

*The BN*

# *Expediter*

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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.

# Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad

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www.fobnr.org

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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.

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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Regular membership is \$25.00/year; Sustaining membership is \$50.00/year; Junior membership (16 and under) is \$10.00/year. The membership year is from January 1 to December 31.

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

## 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. Articles are compensated at \$25/page of text; contributors of photos will receive one free copy if an FOBNR member, two if not.

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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## CORRECTIONS/More Info BNSF's ex-MILW Lines Article

FOBNR Treasurer Jeff Hendricks, who lives in Aberdeen, South Dakota, sends us these corrections to this past April's *Right of Way* article about the ex-MILW lines in SD:

Page 8: The elevator on the north/south track is actually located on the east side of Groton.

Page 10: The middle photo is at Mina, which is just a passing track now. The elevator is idle.

Page 12: Beebe is just a passing track. The upper right photo is at Roscoe.

Page 13: Jensen Rock and Sand receives carloads of crushed rock for their concrete plant in Mobridge. The cars are put on a spur and unloaded with a backhoe.

In addition, new unit grain train loading facilities have been built near Twin Brooks (West Milbank), Andover and Roscoe (SD Wheat Growers), and just west of Bowdle (North Central Farmer's Elevator). The elevator at Craven was expanded and is now capable of unloading trains of fertilizer.

Grain train symbols: SSD (Selby), WBO (West Bowdle), RSC (Roscoe), CVN (Craven), ANV (Andover), WMI (West Milbank), GSD (Grebner), and CGE (Concord Grain). Symbols for ethanol/dried-distiller-grain (DDG) trains: MNX (Mina), BSC (Big Stone), GRO (Groton), HTL (Heartland/Advanced BioEnergy). Coal symbol: BSB (Big Stone Power Plant).

## New Members

Matthew Diestler 16-015 (address withheld by request)	Daniel K Weiler 16-019 (address withheld by request)
Chris Heesen 16-016 (address withheld by request)	Roy Lopez 16-020 P.O.Box 1400 Quincy, CA 95971
Pete Bloom 16-017 (address withheld by request)	Matthew Baran 16-021 (address withheld by request)
William Webb 16-018 (address withheld by request)	Carl Guzzo 16-022 (address withheld by request)

**Cover Photo:** Westbound BN train #97 at Gold Bar, Washington on July 31, 1979 with units 3024 (GP40) / 804 (F9A) / MILW 193 (GP40). The train is just off Stevens Pass, and the MILW jeep is probably enjoying the first rate trackage versus that on the soon-to-be abandoned MILW right-of-way. Freight operations on the trackage west of Miles City, Montana, which of course includes everything in Washington, ended on March 15, 1980, which also ended all the trackage rights MILW enjoyed on the BN in western Washington. Photo by Brian Ambrose.

## 2017 All-BN Calendar

### Call for Photos

The **Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad** is soliciting photo contributions for its third all-BN calendar. If your photo is used we'll send you a free calendar.

Submit a high resolution scan of one or more of your favorite Burlington Northern photos (sorry, no BNSF) to Kent Charles at [kdcharles@q.com](mailto:kdcharles@q.com). A committee of members will review the submissions and make a final selection of photos for publication. Photos of the BN in scenic locals, action photos, structures or unusual equipment are welcome. Photos taken between March 2, 1970 and December 31, 1995 are preferred. **The deadline is July 31st.** Submit a photo to help your society and see yourself in print. Have a question? Send Kent an email or give him a call at 303-589-9146.

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## FOBNR Leadership Changes

At the June convention and membership meeting in Glendive John Parker was elected to replace Gary Seymour on the board of directors, and Kent Charles was selected by the board to replace Gary as secretary. Thanks to Gary for many years of service, and the John and Kent for stepping up to help lead the **FOBNR** into the future.

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## Information/Photos Needed

Check the **FOBNR** web page for more information on the needs for future issues of *The BN Expediter*.

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## Sustaining Members

On behalf of our members, the **FOBNR** Board of Directors would like to thank our sustaining members for 2016. Their generous contributions have helped us to continue furthering the goals of our organization.

John Adams	Wade Griffis	Richard Rehn
Doug Andreason	Gerard Grossman	Richard Rink
Jim Archer	Bill Harvey	Thomas Robb
Joseph Beasley	Alexander Hedin	Kim Saign
Tom Bentley	Richard Heggen	Gary Seymour
James Bradley	Mark Herrick	Dennis Shogren
Jay Burkgart	Jesper Kaae	Patrick Slater
David Burns	Steve Koberstein	David Smith
Kent Charles	James Kreger	Joe Snider
Gayle Christen	Dennis Lutz	Charles Sted
Mike Clifton	Alan Meyer	Mark Steenwyk
Kenneth Cocherell	William Miotek	Lawrence Stephens
Craig Connell	Allen Moore	Thomas Synovec
Earl Currie	John Murphy	Charles Taylor
Mark Dennis	David Obetz	John Tenerowicz
Duane Durr	Dave Poplawski	Frederick Theiss
Peter Ferch	T. Michael Power	Galen Thomaier
Roger Field	Emery Rahm	Aric Van de Vord
John Flodin	Anthony Raimondi	Gary Wlodarczyk

## Wade Griffis



Long-time **FOBNR** sustaining member Wade Griffis passed away this past February. Wade was a master modeler, scratch-building and custom painting many freight cars and locomotives. He supported our organization in many ways, including a major article about his BN-focused basement layout, the Heartland Division, in the October 2006 issue of *The BN Expediter* (see also [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZuZYs0PLcc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZuZYs0PLcc)). He had photos and records for just about every BN locomotive and freight car, and shared this information with us whenever needed to support another article. He also attended many of our conventions and gave a clinic at the one in Bismarck in 2007. He will be missed very much.

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## Historical Photos to be put Online

The press release below indicates that historical railroad photos, including some from the BN and BNSF, are in the process of being put on-line for general viewing and use. A recent check doesn't show a lot of BN/BNSF photos yet, but it promises eventually to be another good source of information. We'll check it from time to time to check up on their progress. Perhaps you'd like to too!

A grant from a railway foundation will help ensure that photographs of railroads and other images of South Dakota belonging to the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre will be available online to the public.

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation has received a \$5,000 grant from the BNSF Railway Foundation to digitize photographs from the State Historical Society—Archives at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. In the process, a photo is converted to a digital image, catalogued and placed into an archive available to the public on the Internet.

"This grant helps make our photo collection more accessible to researchers and the public," said Chelle Somsen, director of the State Archives.

"The South Dakota State Historical Society—Archives contains more than 1 million images dating from territorial days to the present, with more photographs being added each year," said foundation president Michael Lewis. "In the seven years of the digitization project, more than 55,000 images have been placed online. This project is not funded by the state of South Dakota, so annual funding must be secured through grants and donations. BNSF funds will be used to supplement other grants to support the ongoing expenses of the digitization project."

The online photographs can be found on the State Archives' website at <http://sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm>

**Editor's Note:** Long-time **FOBNR** supporter Earl Currie has written the essay summarized by its cover at right and table of contents below. It includes writings by Mr. Lorentzsen as well as interesting comments and some evaluations on how BN was restructured and the leadership style employed by the company in the years after he retired. It also has excerpts from several visits Earl had with Mr. Lorentzsen, oral histories Mr. Lorentzsen gave to some historical organizations, as well as Earl's personal recollections from his years of service as an operating officer with BN. There is a segment on Mr. Lorentzsen's early work on the NP and his service in the U.S. Navy in WWII. It includes a few B&W photos, maps and drawings as well.

We are reprinting one "chapter" of that essay in these two pages to help whet your appetite and decide for yourself if you'd like to read the entire work.

The essay is 37 pages spiral bound. You can obtain a paper copy from Earl for \$15 plus \$5 postage, or \$13 for an electronic copy. Send check or money order to Earl at 42 Osprey Court, North Oaks, MN 55127.

## MERGING FOUR RAILROADS TO FORM BURLINGTON NORTHERN

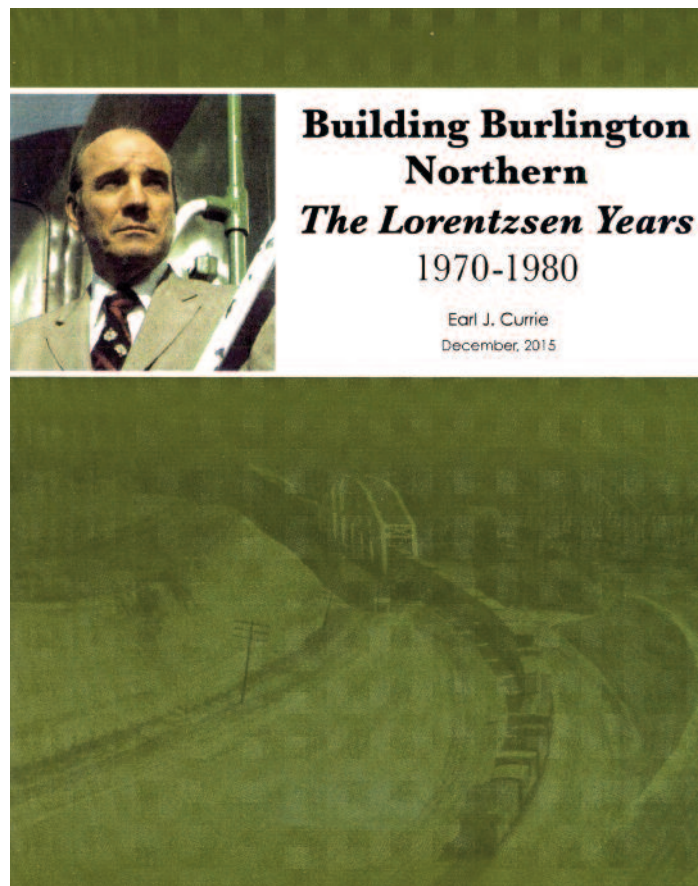
Norman Lorentzsen held senior level positions from the time of the 1970 merger to 1980, the year of the merger of BN and the SLSF (Frisco) and when Richard M. Bressler was brought in to head the company. He played a major part in setting the course for the company in its first decade, in developing leaders for the second decade and beyond, and in overseeing the expansion projects underway in consolidating the operation in the Transportation and Resources divisions.

### Consolidating the operation

As Vice President - Operations of the new company on M-Day, (defined as the date BN was formed, March 3, 1970) Lorentzsen was responsible for getting the consolidated op-

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erating plan in place, getting major construction projects underway in setting the pace for both headquarters and field levels operations and maintenance officers. The network of the new company was made up of 23,609 miles of railroad in 19 states and 2 Canadian provinces. BN's early success in getting the new operation established can be attributed in large part, to his skills and leadership.

Starting on day one, there were new standards, policies and priorities that had to be put into place without delay. More than anyone else, Norman was looked to by the company and its customers to maintain reliability and consistency in service as the merged company put its new operating plan into effect. Also, there were numerous commitments made to communities, unions, customers and competing or neighboring railroads, and conditions imposed by the ICC and in the approval of the merger. Delivery on those commitments was mandatory, right from the start.

Overall, implementation of the merger went well. Certainly, it was done far better on BN than had been experienced in the merger of the Pennsylvania and New York Central railroads a few years earlier. This was a real credit to the planning effort for operations on BN, but also, to the leadership Norman and the operating and maintenance teams he and the six Regional Vice Presidents built and led in those early days of the merger. Having Bob Downing, the architect of the consolidated operating plan serving as President in those early years was of great value in implementing any and all aspects of the plan.

## Decisions on people

In designating the heads of the units in the Operating Department, every effort was made to prevent any one of the three component lines from dominating the new company. A year or two into the merger, promotions were made on the basis of “the best person for the job,” regardless of “heritage,” but at the time of the merger it was important to have a “balance of power” and avoid a situation of “in groups and out groups” as happens so often in mergers of any kind. The position of VPO was especially sensitive since by far the largest number of people in the railroad company are in the Operating Department, and because the early success of the merger depended mainly on how well the operations could be integrated.

In deciding which of the three VPO's should have the department at the time of merger, the choice was between Norman Lorentzsen, from NP, Ivan Ethington of Burlington. John Robson of GN, was nearing retirement at the time. Lorentzsen had been VPO for two years, and Ethington, for five years. With his background on NP, Lorentzsen had the advantage of familiarity with the common points for GN and NP, where the impact of the merger would be the greatest. His appointment to head the operations of the merged company was strong recognition of his capabilities and potential for advancement, possible to head the company, in time. Two years later, when he moved up to Executive Vice President, Ethington was appointed to head the Operating Department.

In those early years Bob Downing, Norman Lorentzsen and the Human Resources Department did a great deal to ensure that the heads of the regions and the headquarters staff departments under operations did not limit their consideration of candidates for promotion to only those with whom they were familiar from affiliations they made in their predecessor company. This kind of oversight in the process of filling vacancies ensured that a broad range of candidates would be considered, to avoid inbreeding and to speed up integration in the company.

Norman Lorentzsen held senior-level positions right from the time of the 1970 merger to 1980, the year of the merger of BN and the SLSF (Frisco) and when R.M. Bressler was brought in to head the company. Norman played a major part in setting the course for the company in its first decade, in developing leaders for the second decade and beyond, and in overseeing the expansion projects underway in the Transportation and Resources divisions.

## Into a growth mode

In the seven years in which Norman headed BN, it became an industry leader in many respects, not only in size, but because of the rapid growth of its revenue and the attention this growth raised in the investment community. BN was seen by investors and financial analysts to have far more potential than any other railroad of that time. BN had opportunities and challenges unlike any railroad company

had faced since the days of Westward expansion under such rail industry icons as James J. Hill, E.H. Harriman and William C. Van Horne.

Managing a railroad under these conditions of growth required an entirely new set of skills than railroad executives had needed for a long time. Since the end of World War I, the mandate under which railroad officers had operated was to have their companies survived by cutting expenses, shrinking the physical plant and by shedding marginal and unprofitable market segments. Railroads had to deal with their ever shrinking share in the transportation market, and with increased regulation of their pricing and operations. They were not allowed to compete in the marketplace, and could not function as a business must be able to do in a free enterprise system and a market-driven economy. Railroad managers to a great extent were trained mainly on how to comply with the plethora of regulations, rules and procedures under which they were regulated and managed. For the most part, the investments they made were limited to maintaining plant and equipment to a desired level of utility, and the acquisition of laborsaving equipment and facilities. There was limited opportunity or need to invest in projects that would generate new business or to support growth in volume. But starting in the early 1970's, that was no longer to be the case on BN. Instead, executives and managers at all levels had to learn to manage a growing business enterprise.

We entered a new era of market opportunity to move fast tonnages of low sulfur coal that would require extensive upgrading, modernization and expansion of capacity on a large part of the network, and in the car and locomotive fleets and maintenance facilities. The need to finance these major projects came not long after the bankruptcy of the Penn Central which had made the investment community skeptical of raising capital for use on any railroad company. The arguments in favor of deregulation had been raised, but the possibility for such legislation to be enacted was seen as unlikely to occur for a long ways into the future, at best.

## We bet the company

It was in this climate that Norman Lorentzsen was appointed to lead the company. Tremendous risks and challenges were undertaken by BN in those years. It is no exaggeration to say that Menk, Downing, Lorentzsen and the Board “bet the company” when the decision was made to seek financing for an investment of \$2 billion to get the railroad in shape to handle the amount of coal to be mined in the Powder River Basin and moved to electric power plants at many locations in the Midwestern and southwestern parts of the country. Bob Downing, Norman, Ivan Ethington and John Hertog worked hard with operating and maintenance managers at all levels to see that the work of upgrading and expanding capacity on the railroad was completed to the high standards expected.

# Dinky Ballet @

by Dave Poplawski

It was 1978, I had just finished college, and my fiancée and I had just moved to Downers Grove, Illinois to start our first full-time jobs, me at what used to be Bell Labs, her at the now defunct Control Data Corporation. I worked in Naperville, she in downtown Chicago. Every morning I'd drop her off at the Fairview Avenue station to catch the train to Chicago Union Station, and every afternoon I'd pick her up at the same place.

For a young railfan smitten with the BN, this was heaven. Although I was tight on time in the morning, I made sure I got to the station plenty early to pick her up in the evening so I could watch the commuter trains (dinkies) come and go in what to me seemed like a complex, intricate ballet. Seventeen dinkies would come past the station between 5 and 7 PM, which doesn't count the trains that finished unloading at Fairview Avenue, reversed and headed back downtown for another load and hence passed the station twice (known as flips). Power was Cascade Green E9s, already an anachronism in 1978, but with many years of service still in them.



If it's freight trains you prefer, then those two hours are not a good time to be trackside. There is just no way for the dispatcher to weave a slow freight between all the dinkies, even with three main tracks and a full set of crossovers every couple of miles.

Why is it a ballet? It's because you have locals on the north track (3), express trains to Naperville and Downers Grove on the middle track (2), and most interesting of all, locals that terminate at Fairview Avenue, perform a reverse move from track 1 to track 3 and then come through again on their way back downtown for another run. With the average time between trains only a scant few minutes, timing is everything and there is little room for error.



Fast forward to 2015. The Cascade Green E9s are gone, replaced by Metra's F40PH-3s and F40PHM-2s in blue. But the ballet continues, with even more trains now than in the late 70's due to the explosive population growth in the western suburbs. In addition, an increase in the number of people living downtown and working in the suburbs has added additional capacity (trains) running in what used to be the opposite direction (west in the morning, east in the evening).

So let's spend a couple of hours on the platform at Fairview Avenue on May 27, 2015 and watch the show.

4:45: (below) The last freight train until 7:03, westbound.



4:53: #1245, a local to Fairview arrives.



4:54: After all passengers have detrained, #1245 crosses over to Track 2 to await the passing of EB #1276, a local currently stopped at Downers Grove in the distance on Track 3. #1276 will stop at Westmont, but it won't be stopping here.



4:58: WB #1245 is now EB #1278 and is crossing over from Track 2 to Track 3. It stopped at the Fairview station but did not load any passengers, then departed at 5:06 for Chicago and another EB load. We'll see this consist again at 6:13.



5:00: #1247, an express from Cicero to Fairview Avenue, sneaks behind #1278 that is waiting to deadhead east.



5:07: #1251, an express to Downers Grove, is slowing on Track 2 in preparation for crossing over to Track 3.



5:08: #1251 crosses over to Track 3 for its stop in Downers Grove. The turnouts in the crossover are #20 and have a 35 MPH speed limit.



		1245	1247	1249	1251	1253	1255	1257	1259	1261	1263	1265	1267	1269	1271	1273	1275	1277	1279	1281	1283	1373	1285	1287
STATIONS		PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM
CHICAGO																								
(Union Station)	LV:	4:02	4:28	4:37	4:44	4:48	4:53	5:00	5:04	5:10	5:13	5:17	5:22	5:26	5:32	5:36	5:41	5:45	5:49	6:00	6:14	6:18	6:22	6:52
Halsted St.		—	4:33			—	4:57			—	5:17					5:40				↓			↓	
Western Ave.		4:09	4:37			4:56				5:18	—					5:44				↓			↓	
Cicero		4:14	4:42			5:01					5:25					5:50				6:11			6:33	
LaVergne		—		↓		5:04					5:28					5:53				6:15			—	
Berwyn		4:18		4:51		5:06					5:30					5:55				6:17			6:37	
Harlem Ave.		4:20		—		5:08					5:33					5:58				6:19			6:39	
Riverside		4:23		4:55		5:11					5:36					6:01				6:22			6:41	
Hollywood (Zoo Stop)		4:26		—		5:13					5:39					6:04				—			—	
Brookfield		4:28		4:58		5:15					5:44	↓				6:08	↓			6:25			6:44	
Congress Park		—		—		5:17	↓				—	5:33				—	5:59			—			—	
LaGrange Rd.		4:31		5:02		5:19	5:11				—	5:36				6:11	6:02			6:28			6:47	
LaGrange, Stone Ave.		4:34		5:05		—	5:14				—	5:39				—	6:05			6:31			6:49	
Western Springs		4:37		5:08		5:23	5:17				—	5:42				6:15	6:08			6:34			6:52	
Highlands		—		5:11		—	5:20			↓	—	5:45			↓	—	6:11			6:36			—	
Hinsdale		4:40		5:13		5:28	5:22			5:32	—				5:52	6:19	6:13			6:38			6:55	
West Hinsdale		—		5:16		—	5:25			5:35	—				5:54	—	6:16			6:40			—	
Clarendon Hills		4:43		5:19		5:32	5:28			5:38	—				5:56	6:22	6:18			6:42			6:59	
Westmont		4:46	↓	5:22		5:35	5:31			5:41	—	↓			5:59	6:25	6:21			6:45			7:02	
Fairview Ave.		4:52	4:57	5:25	↓	—	5:34		↓	5:44	—	5:53		↓	6:01	6:28	6:25		↓	6:48		↓	7:05	↓
Downers Grv., Main St		—	5:00	—	5:09	5:40	—		5:29	5:47	—	—		5:51		6:31	—		6:14	6:51		6:43	7:07	7:15
Belmont		—	5:04	—	5:13	—	—		5:33	—	—	—		5:55		6:35	—		6:18	6:54		6:47	—	7:19
Lisle		—	5:09	—	5:18	5:45	—	↓	5:38	5:53	—	—	↓	6:00		6:38	—	↓	6:22	6:57	↓	6:51	7:12	7:23
Naperville		—	5:15	—	5:24	5:50	—	5:32	↓	5:59	—	—	5:54	↓		6:44	—	6:17		7:02	6:47	↓	7:18	7:29
Route 59		—	5:21	—	5:30	5:55	—	5:40	↓	6:09	—	—	6:03	↓	↓	6:49	—	6:25	↓	7:07	6:54	↓	7:23	7:35
AURORA	AR:	—	5:36	—	5:43	6:08	—	—	5:57	—	—	—	—	6:20	6:30	7:01	—	—	6:40	7:21	—	7:11	7:34	7:47

The Metra timetable for weekday westbound trains during the ballet shows all the scheduled arrival times at Fairview Avenue, three flips (#1255, #1265 and #1275), and one flip at Brookfield (#1263) that doesn't come this far west.

5:19: EB express #1280 to Chicago, after making last pickup west of here at Belmont, flies by at 65 MPH.



5:25: #1257, an express to Naperville on Track 2 doing 65.



5:28: #1259, an express to Downers Grove, slows prior to crossing over to Track 1. #1255, a local to Fairview, is behind on Track 1, which will cross over to Track 3 after stopping and reverse to deadhead downtown. Neat choreography—and very close timing.



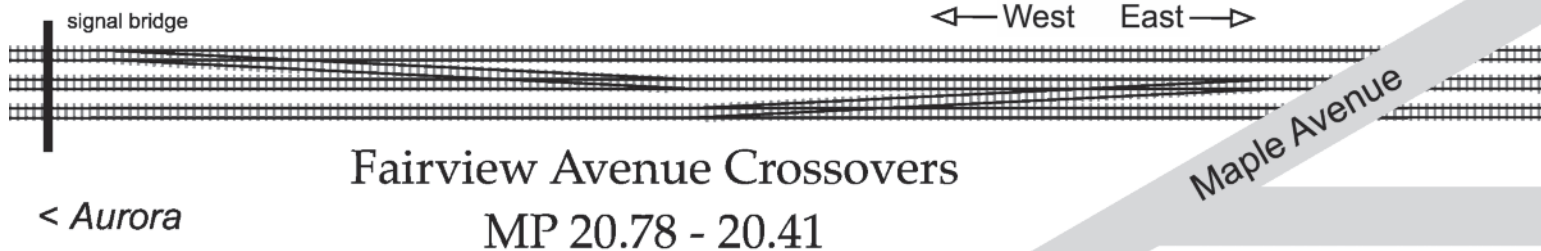
5:34: #1259, having just crossed over from Track 2, is stopped in the distance at Downers Grove, while #1255 has detrained all its passengers and is crossing over Track 2 to Track 3, where it will reverse, become #1282, stop at Fairview Avenue at 5:37 for a few minutes, then deadhead downtown.



5:39: #1255, a local to Fairview Avenue, approaches the station while #1282 waits to deadhead downtown.



5:43: #1253, a local that skips Fairview Avenue, hustles by to its next stop in Downers Grove. #1282 is still here.



5:48: #1267, an express to Naperville, blasts past #1282 that is still here. The small shelter on the north platform is seen on the left.



5:50: #1261, a local slows for its stop while, finally, #1282 leaves the station for Chicago and more commuters. We'll see this consist again at 6:43.



5:52: #1261 heads west as EB #1288, a local, arrives on Track 3. #1261's passengers wait for the EB to pass. Passengers are very disciplined not to cross the tracks when the gates are down. Perhaps the woman hit and killed by a 60 MPH WB Naperville express on track 2 at this very location in 1991, and caught on video, keeps people's mind on safety.



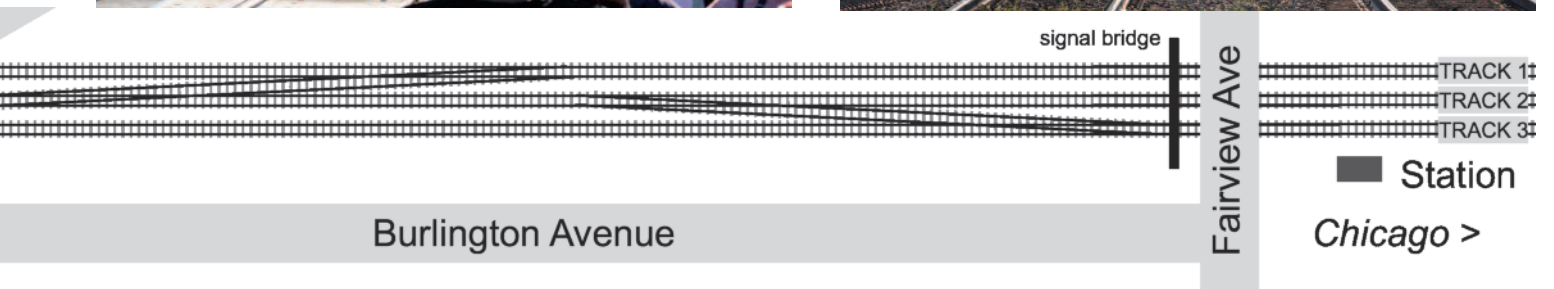
5:53: A very busy moment at Fairview! #1269, an express to Downers Grove with two units on the point, slows to cross over to Track 1, while in the distance #1282 deadheads EB downtown (and not a minute too soon), so that #1288, an EB local, can take its place and pick up commuters. The double header on the WB is used to get an extra locomotive out to the west end without doing a separate light power move.



5:56: An express from Highlands, #1265 pulls in. It will flip and deadhead downtown.



5:58: #1265 completes its crossover to Track 3 and will become EB #1290 (deadheader). #1269, which just 4 minutes ago crossed over from Track 2, is visible in the distance on Track 1, stopped at Downers Grove. Very precise timing.



**6:08:** (a ten minute break - just enough time to make a snack run to the 7-Eleven just south of the station) #1271, a local pulls into the station while #1290 begins its empty trip back downtown for another revenue run.



**6:10:** #1277, an express to Naperville with a pretty dirty F40PHM-2 on the point, races past the station.



**6:13:** About as close as you can get on the same track, #1279, an express to Downers Grove, decelerates in order to make its crossover. This is the consist's second trip this afternoon. It came by at 4:53 as #1245, flipped and deadheaded downtown.



**6:14:** Surprise! After all previous expresses to Downers Grove crossed over to Track 1 to continue west, #1279 crossed over to Track 3 to continue west. I wonder why?



**6:20:** And now for something completely different. Amtrak #89, the WB Illinois Zephyr, right on time! It is nice to see one train that is a little different, but handling it is the same as an express to Naperville (except for one stop east of here at La Grange Road) so it fits right in. Late EB Amtraks #4, the Southwest Chief and #6, the California Zephyr, will sometimes complicate the dispatchers life if they show up during this time, but there is more space and time between EB dinkies to fit them in. Late WB Amtraks are less common, but also easy to fit in as they are just like expresses to Naperville, their first stops after leaving Chicago.



**6:21:** And it crosses over to Track 1! Perhaps this is why the last dinky crossed to Track 3. Very curious.



**6:23:** #1275, another local that will make a reverse move, arrives at Fairview Avenue. The consist will be back, but not until much later in the evening.



**6:26:** #1275 has already made its crossover and is now heading west as #1372 on Track 3 in the background. In the meantime WB #1273, a local, is just stopping at the station on Track 1.



**6:38:** #1283, another express to Naperville flies by.



**6:43:** Hot on #1283's heels is #1373, an express to Downers Grove. I wonder if it will cross over to track 1 or 3? This is another repeat performer. It came by at 5:39 as #1255 and flipped. In case you were wondering what the hopper cars were for, that's a Pepperidge Farm plant on the right, and when the wind blows just right, it smells mighty nice.



**6:50:** EB #1292, a local, arrives as the sun is getting low. The signal bridge is fairly new, having replaced the old bridge with searchlight signals a few years ago.



**6:53:** #1281, a local, performs the final dance of the ballet.



**7:05:** An EB freight ends the show and the ballet is over.



That was 31 different numbered commuter trains in exactly two hours (20 WB, 6 EB, 5 flips), plus the Illinois Zephyr, and the choreography and timing were superb.

The Dinky Ballet is performed every week day of the year except holidays. The admission is free. It looks completely different in January.

# Then &

by Wayne D



## 1980 / 2010

### Portland, Oregon

(above) The northbound Mount Rainier (No. 796) departs Portland Union Station at 9:33 AM on August 3, 1980, for Seattle. On this day, Depot Yard and Hoyt Street Yard are still very much active facilities.

(left) The same scene exactly 30 years later has been much altered with the reduction of Depot Yard, the complete elimination of the Hoyt Street Yard and engine terminal, and the pulling up of industrial spurs. On this day the covered hopper cars we see are the tail end of the Lake Yard-bound UP transfer threading the crossover.



## 1981 / 2010

### Wahkiakus, Washington

(above) The loads they picked up at Klickitat have been pulled into Wahkiakus siding and tied down. Now in the late afternoon hours the Goldendale Branch job continues on up Swale Canyon to its namesake destination. Conductor Ray Jacobs waves so-long for today.

The first train arrived in Goldendale, Washington on the Columbia River & Northern Railway on April 25, 1903. By March, 1994, one month short of 101 years later, the rails had been removed over the entire route. The primary traffic in later years, lumber and wood chips, had petered out. On January 1, 2010 there was nothing to be seen at the former siding. (right)



# BN Pacific Days 1974-79

by Dave Burns

I had left the GN Cascade Division in July 1964 as a Management Trainee heading to Minot for my first official position, that of Assistant Supervisor B & B (Bridges and Buildings) for the Minot Division. It seemed incredible to me that I would arrive back ten years later as Division Superintendent of the much larger BN Pacific Division.

The division ran north from Seattle to Vancouver BC, south to Portland, east to Wenatchee via Everett and Stevens Pass, and also east to Yakima via Auburn and Stampede Pass. There were also a number of important branch lines. I was no stranger to mountain grade, helper district railroading, but I had never experienced so many major yard facilities as this division had. There were big yards in Everett, Auburn, and two in Seattle—Balmer and Stacy Street. We also had a number of secondary yards, all occasioned by the fact this was their primary freight generation and termination location for the west end of the BN network. While I felt I had my arms around the line operations, I never felt I did with the complexity of the terminal operations. Fortunately I was blessed with capable and seasoned terminal managers. But the Pacific Division was a busy, complicated, often taxing operation with plenty of opportunities for Murphy's Law to occur. As a result I came to better appreciate Abraham Lincoln's remark that "Events are controlling me more than I am controlling events."

## Winter Woes

Our first winter was a disaster for the Stevens Pass line. We were geared up to do battle with the often large amounts of snow on the western slope, with snow dozers, big wing spreaders and as a last resort a rotary snow plow. But the heavy snowfalls that winter were interrupted by warming intervals with heavy rains which melted enough snow to get water running everywhere. The situation was not helped by the drainage ditches and culverts having been neglected by a misguided effort to control costs. My first lesson as a trainee came back with a vengeance—that the three basics of sound track were drainage, drainage and more drainage. Keep the water away from the roadbed! Well, that winter and spring we had instances where water was running down the 2.2 percent grade between the rails!

<b>BURLINGTON NORTHERN INC.</b>
<b>SEATTLE REGION</b>
<b>SPOKANE AND PACIFIC DIVISIONS</b>
<b>TIME TABLE 16</b>
To be used in conjunction with Special Instructions currently in effect
IN EFFECT AT 12:01 A.M. Pacific Standard Time Canadian Pacific Standard Time and Mountain Standard Time
<b>Sunday, February 23, 1975</b>
Including National Railroad Passenger Corporation (NRP) Trains
Asst. Vice President Transportation <b>R. G. JOHNSON</b>
Asst. Vice President Operations <b>C. J. BRYAN</b>

<b>SPOKANE DIVISION</b>		
<b>R. O. HAMMERSTROM—Division Superintendent, Spokane</b>		
P. M. ACHRE	Terminal Superintendent	Spokane
J. C. BERGMAN	Asst. Supt. Transportation	Spokane
H. J. WALTERS	Asst. Supt. Administration	Spokane
D. L. MOORE	Asst. Supt. Mechanical	Hillyard
C. G. CARLSON	Asst. Supt. Roadway Maintenance	Spokane
E. J. HEINE	Terminal Manager	Spokane
D. E. LOVELESS	Terminal Manager	Spokane
L. M. HUNTER	Trainmaster	Spokane
K. E. JOHNSTON	Trainmaster	Spokane
M. C. McELROY	Trainmaster	Spokane
D. W. SCOTT	Trainmaster	Spokane
G. T. LITTON	Road Foreman	Spokane
C. A. JACOBSEN	Road Foreman	Spokane
E. E. BLACK	Asst. Trainmaster	Spokane
C. F. NEWCOMB	Asst. Trainmaster	Spokane
S. E. OESTRECHER	Asst. Trainmaster	Spokane
J. H. MITCHELL	Trainmaster	Whitfish
J. L. GARRITY	Road Foreman	Whitfish
D. N. BRIMBLE	Trainmaster	Wenatchee
S. BRETH	Road Foreman	Wenatchee
<b>PACIFIC DIVISION</b>		
<b>D. H. BURNS—Division Superintendent, Seattle</b>		
W. E. BUCKLEY	Terminal Superintendent	Seattle
E. H. NELSON	Asst. Supt. Transportation	Seattle
R. W. STEWART	Asst. Supt. Mechanical	Seattle
J. UHODIS	Asst. Supt. Roadway Maintenance	Seattle
D. E. PARKS	Asst. Superintendent	Seattle
G. T. RASMUSON	Asst. Terminal Superintendent	Seattle
R. W. SAXWOLD	Terminal Manager	Seattle
W. D. BUSH	Road Foreman	Seattle
R. L. BUSHAW	Road Foreman	Seattle
B. W. MOORE	Asst. Trainmaster	Seattle
O. O. STROMSWOLD	Terminal Manager	Balmer
J. J. KELLER	Asst. Trainmaster	Balmer
J. K. WOYCHA	Asst. Trainmaster	Balmer
A. A. JACOBSON	Terminal Manager	Auburn
G. A. HILL	Road Foreman—Trainmaster	Auburn
C. M. WALLACE	Trainmaster	Auburn
R. D. DIX	Asst. Trainmaster	Auburn
R. C. TANGUY	Asst. Superintendent	Tacoma
M. G. WHITSELL	Terminal Manager	Tacoma
J. K. SIMONS	Asst. Trainmaster	Tacoma
R. W. PIERCE	Terminal Manager	Everett
D. D. DAHL	Trainmaster	Everett
J. A. MARTIN	Trainmaster	Bellingham
J. A. FORT	Trainmaster	Vancouver, B.C.

The roadbed became unstable for much of the seventeen mile run from the West end of the Cascade Tunnel at Scenic down to Skykomish. Freight train speeds were 20 MPH, dangerously close to the 14-17 MPH speed at which harmonic oscillation (rocking and wheel lift) began to occur on the spongy joints and sharp curvature (many 10 degree curves), especially with loaded C 6 hopper cars, the mainstay of the westbound grain and alumina ore shipments.

After two bad derailments we imposed a 10 MPH slow order on the entire 17 miles. It did not absolutely end all rock-offs, but they greatly diminished in number and severity. Train performance suffered greatly and the complaint level was loud. It was a tough time for everyone. We improvised our own DEDs (Dragging Equipment Detectors) by nailing pine boards painted florescent pink on top of the ties in the more tortured curve territory. These were usually visible under the snow cover, and splintered beautifully if drug over by a derailed wheel. The caboose crew would watch closely behind to see if any splinters appeared, and



Between 1975 and 1979, the Pacific Division annexed the Portland Division trackage in southwestern Washington, including the main line from Centralia south to Vancouver Jct (extending the 3rd Sub) and all the branch lines from Centralia and Chehalas Jct west (the 15th, 16th and 17th Subs) and abandoned part of the 8th Sub from Issaquah to Northbend (and the CMStP&P connection) and part of the 11th Sub from Maple Valley to Black Diamond. Trackage still in use in 2016 is highlighted in orange (new short subs not shown).

stop the train if so. We actually had a few occasions where major pileups were restricted to but one car by the “Tell Tale” boards.

That spring and summer we attacked drainage ditches and culverts with a vengeance. We also got authorization for a 2-inch lift of fresh ballast. While the next winter went better, we did not get back to really sound track until the following summer when we sledged (undercut) the entire seventeen miles, replacing all the ballast. This was a tedious, backbreaking and time consuming job. The train delays produced loud criticism, but we got the job done and a stable roadbed restored. It was a beautiful sight and a real relief. Today, of course, that segment rests securely on clean ballast, concrete ties, and CWR (Continuous Welded Rail). I can’t imagine this grade-A roadbed sees any harmonic oscillation, especially with no rail joints to flex under weight.

### **Mud, Mud and More Mud**

It was 6 PM on my first Friday on the division. I was sitting at my desk, still somewhat dazed by the complexity of the Pacific Division, when in walked a nicely dressed young man. He asked if I had any idea what BN did with the mudslide debris that plagued us on the coast line between Seattle and Everett. I told him we clammed the mud over into Puget Sound, where it was headed anyway. He then asked me what my position with the railroad was. When I told him Division Superintendent he smiled and handed me a subpoena to appear before the King County Grand Jury on allegations of dumping into Puget Sound. Oh, great. Was this a harbinger of many more surprises to come? In some respects, it was!

Our lawyers prepared me for appearing all by myself, with the customary advice to be truthful, but answer only the questions asked—don’t volunteer information. Needless to say, I was apprehensive when the grand jury door closed behind me and there I was in the witness chair, all by myself, looking at twelve bored jurors, an assistant DA and a court reporter. I was asked if there had been occasions where we had dumped mud into Puget Sound, and I said yes. He then asked if we were doing it now. It being summer and no slides, I said no. Knowing, however, that when the winter rains came again and we would resume, I felt I had to truthfully blurt out that we would again have to resume to clear away the mudslides. He glared at me in irritation and said to just answer if we were currently doing any dumping. It dawned on me his heart wasn’t really in this affair, so I promptly said “No, Sir”, and shut up. He then asked the jurors if they had any questions. Most were dozing, but one man raised his hand and I tensed, expecting the worst. Instead he merely asked where he could get some used railroad ties for his landscaping business. I was a happy and relieved man to tell him how! We never heard any more until that unusually wet first winter struck that nearly did us in on the Stevens Pass line. And then all hell broke loose.

The view from the bluffs along our coast line trackage was spectacular, and attracted more and more expensive homes being built right along the top. The additional weight exacerbated the already unstable soil condition of the bluffs. By November 1 there were two mansions that had been undermined by slip-outs and rendered them unsafe and would have to be demolished. Now the matter really heated up.



F9A 842 and F7A 752 lead the Snoqualmie Turn west of Maple Valley on the 11th subdivision. April 1, 1980. Photo by Brian Ambrose.

We were being pilloried in the press and by the City of Seattle as being the culprit because of their incorrect assumptions that the “ground vibrations” from the trains caused the mud slides. We and the City agreed on a neutral soils engineering firm to conduct a survey, which we paid for. Their conclusion was not surprising. The unstable bluffs were going to slip out when winter rains saturated the underlying soils. Their recommendation was to drill horizontal drainage pipes deep into the bluff at the most prone slide areas where there were homes on top, in an effort to clear the water out. We, of course, did this, though it was expensive. It required these drainage pipes be cleaned out each summer, and even deeper ditching at the base with more culverts under the track into Puget Sound. It diminished public criticism and helped somewhat, but not entirely.

Because slides were an annual problem we had slide detector fences in the worst areas, and ran track patrols during heavy storms. We also operated work trains with equipment to keep drainage ditches clear, and the clam over mud

slides blocking the track when that frequently happened. But we were now served with a court order restraining us from depositing any mud into the water. Instead, we had to load the mud slide debris into rail cars and transfer it to an inland dumping site. This created no end of problems, delays and mess, in addition to higher costs.

The BN’s credit, we did the best we could. But in the middle of a heavy rain storm, mud across both mains, and the available rail cars already full, I never got too curious as to whether some of it didn’t find its way into the Sound. While we had the rest of our main lines looking real clean and sharp, the locations of fouled ballast on the Coast Line slide areas was always embarrassing and discouraging. It was the one area we couldn’t brag about in terms of appearance. I often wonder if the current Division Superintendent lies awake at night in heavy downpours dreading what was likely happening on the Coast Line, and commiserating with the men and women out there trying to keep the railroad open.



GP9s BN 1799, 1794 AND F9B 803 are in helper service parked in front of the Skykomish, WA depot (hidden) in February 1975. It was common during this period to have helper sets on Stevens Pass composed of a pair of GP9s with dynamic brakes spliced by an F7 or F9 booster unit. BN 1799 was formerly Great Northern 726 (Jan. 1958), BN 1794 was former GN 721 (April 1957), and BN 803 was former NP F9B 7000C (Jan. 1954). Photo by William Edgar.

### My Worst Derailment

That difficult first winter also brought with it the worst derailment of my career. It was on a Friday afternoon in January, 1975 when the dispatcher called with the chilling news that train 83 had derailed three of its four units and the following 37 cars just west of Skykomish. The call ended with the ominous words: "The crew says this a bad one - really bad." And it was. (photos below)

It was not a deadly one (no fatalities or injuries). It wasn't in an inaccessible location (it was right adjacent of US Highway 2). It was not that it completely shut the railroad down (we could still operate over Stampede Pass, or around the horn via Portland, or even detour over the MILW Railroad), but it was one of the messiest, the most chaotic I'd ever seen, as the pictures will illustrate, and therefore the hardest to clean up.

Whatever happened had to have occurred quickly and violently, especially to cause the engines to separate. The following cars then jackknifed over and under each other, spilling contents (many cars had alumina ore, wheat and wood chips) and crushing cars so badly that re-railing in many cases gave way to untangling them in pieces and setting aside for cutting up for scrap.

It was raining slightly, of course, with intermittent snow

and sleet showers. This was a disheartening sight and situation. The Seattle wrecking train arrived around 10 PM, and the Spokane outfit for the east end the next morning. The tedious work began in earnest, and it took us some 50 hours to punch a line through.

But another reason this one stood out was that we never found the cause. The speed tape showed the train right at the prescribed speed of 50 MPH. The head end crew felt nothing until the train when into emergency. We found no obvious mechanical or track defect. Whatever happened had been quick and violent. There had been a report three days prior from a westbound train of a rough spot in this area, which had been checked out and nothing found. In fact, the section crew had observed a train traverse the area with no settling or other obvious problems. We had to come up with some cause, however, and we chose a section of broken rail which was sent to the BN testing lab. We were not surprised their report concluded the break was more the result than the cause of the derailment, and we rightly received some criticism for not finding the real cause. But to this day the sheer mess of that derailment haunts my mind. And I will always wonder what happened so quickly and violently to have cause it.

Wreck photos by BN from Dave Burns' collection.





### A New View of Congested Terminals

Managing all the major yards we had at the time seemed to me akin to handling a water filled balloon—it was always out of shape someplace. In an effort to control costs, car movements between terminals were being handled by existing trains. This was time consuming for the trains, and disastrous when the trains were too full to handle any yard transfers.

We documented that the costs of NOT moving the cars greatly exceeded the cost of a daily round trip transfer train linking Auburn, Stacy, Balmer and Everett yards, and got begrudging authority to put on a new run to do this. It improved car flow and congestion tremendously. But I always had this nagging feeling we were missing something. We were attacking symptoms and not the root cause.

After the merger with the Frisco in 1980 it became clearer to me that many of us mistook efficient train operation for efficient car movement. I, for example, looked at a yard full of cars and viewed it as a busy railroad. The Frisco people viewed a yard full of cars as an inefficient railroad. Why were all those cars there in the first place? Why weren't they moving, or at a customer's facility? From this would come the concept of Car Movement Plans rather than just Train Movement Plans. The chief apostle for this discipline of scheduled car movement was Hunter Harrison, whose views would gradually take hold at BN. Hunter would go

on to the IC, CN and now CP to spread the "Gospel." As a result, all those large terminals on the Pacific Division (and elsewhere) are largely gone. It sounds so simple, but it is very difficult to get established and then maintained. Obviously you can't always—Mr. Murphy is alive and well—but the overall result has been better service and lower operating ratios.

BNSF is a proud, well maintained and disciplined operation, which is one reason Warren Buffett bought it. But he didn't do so just for short term profitability—he also bought it for the tremendous long term potential, and encourages investing for it. His view is much like that of James J. Hill, the Empire Builder. Manage well for today, but invest well for the future. That sort of perspective keeps BNSF's High Noon still lying out ahead.

### Struggling With Safety

After being in first place two years running on the Rocky Mountain Division, I was frustrated that we were only average on the Pacific. We did the same serious, sincere Safety Meetings, handled complaints as expeditiously as possible, and preached the Gospel that if it isn't safe, then don't do it. Our second year saw us recognized for the greatest improvement in the safety standings, but we never got anywhere near the top. The brutal truth was that we were not successful in motivating employees to take equal responsibility for their own safety and that of their fellow workers. That meant calling each other out when observing poor practices and attitudes. It would become a great source of satisfaction to watch and the part of their mind set revolution in the 1990's. The credit for fostering that goes to Jack Chain and Roger Nelson, and I'm hoping one of them will write that saga. But in the mean time it is exciting to watch BNSF continue to contend for the top spot in the railroad industry year after year.

### For God's Sake, Don't Smoke

No derailments are enjoyable, but one we had still produces chuckles among those who lived it. The yard at Bellingham is close to a number of homes, and noise from switching operations were plentiful (though the railroad was there long before the homes!). One day a switch crew derailed three empty box cars and two empty tank cars crossing over the main line from one side of the yard to the other. The box cars were upright, and would be easily re-railed with re-railing frogs. But the two empty tank cars had tipped over on their side, and both were equipped with the new "shelf lock couplers" designed to stay coupled in a derailment so the drawbar from one car could not puncture another, causing a leak, an explosion, a fire, or all three. This was my first experience with these new couplers, and it became apparent we were not going to get them uncoupled manually. The couplers were stubbornly doing just what they were designed to do—stay coupled.

By this time the Bellingham fire chief was on hand, worried that the least little spark would cause an explosion. We were not worried because the tank cars still had complete integrity—nothing could get in or out. But the Chief continued to wring his hands, contemplating whether he should order an evacuation of the area. And his constant refrain was “For God’s sake, don’t anyone smoke.”

Cutting the drawbars apart with conventional oxy-acetylene torches would take a long time, produce lots of sparks, and driven the rattled Chief berserk. A grizzled old carman came up to me and said his crew had invented an attachment to a conventional torch that burned super hot and fast, and would cut through these drawbars in only a few minutes. I had never heard of such a gadget, and asked what he called it. His eyes developed an eerie look as he said: “The Burning Bar!”

I explained to the Chief that we were in a crack here and would have to cut through the drawbars—BUT that we had developed a revolutionary technique that would do so in but a few short minutes. “Go ahead,” he said, “But for God’s sake don’t let anyone smoke.” Well, the old carman fired up the Burning Bar, and I thought armageddon was at hand. It erupted with a roar, hot metal flying everywhere, and a flame that defied description. But 60 seconds later the cars were separated, quiet returned and my heart rate slowed down. The gandies and car toads were running around stamping out all the small fires from the hot metal. I was still somewhat dazed—I’d never seen anything like that before or since. I asked the Chief what he thought of our new technique. “Might fine, mighty fine,” he said. “But for God’s sake, don’t anyone smoke!” Which of course, we scrupulously adhered to.

### Watching a Proud Railroad Die

In my 36 year career with GN and BN I had many experiences with CMStP&P (MILW) people and situations that left me with awe and appreciation for the difficult circumstances under which they heroically labored. Railroad historians are better equipped to describe all of the factors that conspired to doom the MILW, but my limited perspective was the inability to generate sufficient revenue to sustain and maintain itself.

My admiration began in 1963 when I was accompanying a train being detoured over the MILW from Seattle to Spokane. In addition to our crew running the train, the MILW furnished a pilot engineer for obvious reasons. As is the custom with many rails, our crew was grumbling over certain conditions on the GN they didn’t understand or like. The MILW pilot engineer gave them no aid or comfort. Instead he began talking of all the niceties he saw on our locomotive, like padded seats, padded armrests, a water cooler and toilet that work, windshield wipers and heaters that worked, a clean cab, and all engines in the consist purring along. It was a pretty quiet ride after that. But even as a trainee, I could see signs the MILW was struggling to keep the railroad well maintained.

As Assistant Trainmaster in Shelby I could see the deplorable shape of the MILW branch lines in the Great Falls area, and the frequent derailments that plagued the already few and overworked MILW forces.

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GP9 1874 leads the Maltby Turn on Hauser Way in the city of Renton. Two cabooses were common on this run. In the background is the last ever daylight MILW train heading east from Tacoma. Later that evening, at 8:47 p.m., Extra 5802 East cleared Tacoma Junction and as it headed east the CMStP&P ceased to exist in the west. Tim Repp took this photo on March 15, 1980.



At Missoula as Superintendent during 1972-74, where the MILW main line paralleled ours for long distances, the tie condition on their transcontinental spine line was getting grim. Layoffs were continuing. Derailments were sometimes pushed to the side and left there for cleaning away later—a demoralizing sight, I always thought.

And finally at Seattle I would witness the last days, the final of the three bankruptcies that seemed to me document my perception that the MILW had overextended its ability to generate adequate revenue to survive. One of the 1970 merger conditions that created BN was granting MILW trackage rights to gain entry into new markets, in an effort to keep them a viable competitor to BN. One such example was MILW running over BN from Tacoma to Portland to access markets there. Needless to say, the MILW crews on that run thought they had died and gone to heaven when running over the first-rate BN double track CTC railroad.

The rail condition on the MILW Snoqualmie Pass line across the Cascades was not too bad, but the tie condition

was downright scary. Ironically, the MILW, the last to reach the Pacific Northwest, had found the best crossing of all—Snoqualmie Pass—and this crossing with easier grades and far gentler curves saved many more derailments from happening. The few ties they were able to get were judiciously placed under joints and to strengthen the gauge in curves. But the mountain line was in tough shape, and the left overs from derailments testified to that.

I had become good friends with Jack Stucky, the last of the MILW Division Superintendents at Tacoma. His territory had gradually been lengthened until it reached Miles City, Montana—previously three divisions worth. His forces were cut to the bone. Talk of abandonment of Lines West, at a minimum, were in the air. Needless to say, Jack was frustrated and apprehensive, but he and his people soldiered on, day after day. One Saturday morning he called me, so apoplectic I could hardly understand him. Finally it came out that a team of consultants, hired by the bankruptcy judge to help him determine what portions should be kept

## MILW Trackage Rights on BN's Pacific Division

by John Strauss

Following the BN merger, the CMStP&P (MILW) had "trackage rights" for its transcontinental freight trains (the westbound Chicago to Tacoma "XL Special" and the eastbound Tacoma to Chicago "Thunder Hawk", Nos. 261 & 262, and non-named Chicago-Tacoma Nos. 263 & 264) over BN between Renton and Black River Junction and over UP between Black River Junction and Reservation (Tacoma). At Reservation (Tacoma), its transcontinental freight trains were on MILW-owned tracks in and out of its Tacoma Tide Flats Freight Yard.

The MILW chose to continue to operate over its own branch line between Tacoma and Chehalis Junction via Tacoma Hill, Hillsdale, Frederickson, Maytown, and Centralia after the BN Merger. It did accept the trackage rights in the Burlington Northern Merger Agreement to operate its freight trains over BN between Chehalis Junction and Portland via Kelso-Longview, Kalama, and Vancouver, WA.

The Cedar Falls-North Bend Branch Line dated back to completion of MILW to the Pacific Northwest and involved NP's North Bend-Monroe via Snoqualmie Falls and Carnation branch line. MILW had trackage rights over this branch line as well as trackage rights over former GN between Monroe and Everett via Snohomish. The MILW had its own yard facilities, freight house, and locomotive facilities in Everett.

This service between Cedar Falls and Everett was terminated when the MILW exercised trackage

rights granted in the Burlington Northern Merger Agreement between Renton and the Canadian Border at Sumas, WA, via Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville, Maltby, Snohomish (Everett), Arlington, and Wickersham (Bellingham). Its freight trains, numbered in the 300 series, were operated between Tacoma and Sumas via Black River Junction, Renton, and Woodinville as "freight train extras." They exchanged "Vancouver, BC, cars" at Sumas with the CP and CN. This trackage rights provision involved former NP branch lines. Its branch line between Renton and Woodinville via Bellevue and Kirkland was named by former NP as "The Lake Washington Belt Line". Its branch line between Woodinville and Sumas via Maltby, Snohomish (Everett), Arlington, and Wickersham (Bellingham) was frequently called "The Sumas Branch Line".

BN operated very few freight trains on this line, since it had the more efficient former GN main line between Seattle and Vancouver, BC, with better facilities in Everett, Bellingham, and Vancouver, BC, than did the former NP. The MILW, however, continued to exercise its Tacoma-Sumas via Renton and Woodinville trackage rights daily until it ceased operations west of Miles City, Montana in 1980.

Other trackage rights exercised by the MILW were between Centralia and Grays Harbor via Aberdeen and Hoquiam over the UP and NP, and between Centralia and Frederickson (Tacoma) over the NP.

(if any) and what had to be sold off, had ridden a business care from Chicago to Tacoma. The group stormed into Jack's office wanting to know why they had encountered one slow order after another, and why the track rode so rough in almost all areas. They gave Jack a long list of complaints, and arrogantly asked him when he would get them corrected. Jack had calmed down enough I felt I could ask him what he had said in reply to such stupidity. He said "After I tipped my desk over on their feet, I told those sons-a-bitches at least they had made it out here—that most of my trains didn't!"

At Harlowtown, Montana, a former change point for both crews and locomotives (from diesel to electric), the town has kept the depot painted with a sign board that really touched me when I first saw it on a trip back east when I went through there. I can't quote it exactly, but I can paraphrase the spirit of it:

*For nearly 70 years the Milwaukee Road and her people fought a valiant fight to keep the railroad running under almost impossible conditions. For their ingenuity and can-do attitude, they earned the proud title of America's Resourceful Railroad.*

Indeed, they taught me valuable lessons in what you can do for yourself for your railroad, and keep on keepin' on.

### A Disappointing Conclusion

I had hoped my tour of duty on the Pacific Division would result in promotion to Assistant Vice President Operations of one of the six BN regions. As the years went by I got this uneasy feeling that this wasn't going to be in the cards for me. Sure enough, in July 1979, after five years at Seattle (by far the longest stretch anywhere) I was transferred to Denver as Division Superintendent of the Colorado Division—a definite step backwards. I also had the sense I had never gotten my hands around the terminal complexity. But there was one area we had made great strides in and that was mutual trust, cooperation and finding fits not fights with the union local chairmen. We found many ways to help both the people and the railroad, which was gratifying to me. My departure generated a number of nice letters but the one from the UTU local chairman summarized it best.

"We want to take this opportunity to wish you well in your forthcoming move to Denver. I personally feel it is a loss to the Pacific Division. Once again I wish to thank you for your past considerations and cooperation in dealing with the many problems that arise on the division. Perhaps Denver will seem like a vacation of sorts! Speaking for the entire membership of the UTU Local we sincerely extend to you and yours all the best wishes in the world. It has been a pleasure to be associated with you. Thank you."

My Denver assignment, however, would turn out to be anything but a vacation. It would be one of my more chal-



BN 5519, a C30-7 rolls an interesting consist past the operator at Reservation Tower in Tacoma, Feb. 10, 1979. Reservation was located at the junction of Union Pacific's line from Seattle to Tacoma with the NP north-south mainline and also connected to both BN and UP's Tacoma yard leads. This shot is taken from the embankment of the Milwaukee Road overpass that crossed these lines. The third unit of this north-bound train is F3A BN 702, former NP 6011D (1/47), one of the oldest if not the oldest road units on BN in 1979. Photo by William Edgar.



BN 6924, an SD40-2 leads BN GP30 2231 (X-CBQ 954, 5/62), SDP40 BN 6398 (X-GN 324, 5/66), and SD45 BN 6430 (X-GN 400 Hustle Muscle, 5/66) on an eastbound freight at Winton Siding east of Merritt, WA. A MOW crew is grooming the mainline track requiring the freight to run through the siding. Winton is about 40 miles west of the Wenatchee crew change. Photo by William Edgar.

lenging, interesting and productive assignments. Here I would have a rude awakening to the destructive impact of unit coal trains on what otherwise had been a perfectly adequate railroad. And outside of Denver Terminal, which was running smoothly under capable people, there we no other large terminal operations. The Colorado Division was mainly a long haul main line, albeit one that would require some massive rebuilding plus lots of self help, but one that we would be able to get humming again. Plus, when I left 18 months later to become General Superintendent of Transportation Administration, the Colorado Division would be bucking for first place in the safety standings.

But that's another story.



(above) BN's Yakima-Cle Elum local backs up the Ronald branch from Cle Elum at Roslyn, WA and is about to use street running for a couple blocks to cut through town. The tracks ran in West Washington Ave. to cross the narrow valley in Roslyn. This route is now part of a trail and the wye at Cle Elum has been removed. Photo by William Edgar.



BN train #146 with units 2203 (GP30) / 1438 (GP10) / 4240 (C424) / 1790 (GP9) power a northbound freight on the 3rd Subdivision near Kelso, Washington on May 11, 1979. Photo by Brian Ambrose.

BN SD40-2 6834 races a freight southbound through Steilacoom, WA on May 8, 1976. The Steilacoom former NP depot is in the background to the right, and part of the ferry slip for the McNeil Island ferry is visible to the left. This line also serves Amtrak and Union Pacific between Tacoma and Vancouver, WA. Photo by William Edgar.

