The BN Expediter

Volume 29, Number 4 *October 2021*

FRIENDS OF THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD

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*, the *BNSF Railway and the Montana Rail Link.*

Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad

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www.fobnr.org
A 501(c)3 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.

The purpose of the **FOBNR** is educational. We wish to perpetuate the history of the Burlington Northern Railroad, its successors and the Montana Rail Link. 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, its successors and the Montana Rail Link. 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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In This Issue

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FOBNR Convention in Vancouver, WA June 8-11, 2022

We're resuming planning for our annual convention that was originally intended for Vancouver back in 2020. Events tentatively include tours of the Port of Vancouver and a grain elevator in Kalama, railfanning the Columbia River Gorge, and presentations by local railroad photographers, as well as pre-convention operating sessions at local model railroads.

Mark your calendars, and we'll have more information in the January 2022 issue.

Cover Photo: BNSF local LMON8821 is at Northgate, North Dakota to do some switching at the Viterra elevator on June 12, 2021. The local's power is coupling onto its remaining few cars after dropping off a cut of covered hoppers at the elevator, and next will head into Canada to serve the Ceres Global Ag Corp.'s extensive facility just across the border. Photo by Al Christianson.

July 2021 Issue Correction

The name "Moffet" in the title on page 5 was incorrectly spelled. It should be "Moffat".

CarrTracks

For many years John Carr maintained a website that, among other things, included a "Burlington Northern Freight Train Symbol History." It is a list of BN trains by symbol, including origin, destination, departure and arrival times, plus photos of some of them.

John's website no longer exists, but he has generously donated the relevant web pages to the **FOBNR**. We now display them in essentially their original form on our website. Check it out when you get a chance at:

`www.fobnr.org/notwp/carr/bnindex.htm`

Sustaining Members

On behalf of our members, the **FOBNR** Board of Directors would like to thank our newest sustaining members: Gerald Dart, Dr. David Fell, Steven Hart, Charlie Herman, Trevor Young Their generous support is helping us achieve the goals of our organization. The complete list will return in January.

2022 FOBNR All-BN Calendar

Our annual all-BN calendar is now available. All sustaining members with 2022 memberships will get one mailed to them free of charge in December. If you are a regular or youth member, you can purchase one for $10 (plus postage), which is $2 off the list price—order one when you renew your membership in the coming months.

Galesburg Mini-Meet

The **FOBNR** held its first "mini-meet" on June 17-19 in Galesburg, Illinois. Nineteen members and several spouses were present for the event. A number of the participants were from Galesburg, the Chicago area and the contiguous states, but we also had members from New Jersey, New York and Colorado!

We met on Thursday afternoon at Peck Park, nestled between the ex-ATSF Transcon and the ex-BN lines to Chicago and Minneapolis. While watching trains shoot by we were able to meet everyone and make a plan for the next day. We then adjourned to The Packinghouse for a great dinner.

On Friday we drove over to a BN caboose on display near the Galesburg Children's Museum for a group picture (left), and then most of us took off for Iowa. We first drove to Burlington and then dropped by the Burlington Junction Railway facility to catch some unique locomotives. We drove out to the old West Burlington Shops, remembering the days in the early 90's when our convention included a tour of the then bustling shops complex. Now everything was quiet with just a few stored locomotives. After that we drove to Fort Madison to watch the Transcon crossing of the Mississippi River. We set up at the depot, which was undergoing renovations, and spent some time on the pedestrian bridge over the tracks where we were able to see several trains. We drove on to Keokuk, driving by a wind turbine blade plant on the way. Those blades are absolutely huge close up! In Keokuk we were able to visit the yards and watch a train being made up, and were then able to follow it back up along the river towards Fort Madison. From Fort Madison we drove back through Media, Illinois, checking out the trestle there, but without any trains. The day wrapped up at the Cameron Connector on the way back to Galesburg where we marveled at the ballet of trains that went through that area!

On Saturday, after a wild Friday night of thunder storms, the group split up a little more. Almost everyone headed east to the Chillicothe area to watch trains transit Edelstein Hill. The advantage of flexibility allowed some of us to do other things. My wife and I stayed at the Cameron Connector most of the morning, then headed to Iowa to meet with my son for the first time in over a year, catching a meet on the Media trestle on the way!

After a long year of COVID it was a fantastic occasion to see old friends and meet new ones. We were fortunate to have several people with railroad connections and knowledge to help us with our train watching. We specifically avoided a lot of planning, leaving the time open for railfanning as it presented itself. Perhaps we'll do this again some time in the coming years.

John Adams

Check out photos of the event on our Facebook page:
`www.facebook.com/fobnr`

FOBNR Freight Cars (N scale)

Repair on the Wahsatch & Union Pacific Railroad

By John E. Rimmasch

The photos of **FOBNR** cars #1994 and #2020 were taken by railfan/photographer John Rimmasch on his family's proto-freelanced N scale W&UP. The photos were edited by Bill Kepner and Mike Lewis. The W&UP features prominent locations of the Union Pacific Railroad and Wasatch Mountains. The Railroad is truly a family activity with most of the model scenes on the W&UP having some real life significance to the Rimmasch family. John with his oldest sons, Ryland and Wesley, worked together in the construction and operations of the W&UP while John's Mother, Hazel, and Ryland painted the backdrop. The layout resides in a 12'-7" × 12'-6" basement room of the family home in Cheyenne, Wyoming and has a Facebook page at:

`https://www.facebook.com/WahsatchUP`

In addition to being an avid N scaler, John is also a prototype railroader and the CEO of Wasatch Railroad Contractors, a specialty locomotive/historic railroad restoration and railcar repair firm:

`https://www.wrrc.us`

Photo 1. Overturned coal hoppers rest on the banks of the Price River, located in Helper, Utah. In the background, train MSPN-WUP-12 (Manifest South Penn to W&UP No. 12) can be seen slowly descending from Soldier Summit. The overturned cars were involved in a derailment early in the week. FRA and NTSB officials are on location to determine the exact cause of the accident.

Photo 2. Yard crews on the W&UP discovered defects on the **FOBNR** cars during interchange. These highly visible bad order cards were written up and placed in the carrier usually found under the reporting mark and number on either side of the car, or sometimes in a carrier near the brake equipment.

Photo 3. The **FOBNR** cars did not travel together on the W&UP as a result of the additional inspections and OTM certificates that were required. Note the BNSF track inspection train hosted by the W&UP in the background under Castle Rock.

Photo 4. FBNX 1994 arrives at Shoshoni, Wyoming with the switching moves handled by D.S. 1011. This locomotive, as well as the passenger train set, pay homage to the Heber Valley Railroad in Utah, where John worked as Chief Mechanical Officer from 1999 to 2004, and where he met his wife, Becky.

The FOBNR Freight Car (HO Scale)

on Mark Herrick's BNSF Montana Division

My BNSF Montana Division represents an HO scale proto-freelanced layout from Shelby, Montana, to Spokane, Washington. The yard at Shelby has typical yard tracks and a 12-track visible staging yard which simulates a crew change point and all points east. Spokane has a hidden 12-track staging yard for destinations west in addition to a 14-track main yard.

The layout is constructed in a finished 20'x24' room on the second floor of an 1820s heavy timber barn. A three-turn helix outside the main room connects the two levels of the layout. A second helix under the peninsula joins the lower level to a ground level at Laurel Yard, which includes an interchange with the Montana Rail Link. Scenery is about 40% complete on the top level and continuing steadily. The layout is fully operational with over 40 operating sessions held to date. Operations require seven people using car cards and four-cycle waybills. Typical assignments include dispatcher, yardmaster and operators running three local trains, one through-train, and Amtrak's Empire Builder.

Today we will follow the G-ELRTAC, a loaded grain train from Eldridge, North Dakota. to TEMCO in Tacoma, Washington for export grain unloading. It has a unique hopper, the **Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad** FBNX #1993, two cars behind the power.

After a crew change, the westbound leaves Shelby, Montana, with clear signals through Cut Bank.

We watch it from a distance as it crosses the famous Two Medicine trestle east of Glacier Park,

and then passes over the Montana Hwy 49 viaduct which is painted to acknowledge the local Blackfeet Tribe.

At Summit, the highest point of Marias Pass, we catch a glimpse of the train from a forest service road off US 2,

and finally we find the train holding at a signal after exiting snowshed #12 east of Essex.

Thanks for coming along on this railfan journey! Follow more BNSF Montana Division action and progress on my Facebook page at:

facebook.com/BNSF-Montana-Division-108421054443754

BNSF's SD70ACe Locomotives

by Jay Glenewinkel

Introduced in 2004, the EMD SD70ACe is a 4,300 horsepower, six-axle, AC-traction diesel locomotive that was produced from 2005 through 2015 utilizing EMD's 2-stroke 16-cylinder 710G3 series prime movers. The SD70ACe was developed to compete with General Electric's ES44AC. During the ten-year production of the model, a total of 2,091 units were constructed for domestic and foreign railroads.

The SD70ACe series of locomotives were the very last locomotives to be built by EMD under General Motors ownership and the very last units to be built at the shops in La Grange, Illinois and London Ontario Canada. The SD70ACe locomotive was also the very first model to be produced under new EMD's new owner, Progress Rail, a Caterpillar company, at its new shops in Muncie, Indiana.

The SD70ACe was the successor to the Burlington Northern-developed SD70MAC with design changes that complied with emission standards implemented by the federal government. The 710G3 engine operates with 15% lower internal pressure for improved emissions. The first SD70ACe units built were rated at 4,300 horsepower (3200kW) with Tier 2 compliant power plants. Later Tier 3 models were capable of producing 4,500 horsepower (3,400kW). (BNSF units are rated at 4,000 horsepower). The SD70ACe locomotives are rated at 157,000 lbf (700 kN) continuous tractive effort (191,000 lbf [850 kN] starting TE). Braking effort is rated at 106,000 lbf (470 kN). The SD70ACe units are equipped with XR (extended range) dynamic braking systems. The SD70ACe was also the first locomotive to use the Nathan K5LLA horn, a 1L chime version of the original K5LA.

Despite it being a successful locomotive, the EMD SD70ACe had several defects, mainly in the cab. Even though the cab had a unique design, it was hard to maintain the wiring, and access to the microprocessor components was difficult. After a collision in Red Oak, Iowa, that resulted in the death of a BNSF train crew member, BNSF discovered that the cab could be separated and flattened in collisions. It is not known if any changes have been made in the design of the original SD70ACe model as a result.

EMD was not able to successfully modify the SD70ACe's 2-stroke 710 engine to be Tier 4 compliant, therefore the Tier 3 SD70ACe was replaced in 2015 with the SD70ACe-T4, bringing an end to production of locomotives using the 2-stroke EMD diesel engine. The SD70ACe-T4 is related to the SD70ACe only by name. The T4 units feature the new EMD 12-cylinder 1010 prime mover (superceding the 16 cylinder 710G3) which produces 4,400 horsepower. It also has a redesigned, non-isolated cab and lighter weight HTCR-6 trucks. Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern are the only known Class 1 roads to roster the -T4 locomotives.

The SD70ACe-P4 is a Tier 3 compliant locomotive that was built in direct response to General Electric's ES44C4 locomotives. Both types have only two traction motors in each three-axle truck. In the GE units, the middle axle in each truck is unpowered (A1A-A1A). In the -P4s the axle nearest the fuel tank in each truck is not powered (B1-1B). Otherwise, the SD70ACe-P4 is identical to its SD70ACe Tier 3 compliant counterparts. BNSF and Tacoma Rail are the only two railroads that own -P4 locomotives.

The BNSF SD70ACe Fleet

From 2006 through 2014, BNSF received a total of 660 EMD/Progress Rail SD70ACe locomotives including twenty SD70ACe-P4s. BNSF has their fleets rated at 4,000 horsepower and equipped with a Knorr-New York Air Brake CCB-2 brake, which is different from the units on the UP or NS that utilize Wabtec braking systems.

BNSF acquired its first SD70ACe locomotives with two separate orders in 2006. These units were the first 70 Series locomotives to be ordered since the BN-designed SD70MACs. The first order consisted of 30 units delivered in February through April 2006 as BNSF 9370-9399. These new SD70ACe locomotives were numbered backward from the 9400 series SD70MAC, therefore grouping the two 70-series models into a single number series. In August and September of that year BNSF received an additional 40 units that were numbered as BNSF 9330-9369.

The external appearance for units in both orders were identical except for the placement of the headlights. The first 30 units had the headlights positioned above the windshields on the cab, while the second group had the headlights mounted on the top-center of the nose.

From November 2007 through August 2008, BNSF took delivery of an additional 175 units that were numbered BNSF 9130-9304. This order was originally for 200 SD70ACe units, but demand for motive-power was so great in the Pilbara region of Western Australia that BHP Billiton made an arrangement with BNSF to purchase ten of their units; therefore the BNSF 9166, 9167, 9184-9191 were instead delivered to the Australian railroad, wearing the BNSF orange livery, and were numbered as BHP Billiton 4324-4333.

BNSF received 35 more units from EMD in February and March 2009. Twenty-five were replacement for those that had been diverted in 2008. These were the final locomotives that BNSF would receive from EMD while under General Motors ownership.

First order, headlight above cab sindows. Alliance, Nebraska. 9/19/06. Photo by Paul Wester.

Three years later, BNSF purchased 80 new SD70ACe units from EMD's new owner, Progress Rail. This group included improvements to the engine design, making them Tier 3 compliant under the emissions standards for that time. Between July and November 2012, BNSF received units 9050-9129.

Between May and December 2013, BNSF took delivery of an additional 100 SD70ACe units from Progress Rail. These would be delivered in two separate number groups, even though they were of one single order. Sticking with tradition of numbering the newer units backward, below the number series of units from previous orders, BNSF 8750-8799 were built and delivered from May through August 2013. From September through December of that year, BNSF received the second half of this order, numbering them as BNSF 9000-9049.

In November of 2013, units 9130 and 9131 were converted to dual-fuel (liquefied natural gas/diesel) locomotives and mated on both ends of LNG tank car #933501 to test the effectiveness of LNG as a replacement for diesel fuel. The experiment didn't last long, as by 2017 the units were back in normal service without the LNG tank car. In 2021, these two units remain as dual fuel units and are currently being tested on the Norfolk Southern.

In 2014, BNSF placed orders for two different variations of the SD70ACe locomotives. BNSF 8500-8510 and 8514 (B1-1B SD70ACe-P4s) were received in July 2014. BNSF -P4 locomotive number 8511 was also received in July. BNSF -P4 locomotives 8512, 8513 and 8515-8519 were delivered that October (see also article on page 11).

In addition to the 20 P4 locomotives ordered, BNSF also took delivery of 190 new standard SD70ACe units in 2014, with BNSF 8520-8599 arriving between April and July, followed by BNSF 8400-8499 between July and October. The final ten SD70ACe locomotives received were numbered directly after the first series of BNSF ordered SD70MACs. BNSF 8990-8999 arrived on the property in December 2014, thereby completing BNSF's purchases of the EMD's and Progress Rail's SD70 AC-traction locomotives for several years. In July 2021 BNSF ordered 23 SD70ACe-T4's. It was the second time BNSF ordered the Tier 4 compliant locomotives, but the first order was canceled before the units were built.

A total of 640 C-C axle SD70ACe units were purchased or leased by BNSF, followed by the twenty B1-1B axle SD70ACe-P4 locomotives, for a total of 660 SD70ACe locomotives. When combined with the SD70MAC units, the BNSF rostered 1,469 SD70 AC-traction locomotives built by EMD and Progress Rail. In 2021, most of these 70-series locomotives continue to ply the rails across the BNSF system as well as on other roads. It is likely that these powerful machines will remain in service for many years to come.

SOURCES:

BNSF Railway Locomotive Directory 2019-2020 by Paul Wester & Paul K. Withers, Withers Publishing, Halifax, PA, 2020.

BNSF Railway Company 2009 Locomotive Review by Robert C. Del Grosso, Great Northern Pacific Publications, Galesburg, IL, 2009.

David Wiegand, retired BNSF engineer.

`locomotive.fandom.com/wiki/EMD_SD70ACe`

`wikipedia.org/wiki/EMD_SD70_series`

SD70ACe SPECIFICATIONS

Wheel Arrangement: SD70ACe- C-C, SD70ACe-P4- B1-1B
Engine: 16-710G3A-T2 (T3 after 2012)
Horsepower: 4,300 (BNSF 4,000)
Main Generator: TA17/CA9, Auxilary Generator: APC 31kW, 74 VDC
Traction Motors: 6-A3432 AC
Wheel Diameter: 42 inches
Gear Ratio: 83:16 Top Speed: 70 MPH
Length: 74' 3", Width: 10' 8", Height: 16' 1"
Total Weight: 420,000 lbs
Fuel Capacity: 4,900 gallons, Lube Oil Capacity: 420 gallons, Retention Tank: 100 gallons
Sand Capacity: 52 cubic feet
Brakes: Knorr-New York CCB-2, Dynamic Brake: Extended Range Flat
Journal Bearings: Timken
Couplers: Type F (with alignment control)

Equipped with: S-580 crash worthiness, RP-506 crash worthiness, snowplow, air conditioning, electric cab heat, air dryer, motorized air compressor, electronic fuel injection, video camera, toilet.

SD70ACe ROSTER SUMMARY

ROAD NUMBERS	QUANTITY	ORDER NUMBER	YEAR DELIVERED	
9370-9399	30	20056729-001 to 030	2006	
9330-9369	40	20056766-001 to 040	2006	
9130-9131	2	20066862-001 to 002	2007	Modified for LNG in 2013
9132-9165	34	20066862-003 to 036	2007	#9159 re-#d to 8749 after wreck
9168-9183	16	20066862-039 to 054	2007	
9192-9304	113	20066862-063 to 175	2008	
9305-9329	25	20066021-001 to 025	2009	
9166,9167	2	20066021-026 to 027	2009	
9184-9191	8	20066021-028 to 035	2009	
9050-9129	80	20116683-001 to 080	2012	
8750-8799	50	20126869-001 to 050	2013	
9000-9049	50	20126869-051 to 100	2013	
8500-8519	20	20116581-001 to 020	2014	SD70ACe-P4 (B1-1B)
8520-8599	80	20136925-001 to 080	2014	
8400-8499	100	20136925-081 to 180	2014	
8990-8999	10	20136925-181 to 190	2014	

Number Series Summary

8400-8599
8749-8799
8990-9399

Antioch, Nebraska. September 1, 2010. Photo by Paul Wester, from the Keith Ardinger collection.

Breckenridge, Minnesota. September 21, 2012. Photo by Keith Ardinger.

Hazard, Nebraska. September 15, 2012. Photo by Tom Farrell.

Liquified Natual Gas (LNG) equipped SD70ACe 9130 and sister 9131 lead the LCAL0611, the Boron Local, near Barstow, California on August 1, 2014. Photo by Paul Wester.

SD70ACe-P4 in Mayfield, Kentucky. May 18, 2014. Photo by Joe Ferguson, from the Keith Ardinger colection.

Northtown, Minnesota. September 16, 2016. Photo by Paul Wester, from the Keith Ardinger collection.

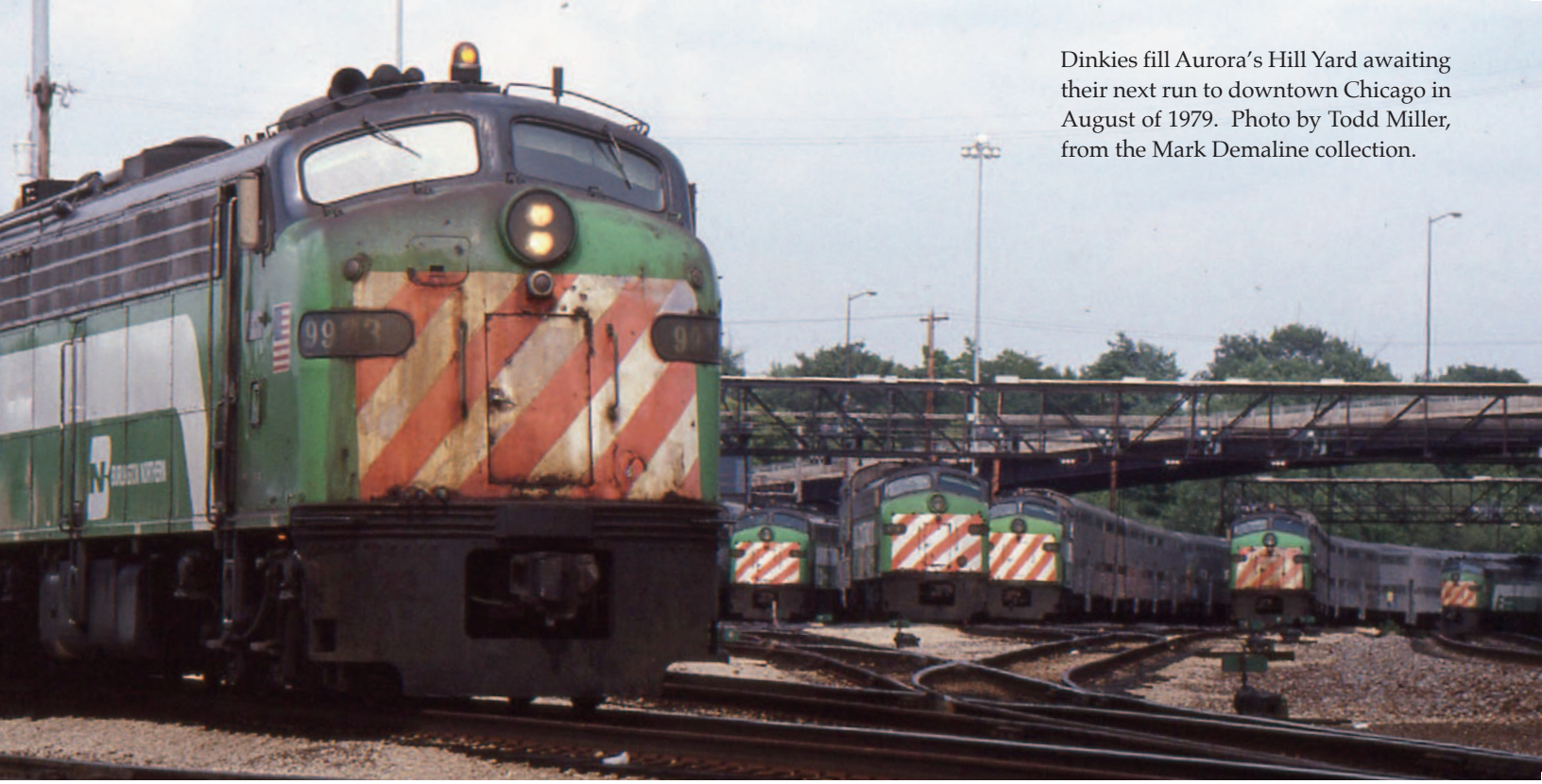
SD70ACe-P4 Demonstrators on the BNSF

by Dave Poplawski, photos by David Wiegand

EMD (Progress Rail) built two SD70ACe-P4 locomotives, EMDX 1211 and 1212, to demonstrate its ability to provide three axle trucks with only two traction motors per truck. The motors are on the two axles closest to the ends of the locomotives, with the axle closest to the fuel tank unpowered.

The units were tested by BNSF on Raton Pass in Colorado, working in both directions pulling and pushing a cut of loaded ballast cars in the company of several other BNSF engines. These photos were taken on October 6, 2013 near Gallinas.

BNSF was the only railroad to purchase this model, with 20 being delivered in 2014 and numbered 8500-8519. The demonstrators went to Tacoma Rail, became TMBL 7001 and 7002, and are still in service.



Dinkies fill Aurora's Hill Yard awaiting their next run to downtown Chicago in August of 1979. Photo by Todd Miller, from the Mark Demaline collection.

Working the "Dinkies" (Chicago Suburban Trains) As a Trainman in the 1970s

by Leo Phillipp

Much has been written about the history of suburban service between Chicago and Aurora, Illinois. Equipment, trains, etc. have been covered in some detail. In this piece I hope to share with you what it was really like to work on the "dinkies" as a trainman and conductor, inside insights as to the routines, sometimes not so routine days, the employee and rider "characters," and much more.

Why I Started Working the "Dinkies"

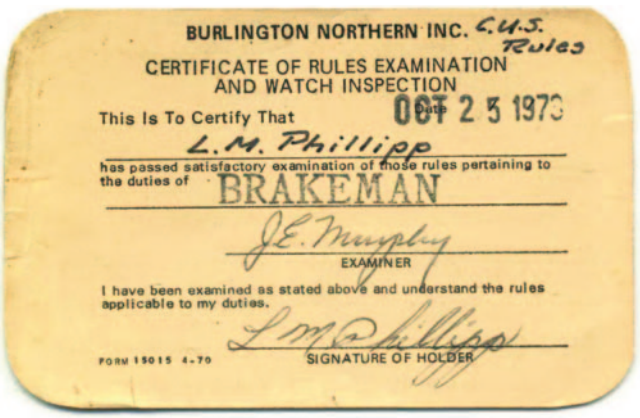
In March of 1974, with only 13 months seniority I somehow won the bid on a brakeman's position on a local freight (known as a way freight) based at Eola, Illinois which was 15 minutes from my home. The job went to work at 11AM and never finished before 11PM. But I was home in my own bed every night with a short day on Saturdays, and Sundays off. I thought I had gone to heaven.

For the next three months I was oblivious to the downturn in the economy as every day we worked twelve plus hours. Then in June I was displaced ("bumped") by a more senior brakeman who had lost his spot on another job in the same fashion. He worked "my" job one day and went back to college. I would have gladly paid him for the day's earnings as I could never again win a bid to get back on that job.

I quickly realized my seniority entitled me only to a spot on the Aurora, Illinois brakeman's extra list which filled vacancies on regular runs when the regular man took the day off ("laid off") or when an unscheduled train was operated. But unlike prior times, instead of working seven to eight times a week, I was lucky to be called to work three days a week. Even more depressing, I was only three men from being furloughed.

To work at least five days a week, I "placed" (bid in) at Eola Yard and began working yard switch jobs. I managed to work one Monday 8AM job and was on 4PM's on Tuesday, where I stayed for the summer. I quickly realized I was not cut out for the repetitive nature of yard jobs, despite working the 4PM "swing job" that rotated between yards at Eola and Aurora.

By the second week of August, I was back on the road service brakeman's extra list at Aurora. I thrived on the end-



BURLINGTON NORTHERN INC. C.U.S. Rules

CERTIFICATE OF RULES EXAMINATION AND WATCH INSPECTION

This Is To Certify That Date OCT 2 3 1973

L. M. Phillipp

has passed satisfactory examination of those rules pertaining to the duties of BRAKEMAN

J.E. Murphy

EXAMINER

I have been examined as stated above and understand the rules applicable to my duties.

L M Phillipp

FORM 15015 4-70 SIGNATURE OF HOLDER

less variation of assignments and locations I was sent to work. But while much improved over the previous spring there were still numerous days without work.

The Decision to Qualify for Passenger Service

During the month of August my work diary displays seven days of "not called." For someone on an Aurora extra list this was disheartening. The extra list worked 30-32 times a month. Yes, that is correct. There were days when you worked an early short run and then that night went to work just before midnight for a "double."

I was reluctant to work passenger for a few reasons. First and foremost, it required wearing a uniform. After wearing a uniform during 12 years of parochial schooling, I sure did not want to resume that pattern. One conductor I "broke for" (was assigned to his "turn" in the freight pool), felt working "dinkies" had little to do with railroading and was closer to being "a cashier at Kresge's 5 AND 10 stores." Years later he retired from a suburban run. From my deadheading on the "dinkies" to freight assignments, I wasn't sure I could work at what sure seemed to be a rapid-fire pace making change and "cutting" (punching) tickets. But there were still too many "not called" days in my time book or diary. I had been told by fellow brakemen that "once I got my uniform, I would never lack for work again."

Six months of freight service were required before starting passenger service, which I well exceeded. The decision was made to qualify for passenger service. I filed the paperwork and was notified of upcoming rules exams dates to qualify for passenger. On September 3rd and 4th I "laid off" from a Savanna freight pool "turn" (run) to take the Chicago Union Station Rules Exam which would qualify me to work passenger service. The "deadhead" or unpaid ride to and from Chicago and time spent at the exam were unpaid. I passed the exam.

Our group was one of the first that was not required to qualify on "back up moves" with a tail hose. Since all equipment was now "push pull" on suburbans, and Amtrak trains were spotted and pulled by yard crews, there was no need to learn how to guide a train from the rear door of a coach shoving between the station and the coach yard with only the air brake system and the communication buzzer to signal the engine crew.

But in addition to the written Chicago Union Station rules, there was still the requirement to pass the Union Station signal rules which included the white (no colors) two and three position signals. The sheer number of variations was confusing. These were totally different from the color signals of the BN. But one coworker simplified it for me: "straight up and down means go at normal track speed, straight across means stop and everything in between means slow down." I passed the exam and was handed my Union Station qualification card on the spot.


CHICAGO UNION STATION COMPANY

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION

Chicago SEP - 4 1974 19

This is to certify that Leo M Phillips

employed by Burl Northern Inc

has been instructed and examined in Signal Indications, Train Starting Signal System, and Chicago Union Station and Joint Track Rules of the Operating Department and is qualified to fill the position of Brakeman

Approved: E Fnrs E Fnrs

Examiner

Station Master

Signature of Holder:

The next step was to ride back to Aurora and go upstairs at the depot to the division office to secure a ticket punch that was assigned and registered to me. Then it was downstairs to the trainmasters clerk to inform him/her that I was now qualified for passenger and mark my file accordingly. The immediate retort was, "Do you have a uniform?" I was able to respond in the affirmative because I had gone to my uncle's home previously and secured one of his old C.B. & Q. uniforms, less the pants. He was much shorter than me. But I had a blue pair of dress slacks that could fill in for the time being.

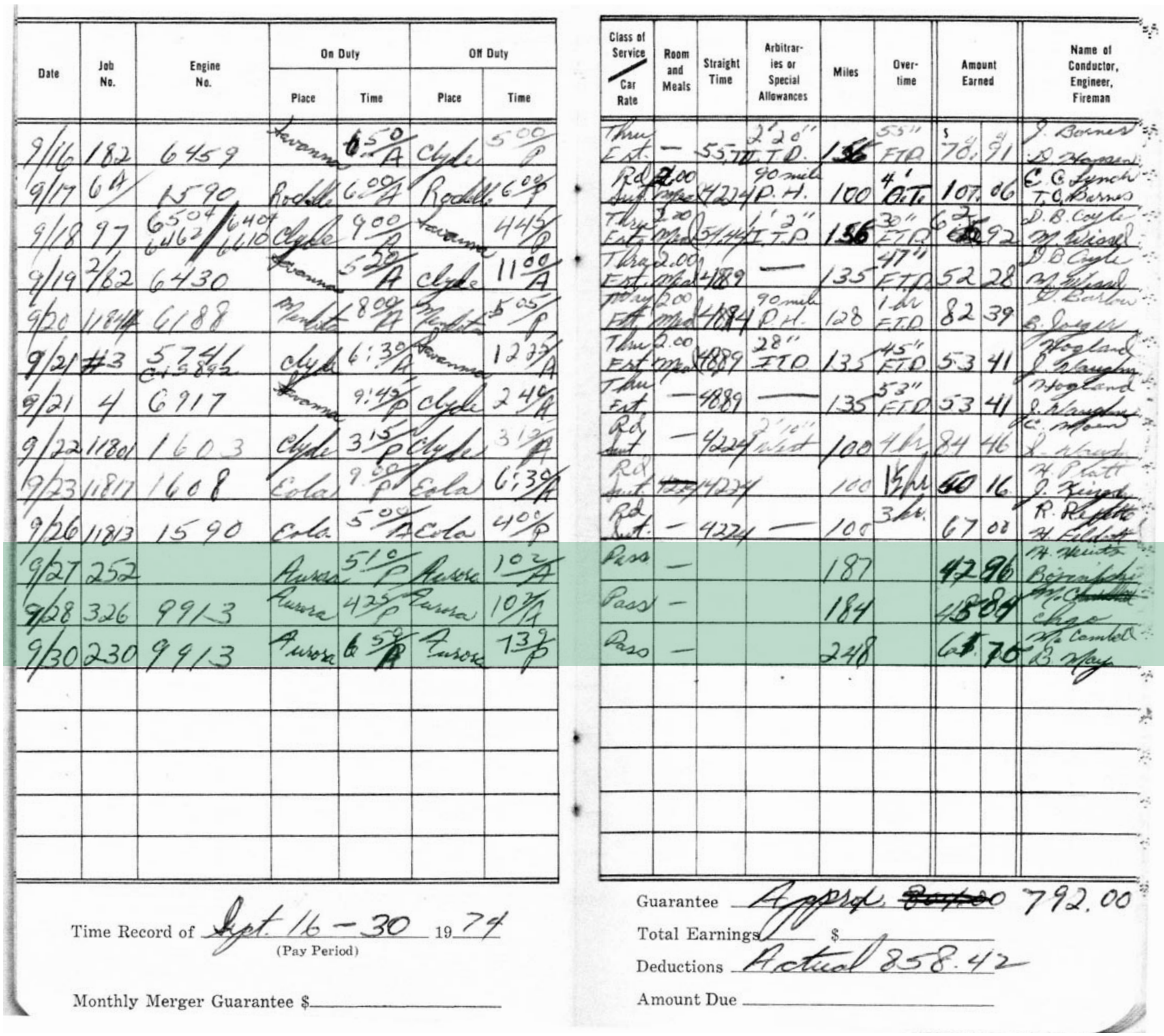
I was also handed Burlington Route collector, trainman and conductor hats by my uncle. I occasionally wore the collector and conductor hats on dinkies and the trainman hat on Amtrak over the next few years and was never called on the carpet for being out of uniform (they are proudly displayed in my office near where I am writing). He wished me well and hoped we would work together before he retired. That did not come to pass.

Then I had to go to the ticket office off the waiting room and sign for a "block of duplexes." These were cash fare tickets/receipts that the trainman/conductor punched when a rider paid in cash on the train. A "block" was ten books of twenty-five two-part tickets in each. Once you signed for them, if lost, misplaced, etc., you, the trainman, were responsible to reimburse the railroad at a predetermined average dollar amount per ticket (duplexes will be discussed in detail later in this article).

I continued to be listed on the brakeman's extra list but now with an asterisk that meant I was passenger qualified. On Friday September 27th I was called to work two evening round trip suburban Number 252 trains (highlighted in green below) and from then on never worried about having enough work. Often just the opposite—more on that later. During the next two weeks I worked a mix of freight and suburban. Overcoming my previous anxiety, I found passenger service to my liking and bid in a spot on the preferred brakeman's passenger list. By some miracle I won the bid! I would now work only suburban and an occasional Amtrak train as long as my seniority allowed or until I chose to return to freight service or a spot on a suburban crew.

Overview of Operations in 1974

Beginning with completion of the direct line between Aurora and Chicago via Downers Grove, Hinsdale, etc. in May 1864, rather than operating to Turner Junction (West Chicago) and then on the Chicago and Galena Union (Chicago and Northwestern, today's Union Pacific) tracks under an operating agreement, there has been suburban service. Over the many decades there have been terminals on the west side of Chicago, then Riverside, then Downers



Date	Job No.	Engine No.	On Duty Place	On Duty Time	Off Duty Place	Off Duty Time	Class of Service / Car Rate	Room and Meals	Straight Time	Arbitraries or Special Allowances	Miles	Overtime	Amount Earned	Name of Conductor, Engineer, Fireman
9/16	182	6459	Savanna	6:50 A	Clyde	5:00 P	Thru Frt.	—	5577	2'20" F.T.D.	156	55" FTD	$78.91	J. Barnes / D. [illegible]
9/17	6A	1590	Rochelle	6:00 A	Rochelle	6:00 P	Rd Swt.	2.00 Meals	4224	90 mile P.H.	100	4' O.T.	107.06	C. C. Lynch / T. C. Barnes
9/18	97	6504 6462 / 6404 6410	Clyde	9:00 A	Savanna	4:45 P	Thru Frt.	2.00 Meals	5444	1'2" I.T.D.	156	30" FTD	62.92	D. B. Coyle / M. [illegible]
9/19	2/182	6430	Savanna	5:20 A	Clyde	11:00 A	Thru Frt.	2.00 Meals	4189	—	135	47" FTD	52.28	D. B. Coyle / M. [illegible]
9/20	1184	6188	Mendota	8:00 A	Mendota	5:05 P	Way Frt.	2.00 Meals	4884	90 mile P.H.	128	1 hr FTD	82.39	D. Barlow / B. [illegible]
9/21	#3	5746 [illegible]	Clyde	6:30 A	Savanna	12:35 A	Thru Frt.	2.00 Meals	4889	28" ITD	135	45" FTD	53.41	Hogland / J. Vaughn
9/21	4	6917	Savanna	9:45 P	Clyde	2:40 A	Thru Frt.	—	4889	—	135	53" FTD	53.41	Hogland / J. Vaughn
9/22	11801	1603	Clyde	3:15 P	Clyde	3:10 A	Rd Swt.	—	4224	2'10" [illegible]	100	4 hr	84.46	C. [illegible] / [illegible]
9/23	11817	1608	Eola	9:00 P	Eola	6:30 A	Rd Swt.	[illegible]	4224		100	1½ hr	60.16	H. Platt / J. [illegible]
9/26	11813	1590	Eola	5:00 A	Eola	4:00 P	Rd Swt.	—	4224	—	100	3 hr.	67.02	R. [illegible] / H. [illegible]
9/27	252		Aurora	5:10 P	Aurora	10:2[illegible] A	Pass	—			187		42.96	H. [illegible] / [illegible]
9/28	326	9913	Aurora	4:25 P	Aurora	10:[illegible] A	Pass	—			184		45.84	[illegible] / [illegible]
9/30	230	9913	Aurora	6:50 A	Aurora	1:39 P	Pass	—			248		61.76	M. Cantrell / B. May

Time Record of Sept. 16 – 30 1974
(Pay Period)

Monthly Merger Guarantee $

Guarantee Approx. ~~[illegible]~~ 792.00

Total Earnings $ Actual 858.42

Deductions

Amount Due

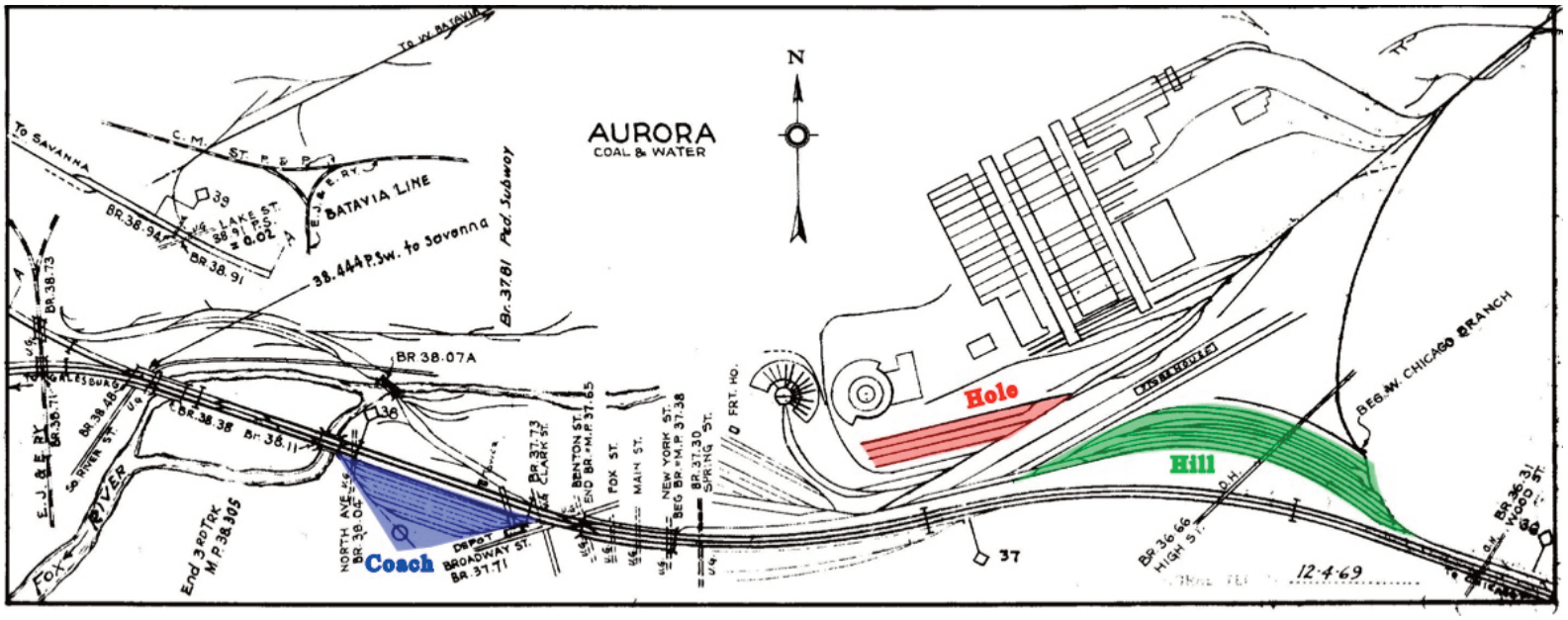
Like all operating department employees, Leo kept a time book, a record of every train he rode along. Documented above are his first three suburban train assignments in September of 1974, highlighted in green. Everything prior to that was freight.

Grove jointly with Aurora until 1952 when all suburban operations were based at Aurora.

When I started working the dinkies there were three locations in Aurora to store equipment on weeknights and weekends. The coach yard at the Aurora depot had seven tracks for train storage. There was also the turntable track that could be used for a car or two. The "Hill Yard" under the High Street bridge and adjacent to the shop complex had seven tracks dedicated to equipment storage/staging. There were an additional four tracks near the original stone roundhouse that were used to hold dinkies. This spot was nicknamed "the Hole Yard" (the name's origin has been lost to history—I know it from my yard service days).

Both Aurora locations had coach cleaners, electricians and carmen maintaining the equipment. No longer were there fuel or sand facilities at Aurora. The movement of equipment between the three locations at Aurora were handled by the 4PM and midnight Aurora switch crews. There was a carefully choreographed set of moves taking arriving trains at Aurora to either the adjacent yard tracks or down to the Hole or Hill Yards. The reverse was performed in the morning. Since the equipment had all been rebuilt with head end power capability there was no longer the need to fit light engine moves to and from the Aurora roundhouse in between the train movements. Nor was it necessary to switch out the old power cars that had previously supplied electricity to the cars.

In Chicago, the 14th Street coach yard and the adjacent "Zephyr Pit" were the daytime layover and major service point for cars and locomotives. There were three distinct yards within 14th Street; "A" yard was closest to and under the Baltimore and Ohio Chicago Terminal Railroad overhead bridge and that of the St. Charles Air Line. Its long tracks held the longer nine car trains and Amtrak equipment. "B" yard was east of there and its shorter tracks held the smaller suburban trains. "C" yard was next to "B" and mostly un-

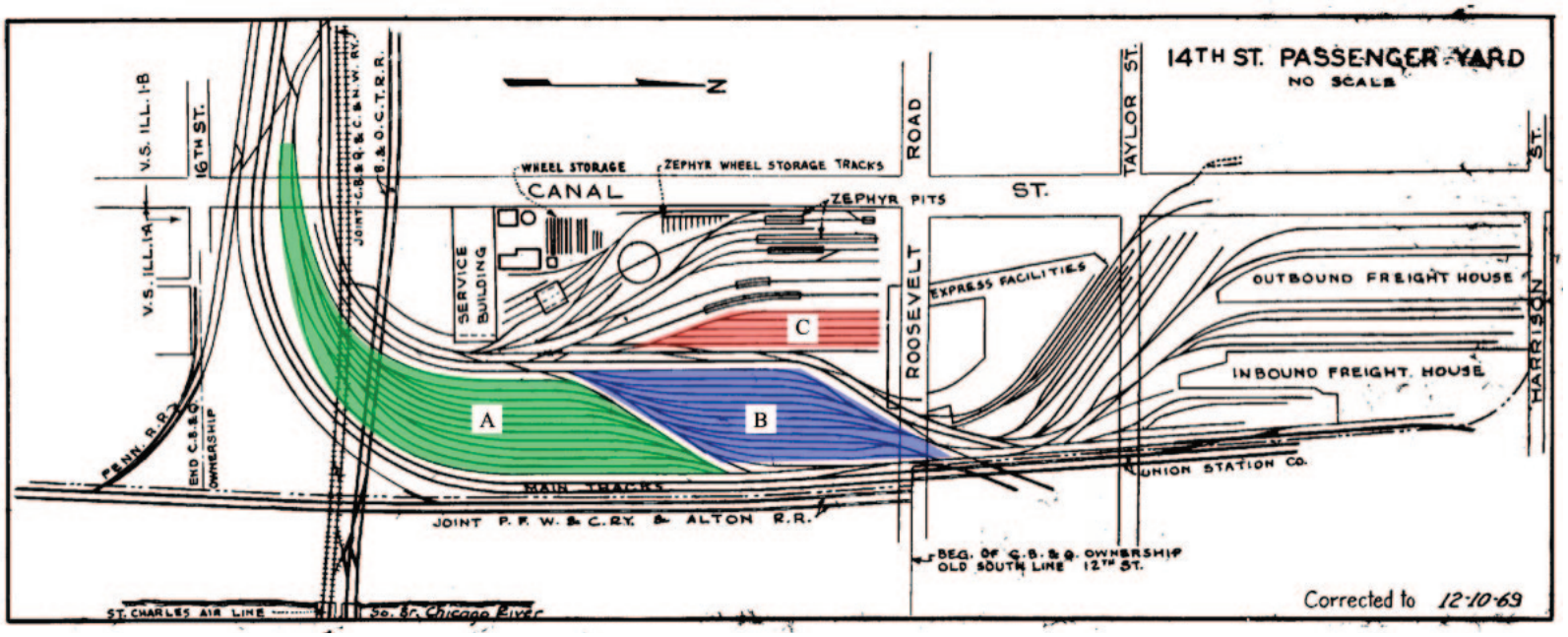


This yard map from the early BN days shows the coach yard (blue) by the Aurora depot, the Hole yard (red) near the roundhouse, and the Hill yard (green) under High St.

The Aurora coach yard and passenger platforms are empty early in the evening of Nov. 30, 1973, but will soon start to fill as westbound dinkies start arriving. The station is on the right. Photographer unknown, from the Leo Phillipp collection.

Three morning dinkies await their departure times from the Aurora coach yard in June of 1980. The main line is on the left. Photographer unknown, from the Mark Demaline collection.

Also from the early BN days, the "A", "B" and "C" yards are shown at 14th Street in downtown Chicago.



used except for company service and baggage cars for Amtrak. This location not only cleaned cars but did mechanical and electrical work as well as changing out wheels when required. The Zephyr Pit not only fueled and sanded locomotives but also performed all required federal inspections and necessary repairs. The name Zephyr Pit dated back to the original Zephyr trains that were serviced there.

The Morning Inbound "Parade"

The morning eastbound rush service was known by all employees on the division as the "morning parade" or the "dinky parade." Eastbound freight crews knew that if they had not reached Aurora by around 4:30 they were going to go into the "holding pattern" until the "parade" was over. There were rare exceptions, but exceedingly rare. Pity the freight crew that was released ahead of the dinkies and then stuck (delayed) one.

Under the local agreements an extra man called to fill a vacancy in train service was to be phoned one and a half hours before going on duty. On duty time was 30 minutes before departure at the Aurora depot and 55 minutes prior for trains leaving from the Hill yard. No passengers were handled out of the Hill yard—trains ran empty to their first stop. By special agreement regularly assigned (dinky) trainman could receive a "wake up" call.

Regularly assigned men on all other classes of service were expected to report on time for duty without being phoned. If the crew caller forgot to call a specifically assigned (dinky) trainman, that man was free to sleep in and be assured he would be paid for the entire day, with an extra man being called in his place once the regular man's absence was noted. It was a rare occurrence.

How could this arrangement have been made? For decades each suburban crew had an assigned "locker car" (actually just a closet in one of the bilevels in which to store their briefcases or other items, such as a uniform coat, while off duty). This locker car had to be on every train the crew worked. If a crew came in with one set of equipment and departed with another the locker car had to be switched between the equipment sets. At some point the conductor's and brakemen's union lodges agreed to give up the locker cars in return for the morning "wake up" call. Yes, the callers kept a log of who and when they called trainmen.

At the Aurora depot there were train departure time signs hanging from rods in the canopy pillars at the east end of each train so that passengers and crews could locate their trains. They were on the same track every day. In the Hill yard the regular men knew which track their train was on. Extra men had to hunt around until they found the crew they were assigned to that day. I gradually developed a "cheat sheet" showing which track each train was on. Upon arriving, the suburban trainmen went to their equipment.

All trains operated with the locomotive on the west end of the train. The men performed two sets of air brake tests operated by the engineer from the locomotive due to the two air brake systems (the "electric" and the "straight air"). This required walking the entire train twice to ensure each car's brakes set and released. Then a third test was made from the control car to ensure the system was working from there after the engineer changed "ends." This test simply required a "set and release" using each system but with only a suburban trainman standing next to the locomotive which was on the west end of each train. At the depot, these tests were accomplished with hand signals. Due to longer trains and the curves in the Hill Yard these were accomplished by using the communicating signal located in a car vestibule.

Next it was time to "setup" the train. This meant going car to car and flipping the four smoking/nonsmoking signs in each car as to how the conductor wanted the train

Taken in late 1970 or 1971, this photo by an unknown photographer shows the B yard in the foreground, the A yard in the upper left, and the C yard in the upper right. From the Leo Phillipp collection.

arranged. The standard plan was for 25% of the cars to be "smokers" with some amount on each end dedicated for the smoking riders. Each crew could and did vary how much was set up for smoking on each end. It varied so widely that as an extra man I kept the information on my "cheat sheet" of how the regularly assigned crew set up the smokers. That way when two or all three crew members were extra men, I knew how to setup the train so passengers would not be surprised and upset when their regular smoking car wasn't one or the reverse scenario. I can assure you they could get very upset. I have even caught passengers changing the signs when "their car" wasn't correctly set up.

While the smoking signs were being arranged, the lights and heat/air conditioning and doors were checked to make sure all were operating. The doors could be operated individually or in series from the cars. Generally, the conductor wanted to control the doors from his location. If anything was not working properly in any of the systems a short walk would locate a mechanical department foreman who would have the situation addressed.

In addition to the above chores, the rear brakeman had flagging responsibility under Rule 95. He would check to confirm that a flagging bag with appropriate items was in the rear car. If not, then the train was searched until one was found. If there were none on the train, then adjacent trains were searched for an extra.

While the brakemen were attending to the train the conductor was filling out the Federal Train Register in the room so named. This was a small room at the depot where all Bulletins, trainmasters notices and job open notices (bid notices) were posted. Each employee was required to be current on the Bulletins and trainmasters notices. This room also served as the company (internal) and union mail post office. In the Hill yard the Register room was in the former Aurora shop superintendent's building.

If there was no line to use the desk in the Register room, the conductor would fill out the train's delay/wheel report [see sample on next page] which listed the car numbers and locomotive number. Some conductors wanted to walk alongside their trains, but most usually had one of their regular brakemen bring the information to him.

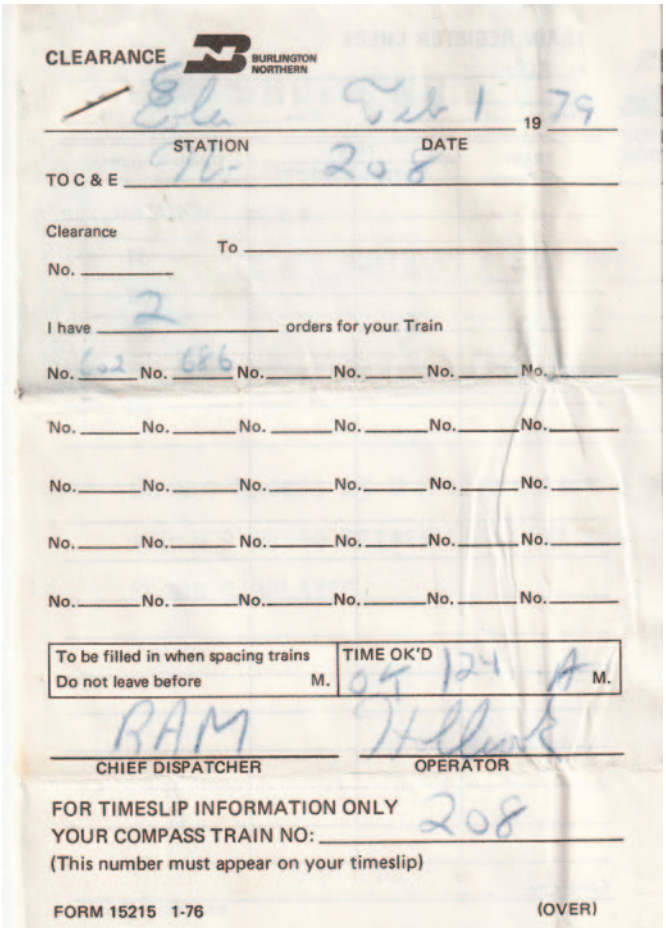
The most important piece of paperwork for the entire day was the timeslip and this was started to be filled out at this time. The last pre-departure chore for the conductor was to secure the train orders and distribute them to the crew. At the depot, the orders were in a modified lineside company phone box divided with multiple pigeonholes. The box was attached to a canopy support pillar on the platform closest to the Aurora tower where the operator prepared them. Each spot had a train number on it. In that slot would be three clearances and three sets of train orders, one each for the conductor, engineer, and "rear man" (flagman).

If the crew was at the depot and there was time to spare before being at train-side the required ten minutes before departure, a cup of coffee could be secured at the bottomless pot at the crew caller's office. While there one could check out the "board" to see who was working any road freight and passenger assignments on the division. This was also where you caught up on the latest rumors. As an alternative you could go to the ticket office and make your remittance for a prior day or days' tickets. A trainman had to remit the cash and tickets no later than five days after collecting them. The interim days float was your "bank" from which to make change. (More on tickets, remittance, etc. later.)

Once a train was ready for departure from the Hill yard the crew would simply attend to bookwork and chat until the train scheduled to leave before them moved, then they would follow. Soon, trains were stacked up one behind the other on the Aurora lead waiting their turn to enter the mainlines at West Eola interlocking. Each crew was required to "check" (observe) the train order board at the junction of the Aurora lead and the mains to determine if there were any orders for their train. There was at least a clearance form and likely orders for each train as there was nowhere to secure them at the Hill yard.

One morning as we approached the order board a relatively new brakeman working as flagman hesitated to get out of the seat when the conductor told him to check the order board. His response to this conductor, known as the "Grand Poobah" (he was the conductors union representative), was that there were always orders coming out of the Hill yard. The veteran conductor "explained" to the brakeman that he better get out of the seat and check the order board, or he could get off at Eola and go home, that is, after he figured out how to get the conductors shoe out of his rear end. I need to mention that I was the "middleman" (brakeman) that day.

The operator at Eola, located in the yard office in the middle of the yard, would be standing at trackside along the mainlines with three sets of orders in three "hoops" in which to hand up a copy to the passing crew. The fireman would be standing in the open vestibule of the lead car with his arm stretched out to catch the engine crew orders. Then the operator would pick up the next hoop and hold it up for the conductor to grab, and then the third hoop for the flagman to grab his set. But here is where the trouble developed. Since there were not passengers on the train



CLEARANCE BURLINGTON NORTHERN

Eola Oct 1 19 79
STATION DATE

TO C & E N-208

Clearance No. _____ To _____

I have 2 orders for your Train

No. 602 No. 646 No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No.

To be filled in when spacing trains Do not leave before M. | TIME OK'D 0424 A M.

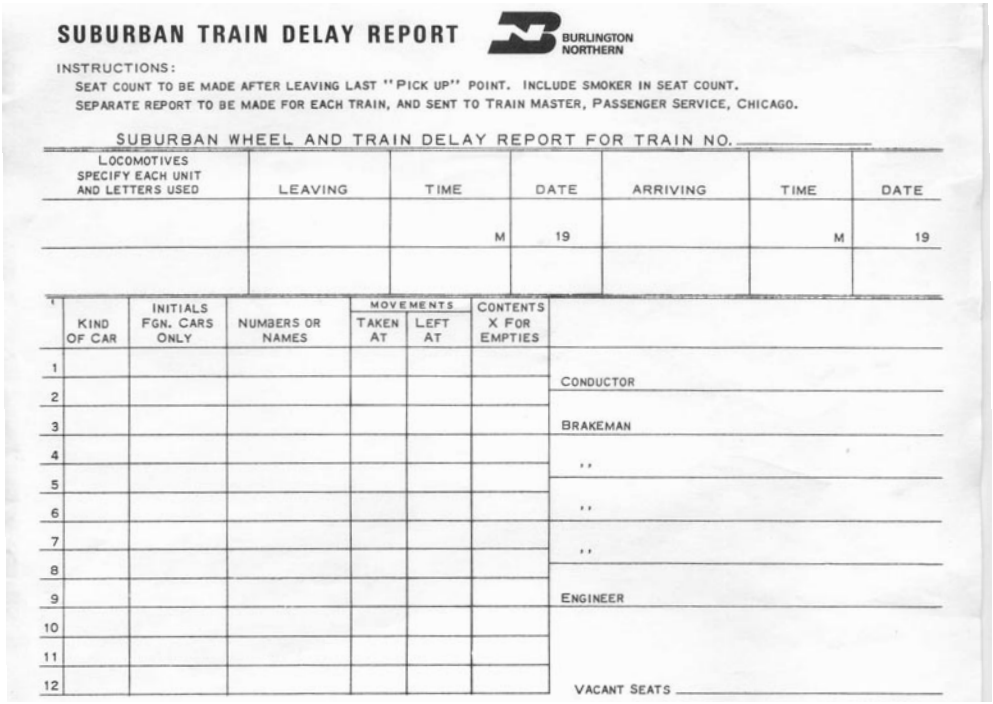
RAM
CHIEF DISPATCHER

OPERATOR

FOR TIMESLIP INFORMATION ONLY
YOUR COMPASS TRAIN NO: 208
(This number must appear on your timeslip)

FORM 15215 1-76 (OVER)

A sample clearance form for train 208 (highlighted in green in the schedule on the next page). It would be hooped up when passing the West Eola interlocking. The schedule indicates that train 208 comes out of the Hill yard, passes Eola at 6:30, expresses to Belmont and stops, expresses again at Highlands, makes all stops to La Grange Road, then expresses to Chicago. From the Doug Hartman collection.



SUBURBAN TRAIN DELAY REPORT BURLINGTON NORTHERN

INSTRUCTIONS:
SEAT COUNT TO BE MADE AFTER LEAVING LAST "PICK UP" POINT. INCLUDE SMOKER IN SEAT COUNT.
SEPARATE REPORT TO BE MADE FOR EACH TRAIN, AND SENT TO TRAIN MASTER, PASSENGER SERVICE, CHICAGO.

SUBURBAN WHEEL AND TRAIN DELAY REPORT FOR TRAIN NO. _____

LOCOMOTIVES SPECIFY EACH UNIT AND LETTERS USED	LEAVING	TIME	DATE	ARRIVING	TIME	DATE
		M	19		M	19

	KIND OF CAR	INITIALS FGN. CARS ONLY	NUMBERS OR NAMES	MOVEMENTS TAKEN AT	MOVEMENTS LEFT AT	CONTENTS X FOR EMPTIES	
1							
2							CONDUCTOR
3							BRAKEMAN
4							"
5							"
6							"
7							
8							
9							ENGINEER
10							
11							
12							VACANT SEATS _____

Suburban Train Delay Report from the Glen Meade collection.

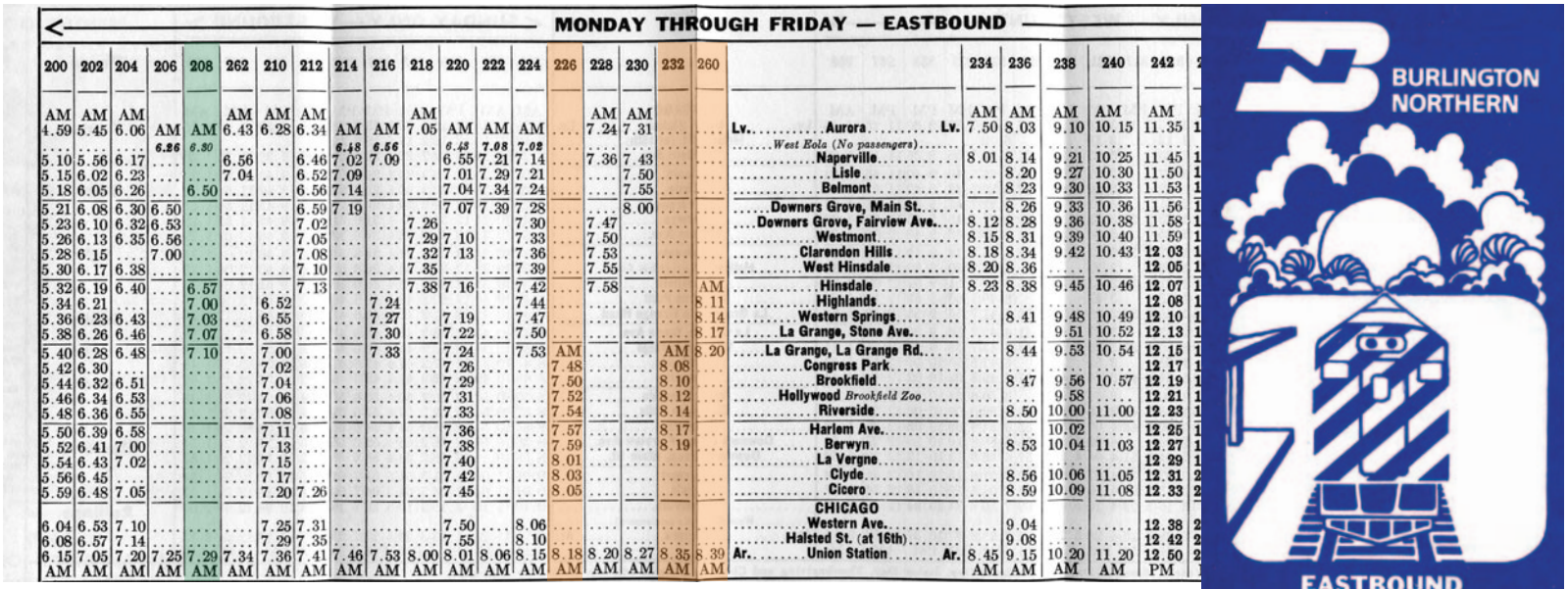
yet, and the fireman occupied the lead vestibule, the conductor could appear at any door from the second to the ninth car. If he was at the ninth (rear) car then the operator needed to be holding up two hoops together. Oh, did I mention the flagman might be anywhere from the sixth to ninth car? At least each set of orders were identical.

Then we headed eastward with each train making assigned stops en route. Basically, the pattern was for a train to make four to five stops and then crossover to the middle main and express downtown. As an example, one train would stop at Naperville (Route 59 didn't yet exist), Lisle, Belmont, and Downers Grove Main Street. Then as that train crossed to the middle main and went east, they would be followed by a train that crossed from the middle main to Main 3 and made stops at Fairview, Westmont, Clarendon Hills, West Hinsdale, and Hinsdale. Then this second train would crossover to Main 2 and express to Chicago. The pattern would continue in this manner with some trains running empty some miles before starting to make stops. Then these express trains would be followed by at least one local making numerous stops in a skip-stop pattern. That train or another would make stops at further western stations and then make stops at Cicero, Chicago's Western Ave, and Halsted Street for passengers who worked near those stations. This pattern can be seen clearly when looking at the suburban timetable below.

It was on these numerous stop trains that the "extra collectors" were assigned. An extra collector rotated between trains during the day on this type of train. He worked independently from the train crew. While he did assist with the morning train setup, after that he made various combinations of two round trips a day rotating on and off trains to work specific cars on each of these trains with passengers getting on and off at intermediate points. There were five extra collector assignments. The best worked either the morning or evening rush with same crew or a different one for the opposite rush. A couple of the extra collector assignments made mid-day runs to an intermediate station working a set number of cars between the middle and rear brakeman. Then he got off and had a layover at that stop before working back to Chicago on an inbound train. These positions were held by very senior brakemen, and I considered them about the best job on suburban. That is, except for the "one-rounders." These were crews that worked one inbound morning trip and one outbound evening trip. There were still three or four "one-rounders" when I first started on suburban. But the days of the "one-rounders" were numbered.

As demand for service grew, the number of "flips" increased. A flip would be an eastbound crew that upon arriving at Union Station and completing unloading would run as an empty express westbound to some intermediate point, reverse direction and begin picking up passengers for a certain prescribed number of stations and then again expressing downtown. [Editor's note: Trains 226, 232 and 260, highlighted in orange in the timetable on page 19 are flips, easily spotted because no times are listed between Aurora and La Grange Road] The empty trains were not listed in the public timetables but were shown in the employee timetables.

The opposite pattern occurred during the evening rush with trains loading at Union Station, departing, and expressing to four to five stops. Then they crossed over to Main 3, the southernmost main used for eastward movements and expressed back to Union Station to again load passengers for the final westbound run of their day. A quick air brake test was made at the crossover station platform after the engine crew had changed ends.



MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY — EASTBOUND

200	202	204	206	208	262	210	212	214	216	218	220	222	224	226	228	230	232	260		234	236	238	240	242
AM	AM	AM			AM	AM	AM			AM					AM	AM				AM	AM	AM	AM	AM
4.59	5.45	6.06	AM	AM	6.43	6.28	6.34	AM	AM	7.05	AM	AM	AM	....	7.24	7.31	....	....	Lv. Aurora Lv.	7.50	8.03	9.10	10.15	11.35
....	....	....	6.26	6.30	....	....	....	6.48	6.56	....	6.48	7.08	7.02	....	....	....	....	....	West Eola (No passengers)	....	....	....	....	....
5.10	5.56	6.17	....	....	6.56	....	6.46	7.02	7.09	....	6.55	7.21	7.14	....	7.36	7.43	....	....	Naperville	8.01	8.14	9.21	10.25	11.45
5.15	6.02	6.23	....	....	7.04	....	6.52	7.09	....	....	7.01	7.29	7.21	....	....	7.50	....	....	Lisle	....	8.20	9.27	10.30	11.50
5.18	6.05	6.26	....	6.50	....	....	6.56	7.14	....	....	7.04	7.34	7.24	....	....	7.55	....	....	Belmont	....	8.23	9.30	10.33	11.53
5.21	6.08	6.30	6.50	....	....	....	6.59	7.19	....	....	7.07	7.39	7.28	....	....	8.00	....	....	Downers Grove, Main St.	....	8.26	9.33	10.36	11.56
5.23	6.10	6.32	6.53	....	....	....	7.02	....	....	7.26	....	....	7.30	....	7.47	....	....	....	Downers Grove, Fairview Ave.	8.12	8.28	9.36	10.38	11.58
5.26	6.13	6.35	6.56	....	....	....	7.05	....	....	7.29	7.10	....	7.33	....	7.50	....	....	....	Westmont	8.15	8.31	9.39	10.40	11.59
5.28	6.15	....	7.00	....	....	....	7.08	....	....	7.32	7.13	....	7.36	....	7.53	....	....	....	Clarendon Hills	8.18	8.34	9.42	10.43	12.03
5.30	6.17	6.38	....	....	....	....	7.10	....	....	7.35	....	....	7.39	....	7.55	....	....	....	West Hinsdale	8.20	8.36	....	....	12.05
5.32	6.19	6.40	....	6.57	....	....	7.13	....	....	7.38	7.16	....	7.42	....	7.58	....	....	AM	Hinsdale	8.23	8.38	9.45	10.46	12.07
5.34	6.21	....	....	7.00	....	6.52	....	....	7.24	....	....	....	7.44	....	....	....	....	8.11	Highlands	....	....	....	....	12.08
5.36	6.23	6.43	....	7.03	....	6.55	....	....	7.27	....	7.19	....	7.47	....	....	....	....	8.14	Western Springs	....	8.41	9.48	10.49	12.10
5.38	6.26	6.46	....	7.07	....	6.58	....	....	7.30	....	7.22	....	7.50	....	....	....	....	8.17	La Grange, Stone Ave.	....	....	9.51	10.52	12.13
5.40	6.28	6.48	....	7.10	....	7.00	....	....	7.33	....	7.24	....	7.53	AM	....	....	AM	8.20	La Grange, La Grange Rd.	....	8.44	9.53	10.54	12.15
5.42	6.30	....	....	....	....	7.02	....	....	....	....	7.26	....	....	7.48	....	....	8.08	....	Congress Park	....	....	....	....	12.17
5.44	6.32	6.51	....	....	....	7.04	....	....	....	....	7.29	....	....	7.50	....	....	8.10	....	Brookfield	....	8.47	9.56	10.57	12.19
5.46	6.34	6.53	....	....	....	7.06	....	....	....	....	7.31	....	....	7.52	....	....	8.12	....	Hollywood Brookfield Zoo	....	....	9.58	....	12.21
5.48	6.36	6.55	....	....	....	7.08	....	....	....	....	7.33	....	....	7.54	....	....	8.14	....	Riverside	....	8.50	10.00	11.00	12.23
5.50	6.39	6.58	....	....	....	7.11	....	....	....	....	7.36	....	....	7.57	....	....	8.17	....	Harlem Ave.	....	....	10.02	....	12.25
5.52	6.41	7.00	....	....	....	7.13	....	....	....	....	7.38	....	....	7.59	....	....	8.19	....	Berwyn	....	8.53	10.04	11.03	12.27
5.54	6.43	7.02	....	....	....	7.15	....	....	....	....	7.40	....	....	8.01	....	....	....	....	La Vergne	....	....	....	....	12.29
5.56	6.45	....	....	....	....	7.17	....	....	....	....	7.42	....	....	8.03	....	....	....	....	Clyde	....	8.56	10.06	11.05	12.31
5.59	6.48	7.05	....	....	....	7.20	7.26	....	....	....	7.45	....	....	8.05	....	....	....	....	Cicero	....	8.59	10.09	11.08	12.33
																			CHICAGO					
6.04	6.53	7.10	....	....	....	7.25	7.31	....	....	....	7.50	....	8.06	....	....	....	....	....	Western Ave.	....	9.04	....	....	12.38
6.08	6.57	7.14	....	....	....	7.29	7.35	....	....	....	7.55	....	8.10	....	....	....	....	....	Halsted St. (at 16th)	....	9.08	....	....	12.42
6.15	7.05	7.20	7.25	7.29	7.34	7.36	7.41	7.46	7.53	8.00	8.01	8.06	8.15	8.18	8.20	8.27	8.35	8.39	Ar. Union Station Ar.	8.45	9.15	10.20	11.20	12.50
AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM		AM	AM	AM	AM	PM

From BN Suburban Timetable #4, Effective 3:01 AM Nov. 24, 1974 (cover at right)

Until the development of control cars and push pull service each train that arrived at Union Station went to 14th Street for servicing. The advent of control cars made increasing train frequency much easier and spelled the gradual demise of the "one-rounder" assignments. I recall one morning while backing to the 14th Street coach yard the other brakeman pointed over several tracks to a run that was just entering under the train shed. He shared that the rear brakeman on that run had something like 43 years of service and had spent approximately 21 of them on one round trip assignments.

At stops the conductor would normally control all the doors, but each brakeman could also control them or just the one he was standing at. Once the doors were open passengers boarded in a quick fashion. I was always impressed that passengers knew the exact spot to congregate on the platform to be directly at the doors when the train stopped. That is until a different engineer was running the train for the first time and missed the usual "spot." Snow could also change the braking dynamics. Rarely, but it did happen, that a train had one extra or one less car than usual and the engineer had not been made aware of that fact. As the train approached the station the engineer would set the air brakes at the normal landmark for his normal size train to make the exact same spot on the platform as normal. But on days where the car count changed the first couple stops would be interesting as the train would coast further down the platform or stop short. Passengers always had comments on those days about the engineer's capability.

Each train had a timetable departure time from each station while in route. We were not to leave before your watch reached that specific time. Generally, there was a couple minutes where we simply stood on the platform or on the bottom vestibule step running down the clock. At the specified time the conductor would step back aboard, give the engineer the "highball" signal and close the doors. If someone was running for the train some crews would wait while others would depart with a passenger pounding on the vestibule doors as they ran alongside the moving train. Occasionally a trainman would "pop" a door open as the train began moving to let a tardy rider onboard. Many years later a couple of very tragic incidents occurred, and Metra ordered all doors be closed 30 seconds before departure or moving the train.

Before we move on, I must share the habit of one very senior conductor, whose nickname was "Maxie." Once his train left the Aurora depot or Hill yard, the next time "Maxie" looked at his watch was when he arrived at Union Station. At the intermediate stops once the mass of humanity had boarded, he stepped aboard and waved a "highball" and closed the doors. He did not look back for the highball sign from the rear and middle brakeman. My first time getting called for "Maxie's" job I was the rear brakeman. Bill Burnell was the regular middleman. While in the Hill yard Bill cautioned me, "Be on the bottom step as soon as the passengers are loaded or Maxie will leave you." At our first stop at Naperville everything proceeded as usual. The next stop was Lisle. After the passengers had loaded, I looked at my watch to see we had three minutes before departure, so I stayed on the platform at the door. Sure enough "Maxie" waved a highball and closed the doors with me on the platform. But Bill had knowingly popped his door open as the train moved and opened the doors between him and me so I could climb aboard. We had a laugh upon arriving at Union Station.

Collecting Fares

The actual collection of tickets was done after an eastbound express train had made its final stop and had crossed over to Main 2 (the middle) to express downtown. On a nine-car train the two trainman and conductor each "worked" three cars. Each crew had a different pattern as to who worked toward each other and who worked away from the other two.

There were two very distinct and different sensations upon entering the coaches on a packed eastbound morning run. In the non-smokers was the strong floral smell from the mixture of numerous perfumes and colognes. It was a bit like walking into a flower shop. The other sensation was in the smoking cars where the blue haze and overpowering tobacco odor were unreal. As a nonsmoker I did my best to get into and out of these cars as quickly as possible. It did not really matter as after just a couple minutes my uniform reeked from tobacco smoke. I know of one freshly hired college graduate passenger, who after making his first inbound ride, went to his boss and explained he might have to quit due to the smoke. The boss then explained to him that there were nonsmoking cars. Conductors had no choice since at least half of the lead car, and usually more, were smokers. Many conductors were smokers so not only didn't it bother them but they could light a cigarette and leave it in the empty space inside the door cutout control box in the vestibule. They could then take a quick drag when moving from one half to other half while collecting tickets. Besides if there were riders in the vestibule, they sure weren't going to turn him in for violating the no tobacco use rule while serving passengers. Many smoking rear brakemen bid in the rear position for the same reason.

On most runs there was more than enough time to collect tickets in three cars before reaching the 16th Street curve outside Union Station. It was at this point or slightly before, that passengers started standing in the vestibules or aisles to make a quick departure in the station. Some riders stood the entire trip in the vestibule or just inside the vestibule door. But there were a couple jobs where you would still be collecting tickets rounding the curve and at that point it became a bit tight trying to work between standing passengers to collect their tickets or from those still seated. Some small

number of riders knew the pattern and would be riding on daily or with no ticket at all. They would position themselves in the car the two trainmen were working towards hoping to be missed in the struggle to collect tickets.

Here again, I must share another "Maxie" story. One morning I was called for Maxie's job as Bill Burnell was on vacation. This was a Monday morning so I would probably be on this run all week unless someone took a day off (laid off) and altered the rotation. On this run the middleman worked the middle three cars and started at the sixth rear car working toward the conductor who was coming from the head car. Almost all conductors could work their three cars and meet the middleman at or near the interior door between the third and fourth car. Sometimes one or the other would collect tickets in a few seats in the other's car. But this day I worked my three cars and stepped into "Maxie's'" third car and could not see him coming through the middle door windows. I figured he got hung up. I worked all his rear car and part of his second car and still could not see him coming my way. So, thinking he had already completed this area (the riders were 95% monthly tickets that simply had to be shown), I turned and went back to my head car.

Pretty soon "Maxie" was confronting me in the vestibule wanting to know why I stopped working towards him. I explained that after working one and a half of his cars I assumed I was aggravating passengers by asking for their tickets again. I was told to work until I met him in the future. Sure enough, the next day I was "called" (caught) "Maxie's" job. I was dutifully on the bottom step at each stop and started working towards "Maxie." I made it all the way to the first few passengers in the rear half of the head car of train as we rounded the curve at 16th Street before meeting up with "Maxie." I had collected tickets in five plus cars while Maxie had not completed one! During the balance of the week, I slowed my collection pace way down so that "Maxie" ended up working one and a half to two cars.

Upon stopping at the platforms in Union Station the conductor would generally "pop" (open) the doors and the rush of humanity to get off commenced. Most trainmen tried to be on the bottom step when entering Union Station. That way they were first off, would step to the side and stay close to the train while hundreds rushed past or off the cars. Once the crush was over, you'd go back into the car and encourage any laggards to detrain by announcing "this train is leaving for the servicing yard."

Why would there be passengers taking their dear sweet time to unload? One set were those walking inside the train toward the concourse to avoid the crowded platform. Another group were collecting newspapers to read at the office. During the 1970s many riders read the morning paper on the inbound trip leaving it on the seat or floor when detraining. I should mention that the train and engine crews would also scrounge around for papers, and not just for personal copies. Many had what were called "paper routes" where they distributed the papers to others. More on that a bit later.

As the engineer hurried to the locomotive to make the quick air brake test for the move to the yard or back out on a "flip" it was the fireman's duty to collect the required number of newspapers. The train crew members operated on an every-man-for-himself system unless they ended up with multiple copies. If so, there could be a quick trading session in a vestibule.

In the 1970s there were generally more than enough papers to go around for the crew, except for one memorable morning's arrival at Union Station which I recall clearly even now, some 45 plus years later. For some reason, this day newspapers were a bit scarce. As I worked my way through the train, I was coming up pretty empty in the newspaper collection. Unknown to me the brakemen's union steward (the griever) who was the rear brakeman was having the same issue as he walked forward. When I got to the head car, I met the fireman who had an arm full of newspapers. Shortly the engineer (who just happened to be the engineers' griever) came down from the control compartment and the brakemen's "griever" arrived about the same time with empty hands. As I went down the steps to make the air test World War Three broke out in the vestibule over the fireman collecting papers. The brakemen's griever said, "The fireman had no business in the coaches," and the engineer expressed that, "The fireman had just as much &#%@! right as the trainmen did." It was quite a show for a few seconds.

Typically, the conductor and one brakeman went from the train concourse to the locker room in the basement. The conductor stopped at the "GB" telegraph office at the top of the platform near Tracks Two and Four to fill out the train register and then went to his locker. [Editor's note: "GB" were the call letters for the operator's office in Union Station. That is where the operator spoke with and copied train orders for the crews. These offices were also where you checked your watch against the official clock in that office. All notices and bulletins were also posted at each that crews had to be current on. Each office had call letters which were listed in the timetables. This was left over from the days of telegraph. Other examples: Cicero was "HY", Aurora was "RO", Eola was "OA."] The other brakeman, and sometimes both, went with the train to the coach yard at 14th Street in case there were any problems such as a broken train line, the need to make a reverse movement, or a switch tender at 14th Street missed a switch or was absent. The switch tenders were men from the switchmen's ranks who worked at specific areas in the yard to route movements within the yard to avoid congestion caused by trains stopping to have its crew throw switches. These positions were often held by senior men as they stayed in one general area, had a little shanty to get out of the weather and at times got nice breaks between train movements. Of course, they never violated the rule about not reading non-railroad documents while on

duty. But they often gave the road train hand signs with a newspaper.

After arrival at Union Station and then putting the train away at 14th Street, crews had several options as to how to spend their "temporary tie up time." This term refers to the requirement in the Federal Hours of Service statute requiring employees scheduled to work over 12 and less than 16 hours to have a rest interval of no less than four hours sometime during that period of time on duty. The maximum allowable continuous time on duty was 12 hours. Almost all suburban jobs were set up to work more than 12 hours and at this time most were on duty 14 to 15 hours. An employee on temporary tie up was being paid during the entire day, including the "rest period" of temporary tie up. This arrangement made it possible to cover the entire day and both "parade" periods with the least number of crews.

The train and engine crews at the coach yard could go to breakfast at the Zephyr Diner (photo below) on the property and inside the fence along Canal Street at the main cross walk in the middle of the yard. The restaurant was also open to the public. A mix of suburban crews, mechanical department men, and the general public passed in and out in a steady stream. The first thing a dinky man did upon sitting down at the "U" shaped counter was to offer the waitress a newspaper.

After breakfast, the suburban guys who had time to go home for a while and then return for their evening trains would walk along the creosoted plank crosswalk to reach the mainlines (photo below right). They would wait patiently for the 8:45AM westbound from Chicago to Aurora to stop at the crosswalk. This train had several "deadhead" cars for Aurora that would be used on later trains that day. The working crew would stop, "pop" the doors on the empty "deadhead" cars, and after all the men headed back west boarded through the three or four open doors the train moved westward on its schedule. This quick stop was not on the schedule but was approved by management.

Other men wanting to go back to the station could walk back or catch a bus by the diner and ride back to Union Station. Some engineers chose to go to their locker room in the former commissary building at Canal and Roosevelt Road.

Back at the station the men who detrained there might go to breakfast at the Iron Horse Café, though few did as it was considerably more expensive than elsewhere. Most went directly to the locker room located in the basement in the southwest corner under what is now called the Great Concourse, but back then it was simply called the waiting room. Once in the locker room men generally went to their locker located somewhere in the mass of rows in the "L" shaped place. Upon entering at the main entrance, one had to go left or right to the wing where his locker was located.

After a quick deposit of uniform coat, ticket punch, etc. many then went to "Peanuts'" coffee and doughnut table at the entrance to the left-hand side of the locker room. "Peanuts" worked Number 202, the second eastbound dinky in the morning, so he arrived before almost everyone else. On his way to work at the Aurora depot he stopped at Harners' Bakery to pick up his standing order, a very large box containing four or more dozen fresh assorted pastries. This he tucked away in the closet (the old locker) of a coach. After arriving at Union Station he would bring it down to his table and begin setting up his store. The first step was to go to his nearby locker and start the process of getting the huge coffee pot to the table and perking away. Soon men from the BN, Milwaukee, G.M. & O., and later the N.&W. (former Wabash operation) would descend into the locker room. "Peanuts" always stationed himself at the left-hand side of the table with the box of pastries in front of him. A quarter laid on the table bought a cup of the fresh coffee, and another 50 cents secured a pastry. Soon there was a pile of quarters and bills in front of "Peanuts." I never recall any leftovers, rather just the opposite. When you arrived in the locker room near the tail end of morning rush hungry for that pastry and coffee, all too often they were all gone.

The Zephyr Diner, temporarily renamed Swallow for the 1986 movie *About Last Night*, and torn down soon after.

Looking northward into 'B' yard from the main crosswalk. It's a latespring afternoon in 1976. Serviced locomotives and trains wait for their crews to back them into Chicago Union Station for the evening parade. Photo by Dennis Popish.

Being an entrepreneur, "Peanuts" had another side source of income. Some riders liked to play cards during both the inbound and outbound rides. They would take a "four-seater" where the players faced each other, and they could put the portable card table across their knees. A portable card table would be stashed between the seats and the wall under the windows. These folks always rode in the same spot and regular riders knew not to take their seats. Now on "Peanuts" runs he took extra care to make sure the card tables were in place for his card playing riders. In fact, if my memory is correct, he pulled the tables from their storage spots, laying them across the seats to guarantee his card players would be able to sit right down and play. The card tables were actually the protective backing sheet that new coach windows were shipped in. You would see these tucked away against the wall on a few trains.

I thought this was just a courtesy some of the older collectors did for their regular riders. That is until I caught "Peanuts" spot and found the card tables still laying across the seats after we had left the last station and were running empty heading for the Hill yard at Aurora. On each card table would be piles of coins left as a "thank you" for making sure the table was made available. On the homeward evening trip there were two of these.

Later I learned the extent to which "Peanuts" would go to ensure the card tables were in place. One afternoon I was riding in a control car backing down to Union Station. The control compartment door was open, and the usual radio chatter was ongoing. Suddenly "Peanuts" was on the radio (it was unheard of for a collector to use the radio) identifying himself as train 2XX and asking for the 14th Street yardmaster. The yardmaster "Twiggy" responded. "Peanuts" said something to the effect of, "Twiggy," where did you put car 7XX?" "Twiggy" responded, something like, "Peanuts," it's on 'A' yard track X, 3 deep from the east end." "Peanuts" was hunting for the card table that was on that car which had been switched out of his train!

Once you had your coffee and pastry you could sit at one of several tables to eat and read the papers. You had to keep an eye on the clock if you were going to catch the 8:45 back to Aurora. Others stayed in the locker room because their next run did not allow time to go home and back. In the summer, a couple guys would spend their day at Oak Street Beach. However, most men went to their "job over town," which will be discussed in part 2 of this article.

Saturdays

In the 1970s there were still a considerable number of riders who worked a shortened day in their offices on Saturday. This need was filled by a modified morning rush with the afternoon westbound rush replacing the evening rush. This resulted in shortened workdays for the crews as well. With only a two-to-three-hour layover between morning and afternoon trips, a tradition of going to Lou Mitchell's restaurant, located next to the former Burlington Route headquarters building (at that time the Chicago Regional Office Building), for a leisurely breakfast was well established. Groups of three or four would wander over to partake of the famous double yolk eggs and Lou's hospitality. He worked the waiting line handing out Milk Dud candies and paying extra attention to the ladies. I recommend going there if you ever have time. While Lou is long gone, the food, service, and décor have not changed one bit. The current owner tries to duplicate Lou's attentiveness.

This ends Part 1 of Leo's experiences working the dinkies. We'll wrap it up in part 2 in the January issue.

Stairs leading to the locker room in the basement of Chicago Union Station. Photo by Leo Phillipp.

Looking northward at the Zephyr Pit. The Commissary building (being prepared for demolition—note the missing windows on the top floor) and the Sears (now Willis) Tower are in the background. Spring 1976 photo by Dennis Popish.

Right of Way

BNSF's Crosby and Niobe Subdivisions
Berthold to Northport, North Dakota

Text by Dave Poplawski, photos by Al Christianson

In the northwestern corner of North Dakota are BNSF's Crosby and Niobe Subdivisions. Inherited from the Great Northern Railway, the two subdivisions together are still an important part of the BNSF system.

The lines were built to serve the rich farmland of North Dakota's Drift Prairie region, bringing in supplies and equipment for the area's farmers and shipping out agricultural products to the rest of the US and abroad. When BN was formed in 1970, today's Crosby Subdivision was the Fifth Subdivision and the Niobe Subdivision was the Sixth Subdivision, both part of the Minot Division. The Crosby Sub ran all the way from Berthold to Crosby with a 40 MPH speed limit, while the Niobe Sub connected to the Crosby Sub just northwest of the town of Niobe. The Niobe Sub then ran due north, with a 30 MPH speed limit, crossed the Soo line at grade near Bowbells and connected with the Canadian National at Northgate on the US/Canada border.

In 1991, the Dakota, Missouri Valley and Western Railroad began operation on the 31 mile portion of the line from Lignite Jct to Crosby. The DMV&W ran over the old Soo line from Flaxton, where it connected with the CP, to Whitetail, Montana, but shifted over to the BN line between Lignite Jct and Crosby after the Soo's parallel trackage between the two towns was abandoned.

Over the years the lines slowly degraded, until by 1995, just before BNSF was formed, the speed limit on the Crosby Sub from Niobe to Crosby was down to 10 MPH and from Berthold to Niobe it was down to 25 MPH. The Niobe Sub actually fared better, with the speed limit increased to 35 MPH. These limits are still in effect into 2021.

In 2006, BNSF abandoned the line from just northwest of Coteau to Lignite and sold the remaining line from Lignite to Crosby. In 2021, trackage from Niobe to Coteau on the Crosby Sub is used for freight car storage. Regular service between Berthold and Northgate on the rest of the Crosby/Niobe subs continues, with BNSF locals LMON8821 (NB Tue/Thu/Sat) and LMON8822 (SB Wed/Fri/Sun) out of Minot serving a handful of customers. In 2016, the connection at Berthold was expanded into a wye, controlled by CTC, and "Crosby" became the name of the north end of the wye, fitting since the Crosby Sub no longer went to the town of Crosby, almost 90 miles away.

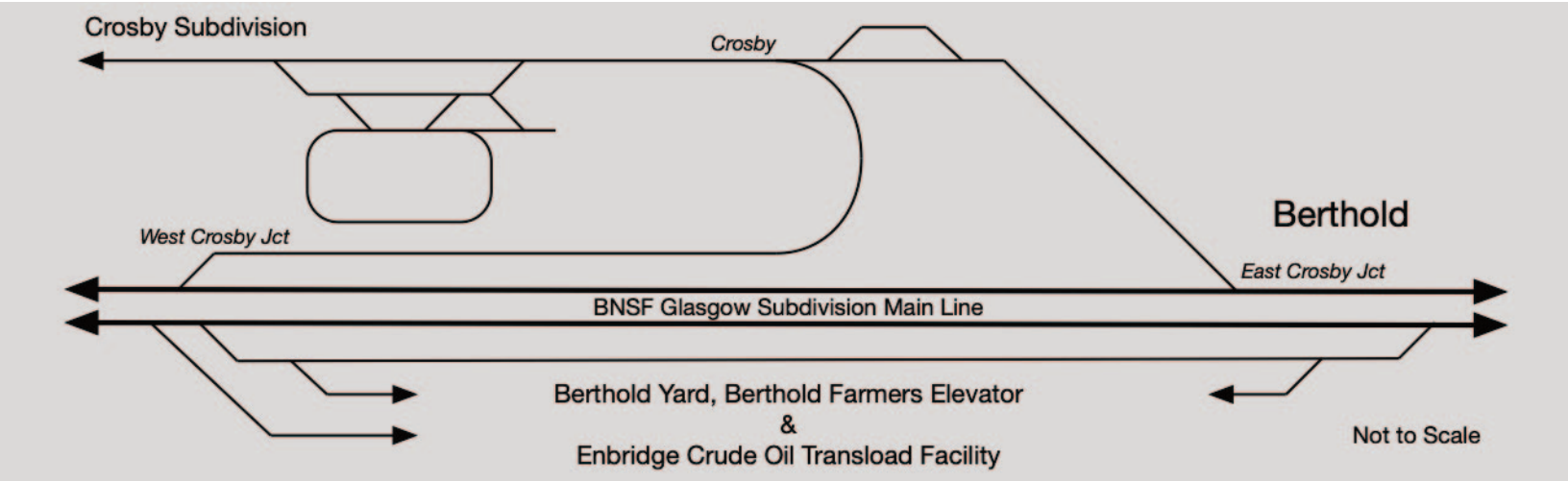
WESTWARD ↓	Length of Siding (Feet)	Station Nos.	Mile Post	Crosby Subdivision BRANCH LINE STATIONS	Rule 4.3	Type of Oper.	Line Segment	Miles to Next Stn.	↑ EASTWARD
Adjoining Sub: Glasgow Subdivision Boundary: Crosby, MP 0.0 / Glasgow, MP 23.0 Information for Berthold is located in the Glasgow sub timetable.									
			0.0	EAST CROSBY JCT	J	CTC	263	0.7	
			0.7	CROSBY	T	RL		19.6	
		58620	20.4	COULEE		TWC		7.0	
		58627	27.4	KENASTON				6.8	
		58634	34.2	NIOBE Adj. Sub: Niobe, MP 34.2	J			6.4	
		58641	40.6	COTEAU				6.4	
			47.0	END OF SUBDIVISION				47.0	
End Crosby Sub MT, MP 35.0									


August 12, 2021

Our tour of the line begins at Berthold, where the Crosby Sub branches off the double-tracked Glasgow Subdivision main line in a very large wye. Al, with permission and an escort, took the panoramic photo above from a rather precarious perch atop the Berthold Farmers Elevator. The two well-ballasted tracks are the Glasgow Sub main line, the tracks to the left of them are yard tracks for the elevator and oil transload facility, and the northeast leg of the wye branches off to the right. The northwest leg of the wye connects to the main line at West Crosby Jct around the upper-left corner and to the northeast leg of the wye near the oil tanks in the upper right. The Crosby Sub disappears into the horizon in the upper right of the photo.

The photo at right is looking west along westbound main at East Crosby Jct and at the switch to the northeast leg of the wye. A manifest blocks the main while a stack train sits on the siding at the left.


June 5, 2021



June 5, 2021

A short siding off the northeast leg of the wye is used occasionally to store MOW equipment.

A little farther north the line crosses US 2 as we look back south towards the north end of the wye and its CTC signal left of the tracks, plus the Berthold Farmers Elevator off in the distance where Al shot the overhead photos from.

From the top of the elevator we see the north end of the siding, RR location Crosby where the two legs of the wye come together, and the US 2 crossing.

June 5, 2021

August 12, 2021

North of US 2 and off the west side of the line is a large loop track serving what once was Sand Solutions, a thriving frac sand transload facility constructed during the Bakken oil boom. When crude oil prices plummeted and the boom went bust, frac sand demand waned and the facility ceased to be a customer.

At Heartland, about seven miles north of Berthold, the line passes an abandoned grain elevator that clearly has seen better days. A 1,055 foot stub siding that used to serve the elevator is still there, as is a dragging equipment detector.

June 5, 2021

June 12, 2021


June 12, 2021

While this part of North Dakota may seem flat, creeks do cut into the land. If the railroad were being constructed today this might warrant a fill over a culvert, but when this line was constructed, building a trestle was the most expedient solution. This beautiful prairie trestle is about a mile south of Coulee (MP 19) and allows the creek and 268th Avenue SW to duck under the tracks.

There isn't much left in Coulee other than the station sign, but back in 2010, when the photo below was taken, the grain elevator still stood. By then its primary use was as a home for various airborne and ground-based critters. Below we see the local heading north with a GP38-2 and GP39M in Heritage I paint leading.

June 12, 2021

April 10, 2010

Kenaston, MP 27.4, has a large grain storage facility, but it isn't served by the railroad. The stub siding is still in service and has a couple of unloading ramps if needed.

The first paying customer on the Crosby Sub, Sun Prairie Grain, is at Niobe. On June 12, 2021 the northbound local, with a pair of SD60Ms in charge, set out a couple of cars before heading out of town and onto the Niobe Sub for Northgate.


June 12, 2021

June 12, 2021


June 12, 2021

The same local crosses another prairie trestle just out of town and approaches the switch to the Niobe Sub. Another view of the trestle shows the Crosby Sub continuing straight ahead and the Niobe Sub branching off to the right. What is left of the Crosby Sub, from here to Coteau, is used for car storage.

At Coteau the usable portion of the line pretty much ends with panel track laying on the "main" line and a derail on the siding to the left. The tracks end about a half mile west of town where HW 8 now cuts the track.


July 31, 2021


July 31, 2021


July 31, 2021


July 31, 2021

Now on the Niobe Sub, the next paying customer on the way to Northgate is the Savage Services Corporation transload facility in Bowbells, seen here looking south. The at-grade crossing with the CP is just out of sight straight ahead, while a connection with the CP branches off to the right, just past the station sign.

WESTWARD ↓	Length of Siding (Feet)	Station Nos.	Mile Post	Niobe Subdivision BRANCH LINE STATIONS	Rule 4.3	Type of Oper.	Line Segment	Miles to Next Stn.	↑ EASTWARD
Adjoining Sub: Crosby Subdivision Boundary: Niobe, MP 0.0 / Crosby, MP 34.2 Information for Niobe is located in the Crosby sub timetable.									
		58634	0.1	NIOBE	J	TWC	264	7.9	
		58708	8.0	BOWBELLS	M			12.7	
		58721	20.7	NORTHGATE	R	RL		0.8	
		58723	21.5	BOUNDARY LINE	R			21.5	
End Niobe Sub MT, MP 21.5									


June 12, 2021

May 16, 2010

A decade ago, the southbound local from Northgate headed through Bowbells and past the Savage transload facility.

Just north of Bowbells is the relatively new Pipeline Foods elevator. A new siding was built to service the facility, but unfortunately it doesn't look like it will get used much for a while. The company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in July 2021. Until resolved, the company is not allowed to accept, nor more importantly, pay for grain from local farmers, even those having current contracts with the company, and if no grain comes in from the farmers, no grain goes out on the BNSF.

We were lucky enough to find a photo of the old BN (originally GN) depot at Bowbells taken on June 30, 1974 by Bruce Black. The photo is from Mark Demaline's collection, who we credit for preserving and sharing the image with us. The depot is long gone.

June 12, 2021

June 30, 1974 photo by Bruce Black from the Mark Demaline collection.


June 12, 2021


June 12, 2021

Our tour ends in Northgate as the local arrives to do some switching at the Viterra elevator. It drops off a cut of hoppers, then the power couples onto its remaining few cars (see cover photo of this issue). It will take them across the border into Canada to the Ceres Global Ag Corp.'s facility, part of which can be seen to the right half of the photo below. While the CN used to have a line that met the BN here, that line is gone and the facility is served exclusively by the BNSF. It is a major customer for BNSF and a major reason why the Crosby and Niobe Subs remain a prosperous part of the BNSF system.

More information about the Ceres facility can be found at:

`ceresglobalagcorp.com/location/northgate-terminal`

The website includes an interesting video in which the staff discusses its good relationship with BNSF for moving commodities in and out of that area of Canada and includes some BNSF rail action.

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Rear Cover Photo: Returning from Whitehall, Montana, MRL GP35s 402 and 403 lead the Three Forks Local east through the Jefferson River Canyon between Cardwell and Sappington, Montana on September 15, 2015. The local doesn't go to Whitehall very often. MRL also runs both BNSF and its own trains to load ballast at the quarry near Pipestone, just west of Whitehall. Photo by Mark Demaline.