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Aug 1998

vol. 11 no. 12  
Volume 12, No 1  
**The Scrambler**

August 1998

The views expressed in the *Scrambler* are those of the Editor and contributors. They do not represent the official view of the Arkansas-Boston Mountains Chapter, its officers, directors or members or the National Railway Historical Society unless otherwise stated.

MINUTES OF MEETING  
JULY 16, 1998

The "Chapter" met for the regular monthly meeting at the Shiloh Museum's "Old General Store". The meeting was called to order by President George Alison at 7:00 PM. There were 20 members and two guests present.

The minutes of the last month's meeting as published in the "Scrambler" were approved as published.

In the report from officers, National Director / Membership Chairman Bob Oswald reported the Board of Directors meeting in Syracuse, NY. The chapter accepted the report. Bob also reported on a new IRS ruling concerning "Travel and Tour Activities in tax exempt organizations"

Vice-President Bill Merrifield reported on future programs.

Treasurer Bill Ussery gave the treasurer's report and a copy of the report is on file with the secretary's records.

Scrambler editor, Tom Duggan, reported on some problems with this month's scrambler.

There was no special committee reports or old business to discuss.

New business, Tom Duggan reported on the new office for the Orphan Train Heritage Society in the old Jones Truck Lines Shop Building.

After the close of the business meeting, Tom Duggan gave an interesting and informative program on the Ozark and Cherokee Central Rail Road, later known as the Muskogee Branch of the Central Division of the Frisco.

Ron Allen  
Secretary.

University of Arkansas  
Libraries, Fayetteville  
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The Scrambler

## President's Observations

We had a good crowd for our July meeting including an old friend of Bill Ussery's who was visiting.

Bob gave a good report on the National Convention that recently was held in Syracuse, New York.

Also, Bob mentioned the sign-up for the A&M excursion that our Chapter members will be taking in November. If you have not signed up yet, but wish to take the trip, please contact Bob ASAP.

Bill Merrifield says that the programs are looking good for the rest of the year, with the exception of October, but it may go any minute so, if you have a program, you'll have to move quick to start off the new year with the first program of '99.

Ron Allen will be staying at Leavenworth for a while; hope to see him back soon.

I appreciate Ernestine and Bill bringing the refreshments for the July meeting; sure hope Uni and I can do as well for the August meeting. By the way, you are welcomed to volunteer for refreshments at upcoming meetings.

Tom presented a great view of a line that was very prominent once upon a time in our area, but like so many; it never came into its own. Between slides and discussions, I believe we all came away a little more knowledgeable about the early railroading in our area, as well as what happened at some of the different turns.

You won't want to miss Bob Oswald's "Black Diamonds and Shining Rails," if nothing else, just to see what the title means

*Your President,  
George Alison*

## Upcoming Programs

### Thursday, August 20

Bob Oswald presents "Black Diamonds and Shining Rails"

### Thursday, September 17

Bob Stark shares his May 1998 Amtrak trip from Kansas City to the West Coast and return

### Thursday, October 15

Bob Hofer presents a program on the July 1998 Annual NRHS Convention in Syracuse, New York.

### Friday -Sunday, November 6-8

NRHS Directors Meeting and Joint Meeting with Kansas City Chapter in Kansas City.

### Saturday, November 14

Chapter member trip on A & M combine 102. See last page of July *Scrambler* for details for this limited capacity event.

### Thursday, Dec 10 (6:30 P.M.)

Dutch treat Christmas Dinner at Fred's Hickory House, Bentonville

Meetings are held at the Shiloh Museums's General Store at 118 West Johnson in downtown Springdale. Meetings start promptly at 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

**A & M to Operate Rare Northbound Excursion Train on October 18.**

On Sunday, October 18th the A & M will operate a rare mileage excursion train between Springdale and the new A & M yard at Monett, Missouri. The trip leaves at 8:00 A.M. and is scheduled to return at 4:30 P.M. The 120.2 mile roundtrip includes lunch provided by the Spring Street Grill, a quality restaurant. Tickets are \$50 plus tax. Call 1-800-687-8600 or 501-751-8600 to obtain tickets.

The last A & M passenger train to operate north of Springdale was the March 29, 1998 charter that ran the day after the Springdale-Fort Smith excursion. The same consist was used and the charter party, said

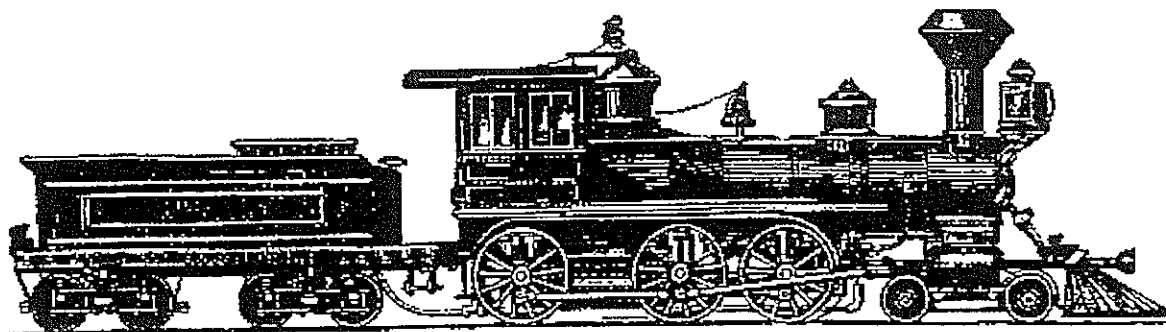
to be Northeast railfans, offered tickets at \$75 per person.

In the very earliest days of passenger service on A & M rails entrepreneur Sean Reed operated a Rogers to Exeter, Missouri dinner train for two summers. The engine crew and equipment engine crew came from the A & M. The Chief Conductor was Chapter member Ray Toler, assisted by Chapter member Bob Oswald (Conductor) and Chapter car attendants Bill Ussery, Juanita Toler and Martin Post. The service ended when a dispute arose between Sean Reed and the A & M.

Ray Toler recalls the principal sightseeing attraction of the ride as the high embankment near Gateway,

AR that provided a four mile long view of the Devil's Eye Brow valley. One could also get a glimpse of scenic Beaver Lake under the right conditions.

The scenery through which the special will travel is nothing special in the editor's opinion. It is mainly rolling country with nice vistas of neat farms and barns. However it will pass through areas with rail history links. Seligman, Missouri, named for a New York investment banker who helped to finance the Frisco's 1880 expansion into Northwest Arkansas, was a junction point with the Missouri & North Arkansas and its successor entities. Exeter was the Frisco connection for the Cassville & Exeter that operated until 1956.



### Security Specialist Joins A & M Team

In recent years the A & M has endured vandalism, labor unrest and other problems. In one case the FBI was called in to investigate a freight train wreck attempt in Missouri caused by a pile of debris.

Ron Sparks, Director of Investigation, joined the railroad about six months ago. His background includes service as an undercover agent for federal agencies. Larry Bouchet, President, hired his old friend to reduce theft of the railroad's property, especially ties, trespassing and encroachment, on railroad property by dumping trash. Sparks is authorized to make arrests in Arkansas but not in Missouri. Many Arkansas towns along the railroad have said they will prosecute all offenders apprehended by Sparks. Unlike most policemen, Sparks will have the ability to watch a crossing or area of concern for a long time thus increasing the chances of an arrest. Bouchet also stated that Sparks will be available to escort fired employees from the property. He will deal with threats made against the railroad's officers and employees, a problem in the last few years possibly related to unionization efforts.

### Van Buren Chamber of Commerce Working to Save Tourist Train Service.

Marjorie Armstrong, President of the Van Buren (Arkansas) Chamber of Commerce has taken the leading role in trying to preserve the A & M passenger train service scheduled to end on November 14, 1998.

In 1997 Van Buren had 15,300 passengers (more than Springdale) of which an estimated 15-20% were walk-ons that purchased tickets at the depot serving as both the Chamber of Commerce and the A & M waiting room. Four years ago the total was more than 20,000. The downtown area of Van Buren is very much a tourist center. Train passengers are an important component of downtown restaurant and antique shop trade. Van Buren has touted the train in its advertising and promotion efforts.

Armstrong been looking for a concessionaire to handle operate all aspects of the train except for engine, cars, and crew. She believes that the successful operator will be someone with hospitality business experience with the reservations, ticketing and marketing already in place. She has identified one such party in the Van Buren area. No proposals have

yet been made. Armstrong has analyzed the numbers and believes the right operator could net in excess of \$100,000 per year. She has also arranged to run ads in two Arkansas tourism industry publications with the objective of getting more business people to investigate the possibility of operating the A & M service as a concessionaire.

She mentioned that the requirement of putting up \$30,000 earnest money (a requirement mentioned by former A & M President Tony Hannold) could be handled via a security bond.

Armstrong sounded very committed to saving the tourist train and hopes that something can be structured by October 1998 given the long lead time needed to place ads for the 1999 tourist season. The train is very sensitive to advertising. Traffic dropped off sharply in August 1997 when the railroad suddenly stopped all advertising for the train.

She has decided to run Van Buren ads for the 1999 season that highlight the passenger train as a reason to visit Van Buren. Armstrong seems to be willing to put money behind her conviction the train is worth saving.

### Arkansas & Missouri Railroad Company

Prior to contacting Armstrong your Editor spoke with Perry Webb, President of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce. Webb's last contact on the train was with Tony Hannold prior to his retirement in late May. He discussed four ideas including the concessionaire one and the use of a management company to operate the service. He also looked into the possibility of using Arkansas development fund money to assist a possible new operator. From Webb's comments the matter is dead on the Springdale end as nothing has happened.

Larry Bouchet, A & M CEO, mentioned the Hannold concessionaire concept. He thought there had been some discussion about "federal museum funds". He thought that Van Buren was trying to do something but to date no one has approached the railroad with any proposal. He stated several times that any tourist train operation "must meet the first-class standards of Mr. Hannold". He reiterated that the railroad was a "profit activity" that had to pay taxes. Bouchet concluded by saying that some employees have taken to calling him Mr. Hannold due apparently to his insistence on high standards.

After completing the above telephone interviews with Armstrong, Webb and Bouchet, your Editor was left with the feeling that Majorie Armstrong of the Van Buren Chamber of Commerce represents the best chance for saving the tourist train service. However there is lot of ground to be covered and a number of issues (liability insurance and the new FRA passenger safety regulations come to mind) that are important. There is relatively little time remaining to address these and other issues before the season ends. In my own banking experience deals always seemed to take longer than estimated even when a basic meeting of minds had taken place. Oftentimes the devil is in the details and I am sure there are a myriad of details to be resolved before a definitive agreement can be worked out.

### Letter to the *Morning News* Editor

The *Morning News of Northwest Arkansas* of July 19, 1998 carried a nice letter from a person in Virginia requesting the A & M to re-consider its decision to terminate passenger service.

This Editor thinks it will take more than letters to get the train extended.

### Not Elsewhere Classified

The **Younger Gang** will meet at the Clarion Inn in Fayetteville from October 8-12. The Younger gang was an outlaw group that inter alia robbed a train at Fort Smith, AR. Springdale historian Phillip Steele can be contacted for details at 501-756-2230.

**Tired Iron of the Ozarks** will sponsor its 7<sup>th</sup> annual antique tractor show from September 11-13, 1998 at the Rose of Sharon Estates located one mile west of Gentry, AR on State Highway 12. In addition to the equipment displays, static and operational, country and gospel music will be provided. Chapter Director Ray Toler is very active in this activity. Please call Ray at 501-751-7810 to obtain more details.

The **FRISCO Museum** is selling copies of the Frisco equipment listed in the Official Railway Equipment Register. Dates available range from June 1897 to January 1981. Registers from 1897 to 1931 include the Frisco's passenger equipment. Each Register copy is \$3.50 plus 15% for shipping. Please call the museum at 417-866-3987 for more detailed information. The FRISCO Museum has decided to stop attending train shows.

was time to improvise. One Cat hooked its boom to the opposite top side of the tender and gave a gentle tug, canting the tender's body over a few inches and letting us clear the tree by a wide margin (at least half an inch). Had 2903 been a wood-burner, we could have had the world's first self-loading tender!

Once past the final tree, 2903 was still at a small angle to the street. A few more zigzags almost got it straight but brought us up against the curb and a light pole and a stoplight. You may have seen the photo from this location in the New York Times—2903 looks as if it is waiting for a high green before rolling down Hyde Park. Even better were the photos of a Chicago cop with a foot up on the tender step writing a phony parking ticket. She might have done it for real if we hadn't explained that then she'd be responsible for towing 2903 to the impound lot.

By this point much of the neighborhood was out to watch. The locals were very friendly and seemed genuinely happy to learn that we were preserving the locomotive. Spectators were four and five deep along the sidewalk and curb, shooting enough film to guarantee Kodak's annual profits; some even brought picnic lunches and spent the day. One enterprising volunteer passed the hat, raising sev-

eral hundred dollars for the project. Offers to purchase crew members' snazzy "Project 2903" hats were frequent, but we had worked too hard to give them up. In retrospect, we should have set up a table to sell shirts and hats, but no one ever imagined that we could receive such an enthusiastic welcome.

By 6:00 pm Saturday we had completed the first turn and had separated the tender again. However, our 6:00 am Sunday estimate for clearing the street was looking completely unrealistic (fortunately, we didn't yet know by how much). As 2903 rolled up to Cornell, the last street before the Illinois Central's viaduct, things were getting tense.

The last 90-degree turn was not fun. It wasn't even close to fun. Since the start of planning for this move, we'd had hours of discussions (and more than a few nightmares) about this most difficult obstacle of the entire project. For those who haven't seen the route in person, picture the intersection of Hyde Park and Cornell: high-rise buildings on northeast and southwest corners, apartments with trees on the southeast, and a gas station—complete with overhead canopy and underground gas tanks—on the northwest. One hundred feet west, the Illinois Central's mainline crosses over Hyde Park on a high embankment. Between the gas station



Photo by Curtis Cox

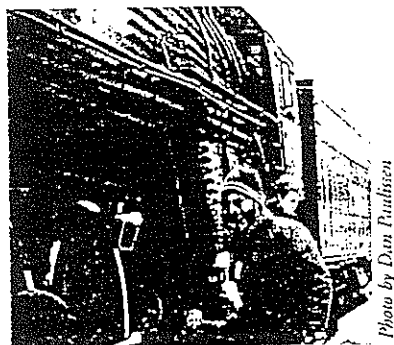


Photo by Dan Tuulisen

**Top:** Gretchen Cox helps prep the 2903. **Bottom:** Kevin McCabe and Project Mechanical Officer Bill Fogelis check progress of preparations before moving 2903.

and the embankment are the remnants of an old team track roadbed, running northward and uphill parallel to the embankment. Beyond the gas station, the old roadbed widens out from an alley into a newly-paved parking lot and then passes through a construction site before finally reaching track level. Our task was to turn the locomotive parallel to the embankment and head up the roadway through the parking lot without damaging anything major or expensive. Now consider that the locomotive is longer than the width of the street even without the tender and that it is almost as wide as the alley width between the gas station and embankment, and

## The Moving of No. 2903 Part II

(In July 1998 the new 1,500 space underground garage that caused the 2903 to <sup>move</sup> was opened. In the middle of the garage is the *Pioneer Zephyr*-Editor)

THURSDAY, MARCH 23: The cold and rain returned, but no major obstacles arose along the day's path. The 53rd Street exit off the Drive was closed only briefly while 2903 quickly rolled across in daylight hours.

Despite the weather, our crowd continued to grow. Many spectators were familiar by this point, having followed along from the first or second day. We made many new friends and gained a few new members as well. We were only now realizing the scope of the public relations bonanza resulting from this move.

By the end of the day, the locomotive was just short of the large model sailboat pond at 52nd Street. Tomorrow would be another quick dash with hopes of reaching Hyde Park Boulevard (51st Street) by midday. But it was not to be.

FRIDAY, MARCH 24: By the end of the day most of the crew hated turns and curves with a new passion. What should have been an easy day was anything but simple.

The model sailboat pond was directly in our path with Lake Shore Drive to the east and several lines of trees to the

**Your Scrambler is named after a Northwest Arkansas Frisco local freight that operated in the 1960s and 1970s**

west. Our path around the pond wasn't going to be easy. By this point we knew all too well that 2903 was not built for curves. To get the minimum possible radius, we separated 2903 from its tender for the first time since leaving MSI. While moving them separately helped with the curves, it also doubled the work.

The zigs and zags seemed endless with very slow progress. By the end of a long day 2903 was northwest of the pond but not quite to Hyde Park. The whole crew knew that the crunch time had come with the hardest jobs of the project next.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MARCH 25 AND 26: These two days melded together into one extremely l-o-o-o-o-ong, round-the-clock stretch, punctuated by moments of extreme frustration and exhaustion and the only physical injury of the move. Your less-than-graceful reporter tripped over a block of wood Saturday morning, badly spraining a foot and ankle, and spent the next week hobbling around on a makeshift tree limb crutch and a cane.

With the loco and tender again joined by the drawbars, we rolled 2903 northwest toward Hyde Park Boulevard and the second of our 90-degree turns. The goal was to make a smooth, sweeping curve onto the north side of the street. After setting up, one good long pull...didn't do it. It was zigzag time again, back and forth to get the angle just right. Meanwhile, we moved several park benches and grumbled about why some fool had planted trees along the sidewalk 60 or 70 years ago just to screw up our project.

After several tries we managed to sneak the boiler and cab past the last of the obstructing trees—only to hang up on a large branch that caught the top of the tender. There wasn't enough room for another zigzag nor room in our budget to pay for the tree if we cut it down, so it

track and bolted it back together temporarily. The last few pulls brought us closer and finally alongside our poor man's switch-to-be. By midday everything was set for the next day's climb back onto real rails.

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, MARCH 30 AND 31: IC's track crew was ready early Thursday as we were. A final north-bound pull took 2903 a few panel lengths past the cut. We shoved the back end of the panels toward the IC main, which in turn was unbolted and pulled east. After cutting and connecting a short splicer panel, 2903 was finally ready to move back onto rails connected to the rest of the world.

Corman's Cats pulled 2903 backward onto the IC. At 9:23 am 2903's 32 wheels reached live rail for the first time in a third of a century. Several passing Metra and South Shore commuter runs slowed to look at the newest addition to the IC's rails and to give a quick whistle (well, air horn) salute.

Shortly before noon two IC switchers rolled up from the south and coupled on. After an air test this odd-looking triple-header rolled south to Pullman Junction, the first stop on the way home. All was well...until the air brakes misbehaved. By the time we handed off 2903 to the Belt and moved to Clearing Yard,

the brakes had threatened to become a major problem; a seven-pound reduction did nothing, but 20 pounds dumped it into emergency. After some disassembly and line cleaning by Bill Fogelis, though, the system again began operating properly; most likely, a fleck of dirt had temporarily clogged a valve orifice.

Layovers at Pullman Junction, Clearing, and Proviso stretched throughout the day and into the night. Finally, 2903 rolled out C&NW's West Line main early Friday morning. It was a quick, nonstop trip directly to West Chicago and then up the Belvidere Sub through Elgin to Union. Shortly before noon on Friday, Santa Fe 2903 reached IRM's interchange and rolled onto our rails, where our new Dri Line switch picked her up and moved her to the station. Santa Fe 2903 thus became the largest—and last—piece of motive power to be moved to IRM by the Chicago & North Western. It as a fitting end to a relationship that has immensely benefited IRM over the years.

After 33 years Santa Fe 2903 had hit the high iron once again. The average speed of Extra 2903 West certainly was slower than Super Chief standards, but this run was no less important. IRM's Steam Team had done the impossible

with the longest and most difficult panel track job anywhere in the country in the past three decades.

But will this be the final mainline run for this magnificent locomotive? Will 2903 roll again under steam next time? We don't have an answer yet, but stay tuned—the best may be yet to come.

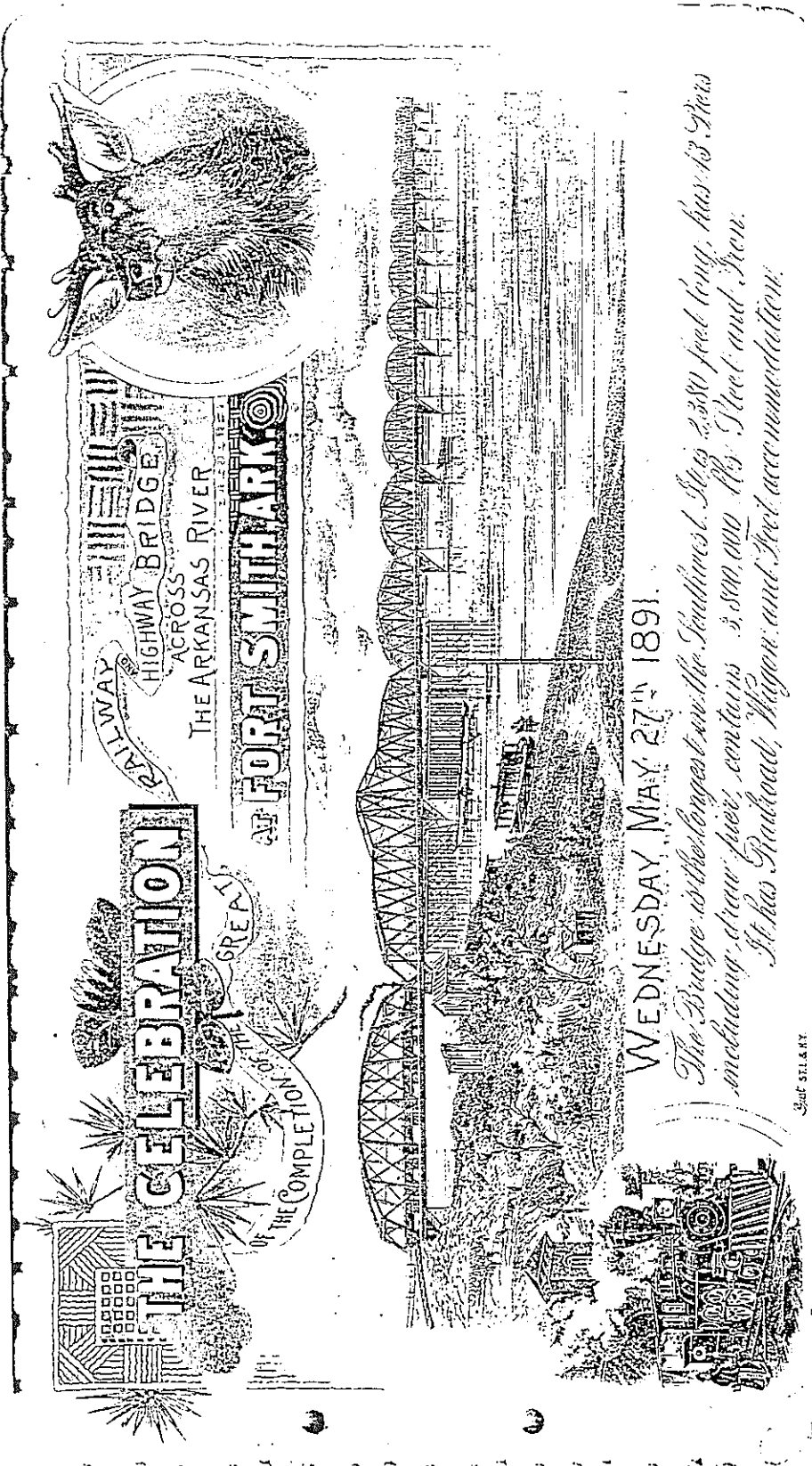
One final note: In late April, I attended a meeting with several top administrators from the Federal Railroad Administration. When 2903 was mentioned, I heard a comment that pleased me immensely: "Nobody but IRM could pull off a project like that. You guys can do damn near anything." I may be biased, but just this once I think the FRA was right. Bravo, IRM!

Mark your  
calendar  
for the  
Thursday,  
August  
20<sup>th</sup>  
meeting

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Midwest Engineer





The June 1998 issue of the *Arkansas Railroader* contained an item from Clifton Hull concerning the 1886 completion of the Frisco's bridge across the Arkansas River at Fort Smith, Arkansas. Ben Williams of Bentonville has a four-part ticket issued in connection with the opening of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern bridge at Fort Smith on May 27, 1891. The new bridge was noted as giving Fort Smith, population 15,000, an air line railroad link from Omaha to Galveston.

Reprinted from the *Gateway Railletter*, July 1998 issue, published by the St. Louis Chapter-National Railway Historical Society

## Where Have All These Railroads Gone?

### How Many Emblems Can You Identify?

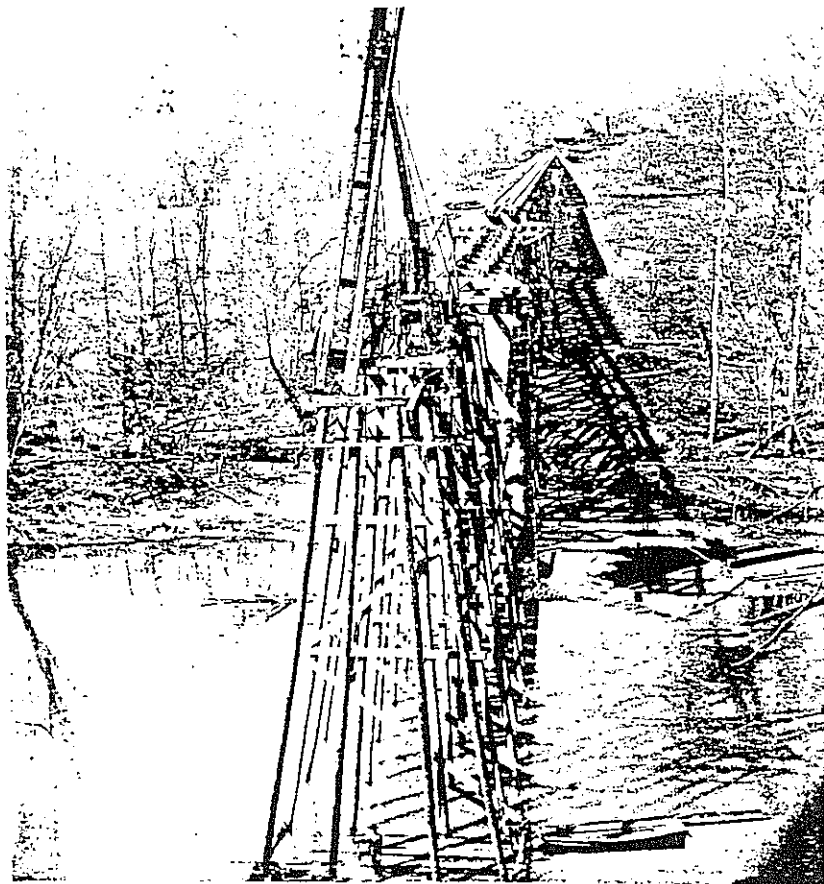


Please see the September 1998 issue of the *Scrambler* for the answer.

## Chapter Christmas Dinner Thursday, December 10, 1998

The Dutch-treat Christmas Dinner will feature a choice of four tasty entrees sure to please the most discriminating palate according to Dinner Chairman Bob Hofer. This great event will take place on December 10 at 6:30 PM at Fred's Hickory House Restaurant on Walton Boulevard in Bentonville.

### Northwest Arkansas Railroad History



Trestle being built to take railway  
to Monte Ne. Picture loaned by Ray  
McCormick, brother Wayne on of the men.

Movie of the Month

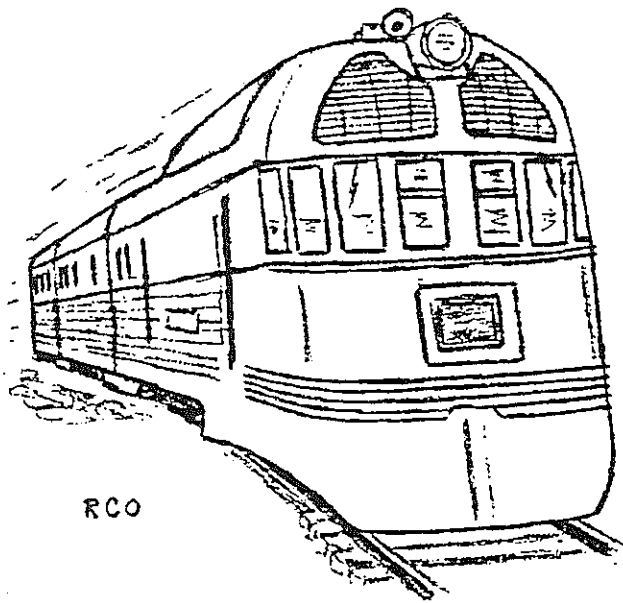
THE SILVER STREAK

Republic, 1934, 71 minutes, black & white

Charles Starrett, Sally Blaine, Hardie Albright, William Farnum  
Irving Richel, Arthur Lake, Guinn "Big Boy" Williams, Edgar  
Kennedy and (in the credits) The Burlington Zephyr

This purports to be the story of the development of "The Silver Streak" (aka "The Zephyr") for the C. B. & D. (for Denver?) Railroad. After a disappointing trial, the train is consigned to the Chicago World's Fair as an exhibit. But as a climax, it's called upon to deliver an iron lung from Chicago to Boulder (Hoover) Dam--2064 miles in 20 hours--average 103 mph! Some of the speeded-up sequences show, in a spectacular way, how not to run a railroad.

Besides all the rolling adventures, comic relief is provided by (a pre-Dagwood Bumstead) Arthur Lake, western regular Guinn Williams, and silent screen alumnus Edgar Kennedy. But the recognized star of the film is the Zephyr itself.



THE PIONEER ZEPHYR  
Three Car Articulated Train  
C. B. & Q. RR

General Motors, Electromotive Corp.  
Stainless steel; type 201E 600 hp  
in line two-stroke diesel engine;  
generator feeds two nose-suspended  
traction motors on leading truck.  
Weight: 175,000 lb; length 196 ft.;  
maximum speed: 110 mph.

On May 26, 1934, the train rolled  
off 1,015 miles from Denver to  
Chicago in just over 13 hours, an  
average speed of 78 miles per hour.

The original 72-seat train ran over  
three million miles in traffic and  
is now at Chicago's Museum of Science  
and Industry.

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As I write this, it appears we have a few seats left for the  
Chapter's November 14th excursion to Van Buren in the old com-  
bine--Car 102. Any requests for additional tickets will be  
honored in the order received from the regular members.

Bob O

**ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Chapter established November 1987

**1998 DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

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Editor	TOM DUGGAN	756-1901	15225 Lakewood Drive, Lowell, AR 72745

Meetings... ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS Chapter No. 158 (ABMT) Third Thursday of each month (except December dinner meeting). Meetings are held at the Shiloh Museum's General Store, 118 West Johnson, Springdale, Arkansas at 7:00 PM. Visitors are welcome at all meetings. Annual dues for 1998 are \$29 for individuals and \$31 for a family. Dues are 50% less for members joining after June 1. Please call 501-750-8165 for directions to the Shiloh Museum

The August 1998 issue of *Rail News* has an interesting two-page story on the Carthage, MO based Raitex subsidiary Missouri & Northern Arkansas. The line has done well under Raitex management and last year handled 40,000 carloads. It is now the single largest Raitex subsidiary based on carloads handled. The article has a picture of the Branson Scenic Railroad but not one of Chapter member White River Scenic Railroad.

ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER  
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