5, 1917 in Peggs, Okla., Allen started out to become an engineer at South Western Missouri College, but these were depression years, and in 1936 he joined the St. Louis & San Francisco Railway as a brakeman. His subsequent moves on the Frisco carried him up the chain of command from safety supervisor in 1947 (after service with the field artillery during World War II) to vice president of operations and assistant to the president at Springfield, Mo. in 1963.

About the photos...

We tried to find photos from the 1970/71 time frame to go along with this article. Alas, nothing turned up. So we're using photos taken in the 1976 time frame, only a few years later. The photos could have been taken earlier—there is nothing noticeable in them that was built after 1971. In future articles about BN's other Regions we'll try for 1970/71 photos—see the Information Needed article on page 5.

In 1966, Allen joined the Burlington as assistant to the president and chairman of Burlington Truck Lines, Inc., the position he was holding when M-Day became reality in March, 1970.

Allen is a graduate of the Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program (a distinction he shares with many Burlington Northern executives) and a life member of the National Defense Transportation Association. His last active assignment in the U. S. Army Reserve was commanding general, 425th Transportation Command in Chicago. As a one-star general for this detail, he commanded 37 rail, water, truck, terminal, administrative, and control units of the Transportation Corps in the Fifth U.S. Army area.

Allens jurisdiction, as head of the BN's largest region, extends over five divisions. They are the Twin Cities Division based in Minneapolis; the Lake Division in Superior, Wisconsin; and the Dakota, Fargo and Minot Divisions in North Dakota.

Major facilities peppered throughout the Region include ore docks and a taconite pellet handling facility at Superior; diesel repair and passenger car repair and maintenance shops in St. Paul; freight car building and repair shops at Brainerd and St. Cloud, Minn.; and eleven yards, including the Gavin Yard, a principal freight classifications facility at Minot, No. Dak. One of the most imposing facilities, the massive Twin Cities Terminal, which a through put averaging 3,000 cars a day, is now undergoing a \$30 million up-grading and expansion.

Some 60 percent of its commodity traffic originates within the Region, running the gamut from raw iron ore and beneficiated ore to manufactured and fabricated products, grain, sugar beets, and livestock.

For Wilburn Allen and the 11,000 men and women of the Twin Cities Region situated deep in the heart of the BN system in one of the line's great revenue-producing areas, their success or failure in serving shippers and moving the freight weighs heavily on the success or failure of the entire railroad.

To date, thanks to their skill and spirit in providing reliable, realistic and ever-faster service, the bouquets from shippers far outnumber the occasional brickbats.



(above) BN's ex-GN Lyndale Yard is seen here in November 1976. In the early 1970's Lyndale Yard temporarily became a busy classification facility while the ex-NP Northtown Yard was being reconstructed as a massive hump yard. Once the upgraded Northtown was operational and became BN's primary Twin Cities terminal, Lyndale Yard was downgraded to mostly car storage with some switching for local industries. GN's one-of-a-kind "Hutch" caboose X-181 (assigned BN number 11272) sits retired and stored in the yard. At the extreme right is the C&NW's ex-M&StL mainline from Cedar Lake Yard to their downtown Railway Transfer Yard. The big black wooden "Great Northern Elevator" seen in the background would be torn down in early 1978. The photo was taken from a pedestrian bridge over the yard, looking ENE. Photo by John Hill.

(below) In 1976 an eastbound BN All-rail train with a load of natural iron ore passes Hoffman Avenue Tower and is approaching the ex-CB&Q Dayton's Bluff Yard with a mixture of GN and NP "Minnesota" ore cars in tow. An All-rail train moves ore from the mine to the mill without any ore boats involved. Most iron ore moves over the great lakes on ore boats. Photo by John Hill.





(above) In this November 1976 view, F9A BN 768 (ex-BN 9800, NP 6700C:2, nee NP 7007A) is no longer in charge of the North Coast Limited, but instead has been relegated to helper service and stationed at the ex-CB&Q Dayton's Bluff Yard. Westbound trains going up the former GN toward Westminster or the NP toward Mississippi Street faced short but severe grades that often necessitated pushers. Mated with 2 other F-units in an A-B-A lashup with mismatched paint schemes, they were considered a sorry sight back then. But what wouldn't we give to see those locomotives back today. Helper service at "the Bluff" didn't last forever as the extra loco crew was costly to keep on hand. Photo by John Hill.

(below) A westbound BN freight is seen roaring through Coon Creek Junction in 1976 behind C&S SD40-2 904. BN F45 6634 and SD45 6432. Coon Creek, located in Coon Rapids a suburb north of Minneapolis, was the junction between the NP's transcon mainline (Joint with GN as far as St. Cloud) and the GN's line to Boylston, Saunders, and the Twin Ports of Superior-Duluth. Coon Creek's manned ground-level "tower" operated the junction switches and handed up train orders. Photo by John Hill.





(above) This 1976 view shows BN switcher 479 spotting cars at the Pillsbury A-Mill in southeast Minneapolis, located near the GN Stone Arch Bridge and the Mississippi River. According to wiki, the A-Mill was considered the largest flour mill in the world for 40 years. The mill ceased operation in 2003 and lay derelict thereafter until 2013 when plans were approved to preserve the most of the major mill architecture and redevelop its interiors into loft housing units. Photo by John Hill.

(below) This photo looks east at BN's ex-GN Union Yard in 1976. GN's 4-track mainline from St. Paul split into separate freight and passenger routes next to Union's yard tower seen at the distant right. In the foreground are the double-track passenger mains heading toward the Stone Arch Bridge, flanked by drill tracks and the small BN "D" Yard that served local industries. Behind the photographer is the 15th Ave SE interlocking where a crossover between the 2 drill tracks skated across the passenger mains on diamonds. Behind the tower are the freight mains and the major body tracks of Union Yard. Unseen in the distance but immediately next to Union Yard was C&NW's ex-CMO East Minneapolis Yard. The picture was shot from the University of Minnesota's pedestrian suspension bridge over the tracks to Bierman Field. Today the footbridge sits relocated several blocks to the west, and there's only a single little-used dead end industry spur track passing under it. Photo by John Hill.



Lou Menk...*tall man in a tall job*

INSIDE STORY

SPRING/SUMMER • 1971

Louis Wilson Menk, at a cloud-scraping 6'5 1/2", is a towering figure of a man. As the new chairman and chief executive officer of the Burlington Northern and the former CEO of three other railroads—the Frisco, the Burlington, and the Northern Pacific—he is also, as everyone now knows, a towering figure as a railroader.

Lou was born in Englewood, Colo. April 8, 1918, the son of a railroader. Louis A. Menk, and Daisy Menk, an ex-school teacher. His father was a trainman for 47 years, first with the Pensy in Pittsburg, then with the U.P. in Denver.

These were the depression years, and life wasn't too easy. Lou, to help out the family, caddied on a golf course, cut grass, carried the Denver post, and pumped gas in a service station. He graduated from South Denver High School in 1936 with no particular academic honors, but with the distinction of being one of the top golfers. (As a high school golfer he was shooting in the 70's - a skill on the fairways and greens that he has nurtured ever since.)

For the next few years it was 14 hours a day for young Lou - six in classes at the University of Denver (he majored in economics) and eight as a messenger for the U.P.

Indicative of his ability to make his own breaks was the fact that he took advantage of his spare time in between bicycle trips to learn the Morse code. In the summer of 1939, he became a full-time telegrapher for the U.P., only to lose his job that December, a setback that set the stage for the decision to try his luck in Tulsa, Okla. with the Frisco.

The decision was an auspicious one. From that fateful moment on, Lou's advancement was swift and certain.

"Call it luck," Lou explains with typical modesty; "that, and the fact that I was generally in the right place at the right time."

He fails to mention a few other factors—uncommon ability in getting along with people; a willingness to work long hours, often at disagreeable tasks rejected by his less energetic and less far-sighted cohorts. Seldom did he stay in any one assignment more than 12 to 18 months.

By 1952, after waystops in Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi, he was a superintendent at Tulsa...by 1958, general manager and vice president...by 1964, chairman and president of the entire railroad.

The following year (1965) he moved to the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy as president and a director, and in October, 1966, he was elected president and a director of the Northern Pacific. In this capacity, he also alternated as president of the SP&S, jointly owned at the time by the NP and the Great Northern. When the Burlington Northern was formed through merger on March 2, 1970, Lou Menk became

president and chief operating officer. On May 1 of this year, following John Budd's decision to reduce his managerial responsibilities, he stepped in as chairman and chief executive officer of the BN.

Such a meteoric rise could have turned the head of a lesser man. Not Lou Menk.

"Few visitors feel ill at ease in his presence," we wrote in 1965 after an interview during his tenure as president of the Frisco. "They usually know he came up through the ranks, and although he has accumulated most of the trappings of success through the years, he has still retained that hearty rapport with his fellow man, particularly if that fellow man is a railroader. People warm to him as he warms to people."

And we noticed in talking with him some 6 years later that nothing has changed. He still fiddles with a pipe as he talks and scribbles on a scratch pad. His manner is still friendly, relaxed, and disarming. And he still is as direct, convincing, and outspoken about railroading—its great promise and its great needs.

He seems to be quite pleased with the way the merger is going and with the people that are making it all possible, even though there are still problems.

"Time has proven our merger planning was good," he told a Twin Cities gathering of Harvard Business School alumni last December. (He completed Harvard's Advanced Management Program in 1953.). "We think a bright future is possible for the Burlington Northern."

He is not so sanguine about the railroad industry in general.

"Our financial bondage is transparent and bitter to us," he told the Harvard group. "Our financially quivering legs are real. Remember what Shakespeare said in Richard III: 'They that stand high have many blasts to shake them: and if they fall they dash themselves to pieces. Keep this statement in mind when you hear pseudo railroad experts describe railroad management...keep it in mind as I tell you the average rate of return for all Class I railroads from June 30, 1969 to June 30, 1970 was 1.88 per cent. This declining rate of return on investment has gone on too long...'"

Railroads today, Menk believes, have two pressing problems—over-regulation which seriously hampers their ability to compete with other modes of transportation, and the near-desperate need for financial aid.

"I think it impractical and unlikely that we can deregulate," he says. "I think nationalization because of the high cost (up to \$60 billion to buy out the railroads) is equally unlikely. In addition, nationalization would result in a tremendous tax loss. Last year, the railroads paid federal, state, and

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Bob Downing...*third generation railroader*

INSIDE STORY

SPRING/SUMMER • 1971

For their second president (towering Lou Menk, now chairman of the board and chief executive officer was the first), the Burlington Northern directors couldn't have picked a man more steeped in railroading.

Robert W. (Bob) Downing's "family tree" for the past 90 years has been sprouting rail, ballast, and cross ties. His grandfather, a conductor, drew his first paycheck from the old Pennsy some 20 years before the turn of the century. His dad also sported the Pennsylvania Railroad colors and worked up to a district freight claim agent in Pittsburg before he passed on the family's railroading baton to son Robert.

Both, if still alive, would have been eminently pleased to know to what heights their dutiful and talented descendant has carried the family railroading tradition and the family name.

"Rail industry and other associates consider Bob Downing a friendly, hard-working, and well-respected executive, in many ways much in the mold of John Budd, his long-time boss," a Wall Street Journal reported wrote. It's an opinion close to the mark, and an opinion shared by other contemporaries long impressed by Bob Downing's quiet, modest, and perceptive approach to executive responsibilities.

Born on September 18, 1913, in Sewickley, Pa. (a suburb of Pittsburgh), young Bob attended grade school and high school in St. Louis and Pittsburgh then prepped for two years at Mercersburg Academy. An academic scholarship established by the family of a former Pennsylvania Railroad president helped see him through Yale University, where in 1935 he earned his degree in civil engineering.

"I know even then that I wanted to work for a railroad," he recalls. He chose the Pennsy, as might be expected, and started in the maintenance of way department. He was caught in a 1935 lay-off, however, and after a flurry of letter writing—landed a new job as rodman in the Milwaukee Railroad's engineering department. This position had lasted exactly three weeks ("I'm sure no one on the Milwaukee now knows that I was there!" Downing quips,) when the Great Northern came through with a far better offer in September of 1938—an opening at Whitefish, Montana.

Downing's days at Whitefish, as it turned out, first as assistant to the superintendent and then as district roadmaster, were numbered by several events in Europe. A reserve officer (through Naval R.O.T.C. at Yale) he was called to active duty as an ensign in July, 1941. He served for two years at the U.S. Navy yard in Bremerton, Wash., then was shipped out to sea as a member of the staff of a destroyer squadron commander in the Pacific Theatre of operations.

He saw action in the Philippines Campaign, advanced in grade to lieutenant commander, and upon the cessation of hostilities in 1945 returned to the BN as district roadmaster and later trainmaster at Great Falls, Mont.

Subsequent trainmaster assignments took Downing to Glasgow, Mont. in 1947; Spokane, Wash. in 1950; and in 1951 to Kelly Lake in Minnesota's Iron Range country. He was appointed division superintendent at Minot, N.D. in 1954 and in September, 1956, was named assistant to the president of the GN in St. Paul. In this capacity he got his first taste of merger intricacies as the GN's representative on a study group looking into the economics and feasibility of an amalgamation of the northern lines.

This study was completed in late 1957, and the following year, Downing was elected to vice president of the executive department. He became executive vice president, the position he held until the time of the merger, in 1967. It was also his first assignment with the BN.

"It has been a lot of fun along the way," Downing muses as he looks back over his long and productive career. His wife Mary (she was the sister of his room-mate at Yale) likely would agree, according to Downing, even though she is now living in her 26th home since their marriage in 1937.

"She says she never got tired of any place we lived because we never lived in one place long enough," Bob chuckles.

Home life now, however, may be a moot point as Bob steps more deeply into the biggest job of his career as president of the BN. It isn't going to be easy, he admits...there are problems.

One of the most pressing is the sudden, almost unexpected upsurge in unit train shipments of low sulphur coal that has locked up 50 to 70 diesel locomotives and precipitated a severe shortage of power. "It's not something we can correct overnight," Downing apologizes, "but we're working on it."

The BN is also working constantly to improve customer service. "This," Downing says, "is our major area of emphasis."

"We've got to do more than meet the needs of our shippers and improve the dependability of our service," he explains, "We've got to stay ahead of their needs."

The means, he says, investment and planning on an unprecedented scale as the BN prepares for a substantial increase in the volume of traffic.

The planners, Downing points out, say that the railroad industry can expect an average of 4 per cent increase in ton-miles each year.

"Figure that out for 10 years," he notes, "and you can

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John Budd...*architect of merger*

INSIDE STORY

SPRING/SUMMER • 1971

For John M. Budd, the first chairman and chief executive officer of the Burlington Northern, the merger of four great railroads and their subsidiaries into the BN was “a railroader’s dream come true.” The “dream” admittedly existed before the turn of the century in the fertile minds of railroading pioneers like James J. Hill, the great “Empire Builder.” But it was a dream that he had helped expand and transmute after 15 years of bitter struggle, from the nebulous realm of ideas into the tangible modern-day world of men, machines, and action. Fulfillment of the “dream” brought new honors and position to John Budd, and a horde of new challenges. It also opened the pages on perhaps the most exciting chapter of an illustrious career that goes back to the early days of the Great Depression when a young lad fresh out of Yale took his first railroading job in the operating department of the Great Northern.

Railroading to John Budd has been one long love story from the moment he first clapped eyes on an iron horse shorting impatiently on shimmering rails.

The family had marked him for a career in the merchandising business, but a railroad father who let him tag along to such exotic and exciting places as Soviet Russia, ended those vocational urgings forever.

“When I returned with my father after the excitement of a three-month survey of railroads in Russia, I simply said ‘sorry’ to any idea of entering the merchandising world. It was railroading for me.”

John Budd was born in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1907. His father, a farm boy from the Marshalltown aread of the tall corn state, had gravitated to the state capitol, then to such distant places as Panama (when young John was an infant of 6 months) and Oregon. He had started his railroading career in the drafting department of the Great Western and then, under the aegis of James J. Hill, had carved out a distinguished career for himself with the Great Northern and the Burlington.

The family eventually settled in St. Paul, Minnesota, where young John attended grade school and prep school at St. Paul Academy. Then came four years of concentrated studies in civil engineering at Yale University and a B.S. degree in 1930. (He returned to Yale several years later for special studies in transportation).

Diversions from railroading on the GN have been rare over the years. World War II managed to pull him away in 1942. He joined a reserve unit, attained the rank of colonel during service in North Africa, Italy and Southern France, and was separated from active duty in 1945.

He returned to the GN, where he had been division su-

perintendent before the war, as assistant general manager of the railway’s eastern lines. And then came the second divertissement—this time to the Windy City as president of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad.

Budd’s stint as head of the C&EI had lasted approximately two years (from 1947 to 1949), when once more the GN beckoned, and he returned to St. Paul as vice president of operations. In May, 1951, he was elected president of the company, a post he held until he became the BN’s first chairman of the board on March 2, 1970.

Over the years, Budd has been active in a number of civic and cultural affairs in St. Paul. He is particularly interested in youth, and has a long and enviable record of service in national and regional councils of the Boy Scouts of America. Like most railroad executives, work is his principal hobby, but he does enjoy photography and the peace and enchantment of bird watching. He has sought out the winged creatures he says, in many parts of the world.

Now that he has voluntarily stepped aside at 63 to, as he puts it, “ease his work load and afford expanded opportunities to younger executives,” he may have more time to seek out his feathered friends. That is, if he wants to.

But it’s not easy at the peak of a distinguished career to walk away from one of railroading’s “great adventures.” And this is not John Budd’s intention.

He had made it clear that he plans to retain an “active identity” with the BN as a director and chairman of the finance committee.

For Lou Menk, the new chairman and chief executive officer of the railroad, and Bob Downing, the newly elected president, it must be comforting to know that John Budd’s lofty and knowledgeable presence in the “wings” will continue to be a source of inspiration and wisdom—two indispensable elements in the running of any railroad.



local taxes in excess of \$1 billion."

Menk is a fervent supporter of the ASTRO proposals to help, as he puts it, "eliminate the bondage conditions railroads have experienced for so many years."

ASTRO, he says, calls for federal involvement to assist the railroads, instead of the historic pattern of obstruction.

"We should be permitted to enjoy the benefits of natural expansion and growth of the dynamic territory we serve. We intend only to develop a stronger, innovative transportation system whose objectives are better service to shippers and our rightful share of the nation's transportation market."

The burdens and pressures of his new office afford Lou few precious moments for the lighter things of life, such as three of his favorites, golf, float fishing, and flying (He soloed some years ago and while at the Frisco frequently took the controls of the company plane.).

He was married in 1940 to Martha Jane Swan, and they have two adopted children—David, 14, and Barbara, 12.

On the civic, social, and professional side, Lou is a director of several major transportation, banking, investment, and manufacturing firms, active in St. Paul civic and cultural affairs, a trustee of four educational institutions, and the recipient of honorary doctoral degrees from Drury College, Denver University, and Monmouth College.

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Galesburg Yard Expansion

In the foreground are three new tracks on the east side of the yard in Galesburg. They extend northward toward the end of the yard and are known as New Long Tracks 1, 2 and 3. In the distance are three new departure tracks, under construction. The hump tower and the edge of the bowl are visible in the upper right. It looks like the crude oil traffic isn't just across the northern tier of states. Photo by Larry Anglund, looking south from the County Road 10 bridge on May 17, 2014.



see that we'll be handling about half again as much traffic as we're handling today."

"This will require a real job of planning and spending."

Even with the problems, and some look formidable, Downing is optimistic about the future of railroading. "Our railroads," he makes the point, "haul more freight than all the trucks, barges, and airplanes combined. They can move a ton of freight with only one-fifth the fuel, one-sixth the accidents, and one-tenth of the land required for highway transport."

He is equally sanguine about the BN's future.

"During our first year," he explains, "there were a lot of non-recurring adjustments. These are behind us. Now we're starting to reap the benefits of the merger."

He mentioned some of the BN's many major improvements now in the works—large classification yards in Minneapolis and Spokane, a major line change and bridge in the West, and COMPASS (a descriptive acronym for complete operating movement process and service system).

"When these are accomplished, we'll be in excellent shape," he says.

Concerning America's Sound Transportation Review Organization (ASTRO) and its proposals to upgrade rail transportation in this country, (tax relief and tax incentives, government-guaranteed loans, a national freight car pool, intensified research, greater freedom to manage, equal footing with other modes of transportation, and right to prune excess capacity), Downing says he wouldn't minimize a one of them. They are all needed, he says. But he obviously favors prudent moderation.

Some die-hards, for example, in the railroad industry have been urging complete de-regulation.

"This would be totally chaotic," Downing remarks with feeling.

"We could do with less regulations and supervision when authority is exercised without the end responsibility of making a thing work," he says, "but this doesn't mean we should abolish the ICC as some extremists suggest."

Bob Downing became president of the Burlington Northern on May 1. Now approaching 58, he has at least seven more solid years to go before he reaches retirement age.

The way it looks now, when that day of retirement does arrive, he'll end a railroad dynasty that extends back nearly a century. Of the three Downing children, Nancy, the oldest, is married to a geologist at the University of Illinois. Bob, the only son, is a chemical engineer with a company in England, a calling some distance removed geographically and professionally from railroading in the U.S. The youngest daughter Susan is a senior in college.

But retirement is a long way from Bob Downing's mind as he takes on the most challenging assignment of his long career in railroading.

Modelling a **WRECK**

by Markus Zöschg

The idea started as I had seen a picture of this GP28M locomotive number 1532 after it and another engine were involved in a collision with some runaway tank cars. Involved in the accident was also BNSF GP35u number 2505, which was completely destroyed. The GP28M has since been repaired and painted in the newest swoosh scheme.

Now to the modelling project. The starting point was a Kato GP35 undecorated version I found on Ebay. First I removed completely the motor, flywheels and gears. I flattened the chassis and began to rebuild some of the remaining long hood using Evergreen, Cannon and Detail

Associates parts. I had to build the longer GP28 nose too. The bent stanchions came from Smokey Valley parts and some of the long hood doors are from Cannon. The EMD prime mover is a modified Walthers model. All the rest of the seriously destroyed rear inside components came from many parts from my scrap box.

I painted the model with Floquil BN green, white and engine black. Microscale provided the correct decals. After that I weathered the whole model. First I gave a wash down with very diluted alcohol/ink for the motor and parts. After that I gave a light over-spray with an airbrush to lighten the green and to add some dirt.

After many hours of modelling a nice “crash” loco was finished. I'm now building the second loco involved in the incident.

The photos on this page show progress in the construction of the wrecked GP28M. The top two on the left are before paint, the bottom on the left is after painting but before engine detailing. The two below are different angles of the finished model. All photos by Markus Zöschg.





(above) BNSF's Salt Mine job, with GP35u 2505 and GP28M 1532 for power, was hit by a 30-plus car runaway at about 4:30 AM on May 23, 2007. The train was in BNSF's Denver 31st street yard at the time. The cars came from the Rennick Yard and were doing about 40 MPH at impact. The crew was warned and escaped injury. Photo by Dave Schaaf.

(below) Marcus's finished model of the wrecked GP28M. Photo by Markus Zöschg.





(above) Wrecked GP28M in Denver in the spring of 2007. Photo by Dave Schaaf.

(below) The finished model of the wrecked GP28M. Photo by Markus Zöschg.

