



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
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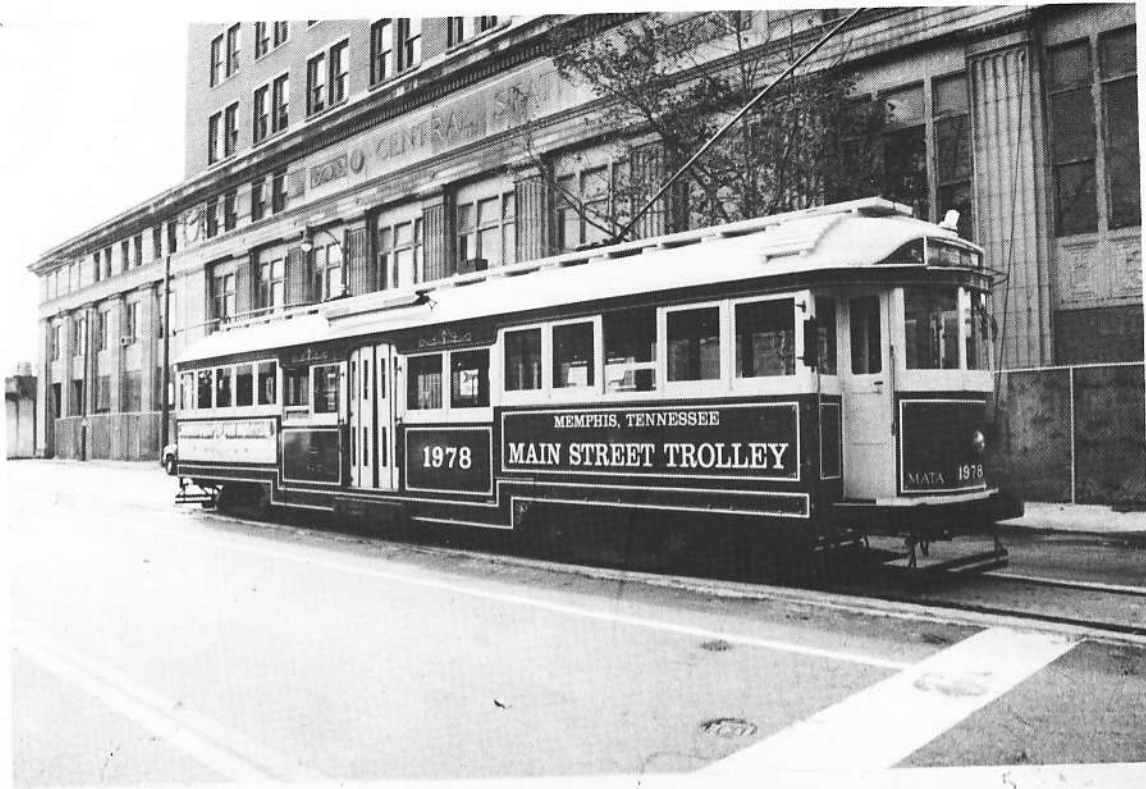
# ARKANSAS RAILROADER



VOLUME 28 NUMBER 12 DECEMBER 1997



The original Freedom Train in Yonkers, New York on December 23, 1948. (Photo by Peter Smykla, Jr.)



**TOP** - The Main Street Trolley in Memphis, sitting in front of Central Station on October 26, 1997. (*John Jones photo*). **BOTTOM** - The UP caboose donated to the city of Hazen years ago was recently painted by the UP Employee Activity Committee (primer only, when this photo was taken on October 25, 1997). Painters were Mike Mason, Steven Leonard, J C Jennings, Robert Young, Joann Marks, George Marks, Richard Baldwin, Marilyn Baldwin, Dana Adams and David Melville. (*Photo by John Jones*)

### 1997 OFFICERS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

PRESIDENT - Craig Gerard, 2011 Aztec Dr, Bldg 16 #6, N Little Rock AR 72116-4470(501-835-6758)

VICE-PRESIDENT - Leonard L. Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)

TREASURER - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72207-5983 (501-225-0826)

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EDITOR - Ken Ziegenbein, 905 Valerie Dr, N Little Rock AR 72118-3160 (501-758-1340)

NRHS DIRECTOR - Jim Bennett, 1002 South Leslie St, Stuttgart AR 72160 (870)-673-6753)

PHOTOGRAPHER - John C. Jones, 117 Cottonwood, Sherwood AR 72120-4011 (501-835-3729)

BOARD '97 - Tom Shircliff, 129 Jessica Dr, Sherwood AR 72120-3429 (501-834-4914)

BOARD '98 - John Hodkin, Jr., 506 Gordon St, N Little Rock AR 72117 (501-945-2128)

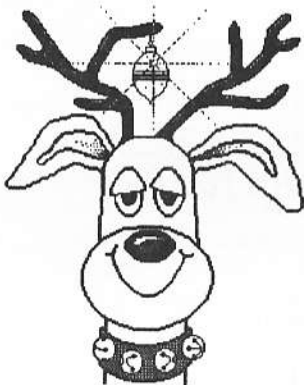
BOARD '99 - Stanley Wozencraft, 108 N Palm, Little Rock AR 72205 (501-664-3301)

BOARD '00 - Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington #31, North Little Rock AR 72114-6455 (501-945-7386)

BOARD '01 - Tom Shook, 1716 Alberta Dr. Little Rock AR 72227-3902 (501-225-8955)

## NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

The next meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will not be a meeting at all. It will be the annual Christmas Party. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on January 11, 1998.



**CHRISTMAS DINNER DECEMBER 6** - Remember the Christmas dinner December 6 at 6 p.m. at Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church in Little Rock. Call Walter Walker (501-225-0826) or Tom Shook (501-225-8955) if you decide to come at the last minute. Price is \$13. The meal will consist of baked chicken and glazed ham plus all the usual vegetables and drinks. Tom Shook will give the program, which will be movies from the tower on the throat of Los Angeles' Union Station back at the peak of passenger trains. This film was taken by a professional photographer.

**DUES TIME!** - You noticed on the outside of the envelop it said Dues Time! And so it is. If you haven't already paid your 1998 dues, please do so now by sending in the renewal sheet in the enclosed envelop or by sending in the dues notices from the NRHS, which you should receive shortly. Dues haven't changed - local dues are \$20 and NRHS national dues are \$17. Send in \$37 for both or \$20 for local. This will be the only notices which contain envelopes and a separate dues

sheet.

**CLUB NEWS** - Our new trip advertising person is David Hoge, He will do all the flyers and advertising should we try to run another UP or other excursion train next year. THANKS DAVID! - JOHN JONES announced that there will be a few BNSF locals run between Pine Bluff and Little Rock and that painting at UP's Jenks Shops has been halted on repaired locomotives due to the urgency of getting the repaired engines out on the road again.

L.T. WALKER has been sick lately and not able to attend the last couple of meetings. He has been an outpatient at Memorial Hospital in North Little Rock. We miss your story-telling and I personally miss your copies of UTU and Retiree News. Hope you get well soon. Oh, by the way, Mr. Walker will be celebrating his **58th** wedding anniversary on December 23. His birthday was November 9. Congratulations!

WILLIAM CHURCH is the same and still in the convalescent center in Lonoke. CRAIG GERARD'S MOTHER is in critical condition. R. W. McGUIRE was back in St. Vincent Hospital, room 3466, as of our November 9 meeting.

**OFFICERS/POSITIONS FOR 1998** - PRESIDENT: Leonard Thalmueller; VICE-PRESIDENT: John Hodkin, Jr.; TREASURER: Walter Walker; SECRETARY: Carole Sue Schafer. Other positions: EDITOR: Ken Ziegenbein; NRHS NATIONAL DIRECTOR: Jim Bennett; BOARD '98 (to take John Hodkin's place): Robin Thomas; BOARD '2002: Bill Bailey.

Official photographer: John Jones. Trip advertising: David Hoge.

**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS** - Here are the birthdays you sent in with your dues last year. If you didn't use the official application/renewal form, I have no way of knowing your birthday, so you won't be listed in that case unless you tell me personally.

THOMAS D OLMSTEAD (12/07); EDWIN M. HORTON (12/10); RONALD TOMME (12/17); THOMAS M. BINGER (12/19); DOYLE Q. TERRELL (12/19); CRAIG GERARD (12/20); KEVIN HINES PHILLIPS (12/24); BOB SANDAGE (12/29); LEONARD M. SHERMAN (12/29).

**"LIVE" TEHACHAPI PICTURES ON THE INTERNET** - A stationary camera has been placed on a curve along the famous Tehachapi Loop, which is activated whenever a train moves past. You can view these trains anytime on the Internet by going to my Web page at:

<http://pw1.netcom.com/weather/trains.html>

Go down to "Railroads" and click on the Tehachapi link. If you haven't checked out this site yet, you'll also find many weather and other train links (such as to UP, Amtrak, Reader Railroad, BNSF, etc). You'll also find the *Arkansas Railroader* posted on the site, minus photos (for storage reasons).

Also, I've recently added several area and nationwide newspapers to the site, where you can read today's news, including the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Hot Springs Sentinel-Record, Northwest Arkansas Times, Batesville Guard, Fort Smith Southwest Times, Benton County Daily. Other newspapers include the Memphis Commercial Appeal, Kansas City Star, Dallas Morning News, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Washington Post, Washington Times, Houston Chronicle, Fort Worth Star Telegram, AND (in case you were holding your breath) the daily News-Miner of Fairbanks, Alaska.

**NRHS NEWS** - It's not too early to be thinking about the national NRHS convention in Syracuse, New York July 6-July 12, 1998. There are several rail trips planned, including a trip to Steamtown. NRHS members may register early by sending \$15 to CNYNRHS, PO Box 229, Marcellus NY 13108. The 1999 convention will be in Sacramento, CA.

**CALENDARS FOR 1998** - For a great Christmas present, buy yourself and friends a 1998 Arkansas Railroad Club calendar. They contain 14 black & white photos of various railroads in Arkansas. As you know, the price is \$7 each, but if you buy 10 or more, the price is only \$6 each. Why not buy a bunch for your gift list?

To order one, send in the coupon located elsewhere in this newsletter.

**PASSENGER CARS ORDERED** from 1911 through 1960 are in a chart elsewhere in this issue. It was taken from *The Mixed Train* publication of the Cameral Club in Nebraska. It was furnished to them by Ray Lowry. Notice the troop cars ordered between 1943 and 1945. Does anybody know why there were no such cars ordered in 1917-1919 during World War I? Also, the 1700 cars ordered in 1945 - were they delivered before WWII ended? What happened to them?

**CONTINUOUS REQUEST FOR NEWS** - Thanks to all of you who have been sending news in to me. I need consistent sources of news from various parts of the state to keep the newsletter "newsy." Mainly, I need news from your LOCAL PAPER. Please keep sending the articles in. You can also send me any current railroad news stories or stories from the past on computer disk. I can use any format, including WordPerfect 5.1, 6.0, 6.1, 7.0 or 8.0 and Microsoft Word 97. I can convert any graphic file to any other format. However, you MUST use a 3.5" floppy - I no longer can use the 5 1/4" size.

### WANTED:FOR SALE OR TRADE

The following is for those who want to find | want to sell or trade such items with other | if deemed inappropriate. The Arkansas  
certain railroad-related items, information, or | railfans. We reserve the right to refuse listings | Railroad Club is not responsible for

misleading ads.

**FOR SALE** - The Arkansas Railroad Club's hardbound, 120-page book called *Railroad Stations and Trains through Arkansas and the Southwest* is ready for mailing. It was written by Clifton Hull with help from Tom Shook, among other club members. Kevin EuDaly of White River Productions did the graphic design and artwork. You can pick them up at the meeting or order from White River Productions, 24632 Anchor Ave, Bucklin MO 64631. Cost is \$29.95 plus \$4.50 postage and handling (total of \$34.45 if you're having it mailed). To use MasterCard or Visa, you must call White River

Productions at 816-695-4433.

**WANTED** - Photos of the L&N's two 70-GE's in any form of ownership. The L&N re-engineered them with Alco prime movers. Contact Russell Tedder, 1401 Cedar St, Crossett AR 71635-4009 or call 870-364-8490. (Russell has recently retired, by the way)

**WANTED** - Photographs of 1940's-1960's streamlined passenger trains anywhere in the country to be used in the *Arkansas Railroader*. Also, photographs of depots in use during the same time period. Your

photographs will be returned. Send to Ken Ziegenbein, 905 Valerie Drive, North Little Rock AR 72118 or e-mail at ken.z.rw@ix.netcom.com.

**WANTED** - Photographs of abandoned or used (rail or otherwise) depots in Arkansas taken 1990 to present. I want to get pictures of as many depots as possible that are still standing for a permanent record in the *Railroader*. Send to Ken Ziegenbein, 905 Valerie Drive, North Little Rock AR 72118 or e-mail at ken.z.rw@ix.netcom.com.

## RAILROAD ABANDONMENT PROPOSALS

These abandonment proposals have been printed in the Federal Register. They will go in effect unless one of the following occurs: 1) an offer of financial assistance is received; 2) a request for public use of the land is received (for instance, rails-to-trails); 3) petitions to reopen the case is filed. Railroads, before they can file these "notices of exemption under CFR 1152 Subpart F," must certify that 1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; 2) any overhead traffic can be routed over other lines; 3) no formal complaint filed by a user is pending and; 4) environmental reports, historic reports, transmittal letter, newspaper publication, and notice to governmental agencies have been met. For each new abandonment proposal, I'll take off the same number from the top of the list, so the latest will always be on the bottom.

- PENNSYLVANIA - PITTSBURG & SHAWMUT RAILROAD INC** - To abandon the Piney Branch from m.p. 0.0 near Coder to m.p. 23.80 near Piney, PA, a distance of 23.80 miles, including the stations of Sutton and Piney Mine. Final decision by January 14, 1998. (FR October 16, 1997)
- TEXAS - TRACK TECH, INC** - To abandon a line between Amarillo, m.p. 761.80 and Bushland, m.p. 775.70, a distance of 13.90 miles. Line was acquired from BNSF November 1996. Final decision by January 12, 1998. (FR October 16, 1997)
- NEBRASKA - TRACK TECH, INC.** - To abandon a line between Bladen, NE, m.p. 96.30 and Hildreth, NE, m.p. 119.34, a distance of 23.04 miles. Final decision by January 12, 1998. Line was acquired from BNSF November 1996. (FR October 16, 1997)
- ILLINOIS - TRACK TECH, INC.** - To abandon a line between Denrock, IL, m.p. 25.15 and Lyndon, IL, m.p. 28.35, a distance of 3.20 miles. Line was acquired from BNSF in November 1996. Decision by January 12, 1998. (FR October 16, 1997)
- MICHIGAN - LAKE STATE RAILWAY CO.** - To abandon its 8-mile line between m.p. 0.0 near Alpena and m.p. 8.0 near Hillman, Michigan. Effective November 16, 1997. (FR October 17, 1997)
- WISCONSIN - UNION PACIFIC** - To abandon the Hayward Industrial Lead from m.p. 83.32 near Trego to m.p. 96.0 near Hayward Junction, WI, a distance of 12.68 miles. Includes the towns of Trego, Earl and Spring Brook. Final decision by January 16, 1997. (FR October 20, 1997)
- KENTUCKY - CSX** - To abandon 2.14 miles of line known as the Lick Branch between m.p. MP-250.0 and m.p. MP-251.19 at Cato and its Crummies Branch between m.p. MQ-251.18 at Cato and m.p. MQ-253.04 at Crummies, Kentucky. Effective November 23, 1997. (FR October 24, 1997, STB Docket No. AB-55, Sub-No. 553x)
- NORTH DAKOTA - RED RIVER VALLEY & WESTERN RAILROAD CO** - To abandon 11.94 miles of line from m.p. 16.56, one mile west of state highway 30 near Maddock to m.p. 28.5 near Esmond, North Dakota. Effective November 28, 1997. (FR October 30, 1997, STB Docket No. AB-391, Sub-No. 3X)

## ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

### LONG TRAIN

*(Ashdown)* - On November 9, Randy Wheeler reported that the KCS was combining the north local with a northbound manifest in Ashdown. What was so unusual about that? Well, it seemed that the resulting train was 8,790 feet long and had 14 engines! The train was to be broken up again in DeQueen.

## GENERAL RAIL NEWS

### 110-YEAR-OLD ROUTE CLOSED



*(Herington, Kansas)* - Shortly before sunrise on October 2, 1997, the last revenue train on the Union Pacific's Hoisington Subdivision between Pueblo, Colorado and Herington, Kansas reached Herington. The eastbound 107-car UP coal train, pulled by SP engines No. 158 and 318, was destined for Kansas City. This line had been carrying about 4 coal trains a day since the shutdown of Tennessee Pass on August 23. UP will route these trains on other routes and considered this line redundant ever since acquiring Missouri Pacific 15 years ago. UP plans to abandon about 32½ miles of the track between Bridgeport and Hope with tracks west of Bridgeport to the Colorado line being leased to the Central Kansas Railway.

Closure of the segment between Hope and Bridgeport marks the end of a route that was nearly 110 years old. Most of its life the line hosted the Missouri Pacific. The original route between Pueblo and Herington was completed in 1887. This was the third line out of Herington to be closed. However, plans call for a south route from Herington to Wichita to Fort Worth to be reopened in coming months. *(The Herington Times, October 9, via Jim Johnson)*

### AMERICAN ORIENT EXPRESS

According to a message on the Internet, the American Orient Express excursion train is planning to run four one-way trips, Chicago-New Orleans via St. Louis and Memphis, in March 1998. It will run on former Frisco tracks between St. Louis and Memphis. Dates are 3/16-20 and 3/26-30 northbound and 3/21-25 and 3/31-4/4 southbound. Fares start at \$1299 per person for one 5-day trip. For more information, call 888-759-3944.

Quote from the PBS documentary "Divided Highways: The Interstates and the Transformation of American Life" - *"It has altered our sense of space, fueled our mega economy, knifed into the hearts of thriving city neighborhoods and left them desolate, and changed the lives of millions of people in the 50 years it's taken to build."*

### OVERWORKED RAILROADS

In the October 27 *U.S. News and World Report*, there was an article on freight railroad's comeback. "After decades of decline, railroads are back. Today, they transport 84 percent more freight (measured in ton-miles) than they did during the golden age of railroading at the height of World War II...The average cost of moving freight by rail dropped by 62 percent between 1986 and 1995 (due to deregulation). As a result, railroads have won an increasing market share of intercity freight traffic...This performance is all the more impressive given the massive subsidies enjoyed by rival modes of transportation. A study released in August by the U.S. Department of Transportation found, for example, that user fees paid by heavy trucks (over 80,000 pounds) represent only 50 to 60 percent of the financial costs imposed on government highway budgets...In 1995, the top four railroads accounted for

under 70 percent of the total ton-miles moved by rails. Next year (1998), after a series of mergers in completed, just four railroads will control well over 90 percent of all the freight moved by major rail carriers." *(Thanks to Dan Barr of Houston, Texas)*

### UP TRAFFIC

From what I've been reading lately, Union Pacific appears to be improving its delivery time and traffic system quite a bit. It's still promising to have things more or less back to normal by January 1. (News reports stating how bad things still are apparently are exaggerated and outdated). For instance, in mid October, the KCS had 1,800 of its cars on the UP system, about 1,000 more than normal. The United Transportation Union blamed the initial fiasco on UP not having enough locomotives and people to handle the traffic once they merged with SP. UP plans to hire 1,000 more people by the end of the year, however.

UP also is starting to guarantee time off for 3,500 employees in Texas. It would grant any train crew who works on 14 consecutive days the absolute right to voluntarily layoff for up to 48 hours. Other steps taken by UP: Managers will meet with every crew before it goes on duty; Managers will ride with crew members to check compliance. It has also been ordered by the STB to let the Tex-Mex Railroad in Texas take over some of its business. *(Kansas City Star, October 18 via Jim Johnson, Dallas Morning News via Dan Barr, and a UP release)*

*Grow where you're planted.*

### UP GIVES UP GM

*(Arlington, Texas)* - Union Pacific has given away its parts trains to the Arlington, Texas General Motors assembly plant. A

daily UP train originated in Chicago with at least 20 loaded rail cars of parts into the plant each day. This traffic has been turned over to the KCS. UP has served this plant since 1951 (then MoPac). *(Fort Worth Star Telegram, November 7 via John Smith)*

**\$2.5 BILLION JUDGEMENT OVERTURNED**

CSX announced on October 31 that the Louisiana Supreme Court vacated and set aside the \$2.5 judgement made by a jury relating to a 1987 tank car accident in New Orleans. The jury originally ordered CSX and other lines to pay the plaintiffs \$2.5 billion. The Supreme Court said no damages could be given until all liability cases have been determined, about 7,980 more cases. *(CSX Press Release October 31, 1997)*

**55<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SANTA SPECIAL**



*(Kingsport, Tennessee)* - Since 1943, a train called the Santa Special has made its annual railroad trek through Appalachia, spreading gifts, good will and holiday cheer the weekend before Thanksgiving to thousands of people who live in remote areas of Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee. Now in its 55<sup>th</sup> year, the Santa Special will distribute more than 15 tons of gifts on Saturday, November 22 along a 110-mile route that begins in Shelbiana, Kentucky and ends at Kingsport, Tennessee.

The Kingsport Area Chamber of Commerce and CSX co-sponsor the train. This year's Santa Special continues the tradition of sharing in Appalachia, operating through towns like Levisa Junction, Splashdam, St. Paul, Speers Ferry, Shelby, Marrowbone and Dunleary where Santa will distribute gifts to the young and young-at-heart who gather along the route. This year Santa's helpers will include Kentucky Governor Paul Patton.

The 110-mile line is part of the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio, formerly known as the

Clinchfield Railroad. (My comment...UP, are you listening? BNSF also does this. Nice publicity, don't you think?). *(CSX Press Release November 7)*

**AROUND THE WORLD BY RAIL**

Incredible Adventures, Inc., of Sarasota, Florida, known for arranging MiG-29 flights in Moscow, has added an Around the World By Train in 40 days tour. In one incredible journey, passengers encounter the Arctic Circle, Red Square, the Great Wall of China, the Australian Outback, the Canadian Rockies and more. Cities include Hong Kong, Beijing, Sydney, Amsterdam, Toronto, and Helsinki. Departures are available weekly. Tours include first class rail and air accommodations, hotels and many meals. The price? Only \$15,900. Contact Incredible Adventures at 800-644-7382 or their web site at <http://www.incredible-adventures.com>

**AMTRAK NEWS**

**AMTRAK GIVEN HOPE**

On the last day Congress was in session, November 13, Amtrak was given a budget for the next two years, including that \$2.3 billion tax rebate. To get the bill passed, a compromise had to be passed, changing the way the Amtrak Board of Directors were appointed and also changing some of the labor rules, possibly allowing some outside contractors to do things. Just a week or so before, the threatened strike by the BWME was averted. Let's hope Amtrak uses some of this money to get the *Texas Eagle* daily. Below is a table I composed comparing Amtrak and individual airline riderships for May, 1997. I'll do the same for the yearly totals once the airline data is in.

**AMTRAK/AIRLINE RIDERSHIP - MAY 1997**

This is a comparison of Amtrak ridership and some individual airline boardings for May 1997. The Amtrak ridership for April/May/June 1997 was 5.19 million - I could not obtain the exact May figures for Amtrak so I divided the 5.19 million by 3 to get the average monthly ridership of 1.73 million, which is what I used for May. If anyone can get the exact May figure for Amtrak, I'd appreciate it. However, I don't think it would vary much from the 1.73 million.

I could not obtain all the airlines, some are small, some large, including American and Delta. I was a little surprised that Amtrak carried 40 percent as many passengers as Southwest and 25 percent as many as American and United and 20 percent as many as the number one airline Delta.

AIRLINE.....AMTRAK.....Amtrak's percentage of the airline

Air Wisconsin - 151,228.....1,730,000.....1,144 percent

**ARKANSAS RAILROADER**

ValuJet - 247,787.....	1,730,000.....	698 percent
Atlantic Southeast - 336,913.....	1,730,000.....	513 percent
Frontier Airlines - 549,000.....	1,730,000.....	315 percent
Alaska Air - 1,010,400.....	1,730,000.....	171 percent
America West - 1,532,650.....	1,730,000.....	113 percent
Southwest Airlines - 4,361,121.....	1,730,000.....	40 percent
American Airlines - 6,862,301.....	1,730,000.....	25 percent
United Airlines - 6,998,000.....	1,730,000.....	25 percent
Delta Airlines - 8,826,824.....	1,730,000.....	20 percent

Further information on the airlines - the load factors were as follows (May 1997):

Delta (73.16 percent); United (71.2 percent); Frontier (60.8 percent); Atlantic Southeast (52.1 percent); America West (68.9 percent); Air Wisconsin (65.2 percent); ValuJet (52.8 percent); Alaska Air (66.7 percent); American Airlines (69.0 percent); Southwest Airlines (64.3 percent).

According to the Department of Transportation, the 10 largest U.S. airlines flew on time 79.8 percent in April, 1997, down from 80.2 percent on time in April 1996.

The airline reports came directly from the airlines in press releases. Amtrak's third quarter report came in a press release from Amtrak. ~~Amtrak~~

## ANOTHER REASON FOR TRAINS

Early afternoon here in south Florida. Just west of me the northbound Silver Meteor and Star have already departed on their journey to Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan. The southbound Silver Palm is in its Hialeah home being prepared for its next run north. The southbound Silver Star and Meteor are also working their way home.

Much more important than that.. and often lost in the often scholarly missives are the real stories. Students and servicemen and women are traveling. A few are going home, as I did thirty years ago, from a place far away. People travel in sadness and joy, to reunions, for holidays and final farewells. Often hopeful, fearfully sad at times, still the steel rails take them home.

Amtrak has been around for a little more than a generation now, sometimes providing a journey that will be remembered for longer than a generation. There's a good chance tonight that a child on the Empire Builder will see the Aurora, the shimmering "northern lights" for the first time. Other journey's.. other people.

Have you ever noticed anyone writing a letter aboard an American train? If you haven't, you haven't heard the song of steel on steel long enough. Pen to paper in the ViewLiner, or the Superliner. The one in the corner of the club car... next to the girl with her nose in a book..

From city to town... generations have ridden on the trains.

Recent articles and books act as if Amtrak is still waiting for their first passenger to board. The Wall Street Journal rants about so many billions spent. Nothing is said of the passengers, the children, the summer trip to the lake, or the solitude or comfort that such a journey can provide.

More than a generation of steel wheel rolling on a steel rail. I think they are probably still a larger operation than TWA. If no one wanted the trains anymore... why are the politicians so afraid to let it go?

The cold hard fact is; The American people want their trains. Its driven into the American minds from the Civil war through the "Belle Epoch" of rail earlier in our now fading century. America will have its trains. The bigger question is; Who will run them on time?

Amtrak yesterday, Amtrak today, and Amtrak tomorrow.

Down here, someone's spreading sheets on a Viewliner bed, as a dining car is being stocked for the next northbound run.



People wait at the station, make reservations, and examine unfamiliar timetables. Happy people, sad people. They are still here.. waiting for the train.

*Tim Lynch - Dania Fl*

## EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

Nothing to report.

# ROCK ISLAND CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

by: Tom Scott, appearing in the December 26, 1994 Conway Log Cabin Democrat

**M**y most memorable Christmas dates back to a short time I spent working as a brakeman on the Rock Island Railroad in the 1960s.

Railroad men are almost universally a big-hearted group. There always seemed to be some sort of charity drive under way. Whether it was for a fellow worker who had lost his home to fire, or the hospital bills of a waitress at a diner near some train station, their pockets were always open.

On occasion, I would catch a fast, through-freight that ran from Little Rock to Booneville, Arkansas. At one of the nameless crossings between the two cities, a group of raggedly dressed children would always run to meet the train as it passed.

The railroad men who traveled the route regularly had sort of adopted the kids and would throw nickels, dimes and loose change to the children as the train rumbled past.

Possessing probably less seniority than anyone in the whole company, I naturally had to work Christmas Eve and Christmas Day that year. It was to be my first time to miss being home for Christmas, but I took the assignment like a man (I was, after all, 20 years old).

But as I left Little Rock that evening, riding in the cab of the second locomotive, the city was ablaze with Christmas decorations. The brightly lit Capitol dome could be seen through the evening's haze, and the streets were full of commuters on their way home for the celebration.

Just as I was beginning to feel a bit sorry for myself, the conductor came into the cab to tell me of our plan to make a special stop that night that was not included on our regular schedule.

This evening as we reached the crossing where the children usually met the train, the engineer hit the brakes and right there on the main line of the Rock Island, we stopped a 120-car freight train, a violation of just about every rule in the book.

The engineer, fireman, and I walked the short way to the unpainted frame house on the hill and left three big boxes of food, clothing and toys collected by the crew.

A thin woman, dressed only in a robe and bedroom slippers, came to the door, telling us that the children were attending a church service nearby.

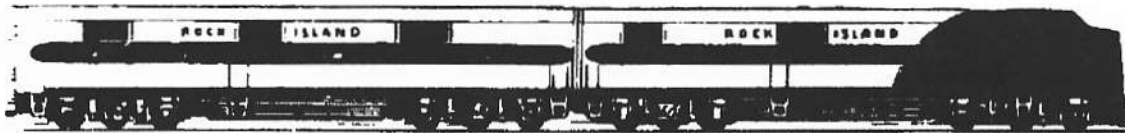
She thanked us, and the men asked about her health (she had once spent some time in the tuberculosis sanitarium at Booneville) and if she had heard from her husband working in Texas? (Yes, he had died in a construction accident).

We left the woman standing on the porch and returned to the idling diesel engines, recalled the two other

brakemen who were acting as flagmen in the front and rear of the train. Then began the slow process of starting the train on its way again.

As we finally gained some speed and continued on our way, I began to feel better about the night ahead and had a new respect for the unusually groff "hog heads" (engineers) and the profane "knuckle-busters" (brakemen). I also thought of another group of gift-bearing night visitors who made a difficult, although more special pilgrimage long ago.

Weeds now grow in the right-of-way of the defunct Rock Island and those Wise Men of the rails have either retired or found other jobs, but I will never forget the woman's voice as we left for the train: "Thank ye'...It's been a tougher year than usual, but at least the kids will still have their Christmas. God bless 'ye boys!"



**Amtrak Ridership By Route**

Train Name	Q4 FY 1996	Q4 FY 1997	Pct Up(Dn)	FY 1996*	FY1997*	Pct Up(Dn)
<b>Intercity SBU</b>						
Auto Train	64,372	71,091	10.4	232,507	241,307	3.8
California Zephyr(A)	64,095	113,171	76.6	224,168	292,152	30.3
Capitol Limited	55,088	55,938	1.5	188,519	179,180	(5)
Cardinal	24,321	25,026	2.9	80,115	80,044	(.1)
Carolinian	60,261	59,685	(.9)	232,452	231,372	(.5)
Chicago-Pontiac	104,794	108,399	3.4	375,129	418,491	11.6
Chicago-St.Louis(B)	68,539	70,447	2.8	254,581	255,572	.4
City of New Orleans	49,258	51,115	3.8	161,115	174,073	8.0
Crescent(C)	73,657	69,421	(5.7)	219,977	247,307	12.4
Desert Wind (D)	45,802	n/a	n/a	142,980	80,411	(56)
Empire Builder (E)	95,545	124,149	30	310,292	346,535	11.7
Gulf Coast Ltd. (F)	12,767	n/a	n/a	12,791	21,326	66.7
Hiawatha Service	86,117	93,056	8	320,188	361,212	12.8

Illini	20,444	23,328	14.1	84,915	88,801	4.6
Illinois Zephyr	19,907	21,310	7	76,581	82,312	7.5
Lake Shore Limited	103,113	101,111	(2)	352,172	355,069	.8
Kansas City-St.Louis	41,128	42,708	3.9	131,354	156,300	19.0
Pennsylvanian	51,054	36,752	(28)	201,576	160,003	(20.6)
Pere Marquette	16,621	16,720	.5	53,551	65,172	21.7
Piedmont	9,971	14,534	45.7	29,078	43,300	48.9
Pioneer (D)	30,819	n/a	n/a	94,645	51,138	(54)
Silver Meteor (G)	88,584	62,530	(29.4)	346,098	254,590	(26.4)
Silver Palm (G)	n/a	57,149	100		187,704	100.0
Silver Star (G)	n/a	65,997	(33)	352,622	269,619	(23.5)
Southwest Chief	74,340	84,415	13.5	235,852	257,055	9.0
Sunset Limited	39,189	38,521	(1.7)	144,324	124,493	(13.7)
Texas Eagle	28,095	23,964	(14.7)	97,905	95,251	(2.7)
Three Rivers	72,005	37,878	(47.3)	249,555	140,382	(43.7)
Special Trains	2,132	4,928	31.1	34,146	38,351	12.3
<b>Intercity Totals</b>	<b>1,442,292</b>	<b>1,473,343</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>5,348,950</b>	<b>5,422,026</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>Northeast Corridor SBU</b>						
Metroliners	476,664	480,791	.8	2,011,197	2,081,326	3.5
NortheastDirect (inc. Vermonter, Special Trains)	1,503,301	1,486,582	(1.1)	5,774,110	5,674,938	(1.7)
Empire Service (inc. Adirondack and Ethan Allen)	295,080	332,668	12.7	1,073,863	1,185,341	10.4
Clockers/Keystone	471,649	580,139	23.0	2,142,232	2,150,355	.3
<b>Northeast Corridor Totals</b>	<b>2,746,694</b>	<b>2,880,180</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11,001,402</b>	<b>11,091,960</b>	<b>.8</b>

<b>Amtrak West SBU</b>						
Coast Starlight	131,831	170,165	29	401,795	497,091	23.7
Pacific Northwest Corridor (K)						
San Diegans	501,474	518,707	3.4	1,565,676	1,634,874	4.4
San Joaquins	189,249	254,509	34.5	567,390	687,725	21.2
Capitols	151,566	146,294	(3.4)	454,963	489,508	7.6
Special Trains	3,430	1,700	(50.4)	30,030	31,868	6.1
<b>Amtrak West Totals</b>	<b>1,073,023</b>	<b>1,197,445</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>3,323,573</b>	<b>3,676,464</b>	<b>10.6</b>
<b>Amtrak nationwide</b>						
<b>System Totals</b>	<b>5,262,009</b>	<b>5,450,968</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>19,673,925</b>	<b>20,190,450</b>	<b>2.6</b>





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# OBSERVATION PLATFORM

Below is display of passenger train cars ordered as furnished by Ray Lowry. It tells a story of war, depression and boom times. The chart ends with the 1960 orders but there were still some sizeable amounts of RPO's and mail storage cars ordered as late as 1963.

Ray doesn't recall the source of the chart for our credit but we will accept it for that matter. Thanks Ray.

## CLASSIFICATION OF PASSENGER TRAIN CARS ORDERED FOR DOMESTIC USE (Carbuilder and Railroad Shops)

Year	Coach	Coach Comb.	Bagg. and Exp.	Exp. Refr. and Milk	Sleeping and Comb.	Parlor, Club, etc.	Dining	Postal and Comb.	Other	Interurban and M. U.	Self Prop.	Troop Hospital	Troop Sleeper	Troop Kitchen	TOTAL
1911	897	197	316	60	491	26	53	418	8						2,466
1912	1,191	253	375	128	423	59	119	337	3						2,888
1913	1,649	169	382	35	726	33	110	417	14						3,535
1914	570	103	183	124	281	27	45	154	7						1,494
1915	651	113	259	155	471	55	39	133	2						1,878
1916	759	123	498	25	299	37	50	191	24						2,006
1917	265	55	246	15	389	42	15	77	14						1,118
1918	6														6
1919	66		62		150		9	3							290
1920	496	28	354	40	468	1	38	37	2	127					1,591
1921	77	11	3	50	100		16	8		22					287
1922	1,133	132	318	256	254	42	77	145	9	100	18				2,484
1923	487	49	231	673	374	88	86	124	15	104	1				2,232
1924	644	142	372	372	629	75	131	114	9	264	23				2,775
1925	663	115	554	90	427	71	109	129	52		64				2,274
1926	653	115	359	85	446	93	135	77	14	15	68				2,060
1927	782	171	271	45	60	80	59	182	16	11	16				1,693
1928	436	80	417	930	226	26	64	95	17	50	52				2,393
1929	390	98	351	505	490	79	103	184	15	160	8				2,383
1930	232	56	84	50	68	48	19	43	1	85	14				700
1931	1	10	14		1			9	1		1				37
1932	2	1	4	2	1			4		30					44
1933		2			3	6		1		6	1				19
1934	317	38	23		8	2	6	20	10		5				429
1935	14	16	7	55	18	6	10	7							133
1936	294	36	35		5	26	44	10	1						451
1937	136	23	58	110	171	18	37	8	6						567
1938	85	28	42		86	10	15	10			2				278
1939	97	20	9		125	18	38	12							321
1940	220	26	8		53	6	48	13	2						379
1941	164	13	69		197	16	36	46							549
1942		1	2												34
1943	14	2	3					12							34
1944	461	36	20		26	16	4	12							1,685
1945	296	17	134	25	510	84	53	12							725
1946	311	40	22		587	53	143	54	67	8					2,993
1947	132		22		72	36	19	46	28	8					1,238
1948	143		51		156	20	25	29	4						316
1949	46		6		30	6	14	10	1	100					506
1950	21		38		1			6	1						109
1951	50	14	10		66	26	19	10							102
1952	107		80		22	8	7	3							261
1953	59		25		62	8		17		120	7				520
1954	88	1	1	300	38	10	6		4	100	70				164
1955	173	2	85	700	39	13	8		2	40	62				610
1956	37	2	102	35	2	1	1	41	2		16				1,078
1957	35		25			1	6		1	6	51				269
1958	20						10		22						78
1959	36		145		12			6	3		5				63
1960	176		85												193
															264



**TOP** - A few club members got off this special train running on Peter Smykla, Jr's Paperton Junction Southern Railway (near Pine Bluff) to photograph a runby. The date was Saturday, September 6, 1997.

**BOTTOM** - The excursion train as it went past. Locomotive 303 is an ALCO RS-3, c/n 81900, August 1956, the last RS-3 built and the last ALCO locomotive built with a model 244 prime mover. It was formally Litchfield & Madison 303; C&NW 1554; Michigan Northern 1554. Nose was chopped for MN, but conversion was never completed by changing controls, so the long hood is to the front. It was acquired by Peter Smykla in 1984 from Michigan Northern. The caboose, SSW 2325, was built in Pine Bluff in July 1920 at a cost of \$3,488.75 and spent most of its life on the Paragould & Southeastern running on the mixed train between Paragould and Blytheville. It was once assigned to Bill Church's dad. *(Both photos by Ken Ziegenbein)*



**TOP** - The Russellville Missouri Pacific depot taken in July, 1997. It sits along the main line of the Union Pacific between Little Rock and Van Buren, where many coal trains pass each week. Efforts are underway to preserve this station. (*Andy Anders photo sent in by Mary Cohoon*).

**BOTTOM** - Missouri Pacific E-8 No. 40 on the head end of Train No. 41, arriving in Houston, Texas from Palestine on October 15, 1966. Consist was 6 head-end revenue cars, 2 coaches and a 14-4 sleeper. (*Robert Oswald photo*)