



NORTHSTAR NEWS

Jackson St Roundhouse is Now the June Meeting Location Directions Page 2

Riding Auto Train Then and Now By Russ Isbrandt



Top: Southbound Auto Train at Jacksonville, March 6, 1976. Bottom: April 2, 2010 northbound Amtrak Auto Train at almost the same location. Note weed overgrown track under the next car. Photos by Russ Isbrandt

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Meeting Notice

The June meeting of the Northstar Chapter of the NRHS will be held at a **NEW LOCATION**, the Jackson Street Roundhouse, 193 Pennsylvania Ave. East, St. Paul, June 19th at 7pm CDT. See map on following page.

There will be a pre-meeting get-together at the Keys Cafe and Bakery downtown at 500 N. Robert St. starting about 5:15 pm. Call Bob Clarkson at 651-636-2323 and leave a message with your name and the number of persons coming with you.

Program: H. Martin Swan will present a DVD of some of his 8 mm movies of passenger trains in the Seattle area in the '60s and a trip to Churchill, Manitoba on VIA Rail.

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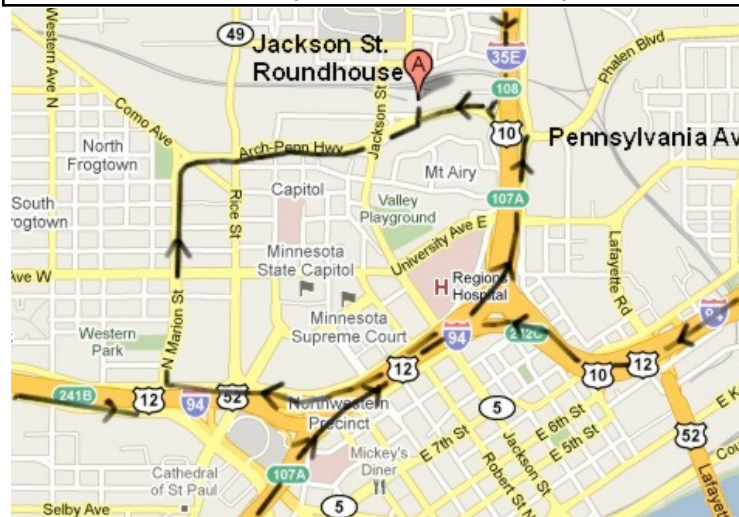
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NOTE: Consult the website for any announcements regarding chapter activities including cancellation of any meeting for any reason, including weather.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dues are \$48 (\$36 for the National dues and \$12 for the local dues). Family memberships are \$5 per person additional. The student rate is \$22 (\$16 for the National, \$6 for the Northstar Chapter). If you want to join, an application is available at <http://www.northstar-nrhs.org/>. Print out this application and send it with a check made payable to "Northstar Chapter NRHS" to Northstar Chapter NRHS Membership Services, P.O. Box 120832, St. Paul, MN 55112.



Directions to Jackson St. Roundhouse

From the east and west, exit I-94 at Marion St. Turn north and follow Marion St. to the three way intersection of Marion, Como Ave. and Pennsylvania Ave. Curve right on to Pennsylvania Ave. Just after you pass under Jackson St. you'll find the roundhouse on your left.

From north or south, exit I-35E at Pennsylvania Ave. Turn west on to Pennsylvania Ave. The roundhouse will be on your right a short distance from the off ramp from I-35E South.

Auto Train Then and Now

By Russ Isbrandt with excerpts from a Pat Dorin manuscript

In 1969 Mr. Eugene Garfield came upon a high speed ground transportation study which inspired him to come up with a concept for an auto ferry train from the Northeast to Florida. Mr Garfield assembled a small group of investors to provide seed money for a two year auto train experiment. Mr. Garfield then designed the Auto Train, negotiated contracts, obtained equipment, received all the regulatory approvals and staffed the operation.

The Auto-Train Corporation began operation December 6, 1971 from Lorton, Virginia to Sanford, Florida. Mr. Garfield acquired dome cars from the Santa Fe, Western Pacific, Union Pacific, with auto carriers from Canadian National. Other equipment came from Louisville and Nashville, Burlington Northern, Norfolk and Western and Seaboard Coast Line. The cars were completely refurbished with new reclining leg rest seats for the domes and vibrant colors. The exterior paint scheme was red, white and purple with dark purple trucks. Interiors were also decorated in bright colors.

In late 1973 Congress modified the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 with the effect of enabling Auto Train to operate its own train from the Midwest to Florida. In May 1974 Auto Train began operations from Louisville to Sanford, Florida.

In winter of 1976 my wife Martha and I planned a March trip on Auto Train from Louisville to Sanford and return. Railroad book author, Pat Dorin, asked me to photograph the operation and obtained permission for me to photograph train servicing and the Sanford service facilities for a possible book.

March 5th Martha and I drove our '72 AMC Ambassador from White Bear Lake to Lexington, Kentucky where we stayed with my former college roommate. The morning of March 6th we drove to the Louisville Auto Train terminal where we checked in. We arrived in time to see the north-

bound train arrive. I was given the run of the train and took a number of black and white photos of the servicing operation. (Remember in 1976 color was rarely used in railfan books.)

At 3:30 pm we departed Louisville behind 3 red, white and purple GE U-36B locomotives, approximately 9 auto carriers, a steam generator car, 4 sleepers, 7 domes and 2 pairs of kitchen – buffet and table cars. One of the ex-Western Pacific *California Zephyr* domes became a night club car complete with piano and entertainer.



Top: Our AMC Ambassador about to be loaded on the train. Bottom: Auto Train's GE U-36Bs pulling into the Louisville terminal. Photos by Russ Isbrandt

Top: Our dome coach seats. Middle: Car cleaner at work in the lower level of the night club car. Bottom: Dome section of the night club car. Photos by Russ Isbrandt

Our reclining legrest seats 29 and 30 were in an ex-UP dome. We were assigned to the 5 pm serving in the Purple Plum diner. Dinner was cafeteria style with an attendant carrying your meal to a seat in the adjacent table car.



Top: Cafeteria / kitchen car. Bottom: Table car. Top: Pat Dorin collection Auto Train Corporation. Bottom: Photo by Russ Isbrandt

After supper we returned to our dome seats and watched the rolling countryside of southern Kentucky roll by at 79 mph. Near dusk we passed through Nashville. Just south of Nashville we repaired to the night club car where the entertainer was playing the piano. There is nothing like a live entertainer singing Steve Goodman's "City of New Orleans" while rolling along at 79 mph.

While we were provided with blankets and pillows, we soon learned the limitations of dome car seating when trying to sleep, as there were no shades. When the UP reacquired some of these cars, they corrected this shortcoming.

Montgomery, Alabama was the service stop and I got out to stretch my legs and get a night shot.

East of Montgomery, we discovered that the former Atlantic Coast Line to Waycross, Georgia was not built to the same high standards as the Louisville and Nashville mainline. The line is a hill and dale affair. With the autocarriers up front and not equipped with tightlock couplers, we felt the slack action all night long. Wham! Bang, as the consist bunched up or stretched out. Ultimately Auto Train moved

the autocarriers to the back of the consist as is done today.

Apparently the engineer of the return train was much more adept at train handling as I don't recall the slack action being as noticeable. The running time from Louisville was somewhat longer than the Lorton – Sanford running time, taking 22 hours southbound and 21 hours northbound. Breakfast and lunch were also provided.

On departing Sanford, I spotted a Milwaukee Road Skytop Lounge and exclaimed, "Look! There's a Skytop lounge!" All heads in the dome section turned to see, even though no one knew what a Skytop Lounge was. It turned out it was owned by Mr. Chapman "Chappie" S. Root of Daytona Beach. The car was the *Dell Rapids* and is now on display at a museum in Daytona Beach.

Business could not sustain daily service. By February 1975 the service was cut to twice a week, departing Louisville on Saturdays and leaving Sanford on Fridays.

Unfortunately derailments of the Lorton – Sanford trains at Possum Point, Virginia March 7, 1976 and at Jarrett, Virginia May 5, 1976, later determined to be caused by broken wheels, caused the Louisville section to be suspended due to a lack of equipment. It was determined that the broken wheels were caused by overheating on braking. The train consists were held to a 43 car maximum, down from as long as 53 cars, and speed restricted to 65 mph. Amtrak today holds to this maximum, though the maximum speed has been increased to 70 mph.

Auto Train arranged to combine its train with Amtrak's *Floridian* beginning October 31, 1976. Amtrak left the Louisville and Nashville station in downtown Louisville in favor of the modern Auto Train terminal south of Louisville. Winter of 1977 was a bad one for Amtrak and Auto Train with the *Floridian* suffering from service disruptions. Auto Train retrenched to the Lorton – Sanford route. Amtrak continued to use the Auto Train terminal until the *Floridian* was discontinued in 1979. Auto Train declared bankruptcy in 1980 and discontinued service May 1, 1981.

Amtrak resumed the Auto Train service in October 1983. A new Lorton station was opened in 2000. This is a family



Newly arrived Auto Train at Lorton, VA. Photo by Russ Isbrandt



Top: Loading the minivan on to Auto Train at Lorton, VA. Below: Bedrooms ensuite, looking through the connecting door. Toilet / shower annex on right.
Photo by Russ Isbrandt

friendly facility with a jungle gym for the kids to play on during the wait for boarding and unloading the train.

March 27th my wife and I along with my daughter, Allison and her family loaded up their *Stow n Go* minivan with all our luggage and even breakfast foods and water for use at Disney World and headed for Lorton. Loading was supposed to begin at 11:30 am. During check-in I was videoing the process when an Amtrak employee suggested I turn around and video the arriving train. It was running 2 hours late. Despite that, boarding was started only ½ hour late. We headed for our sleeper bedrooms, J

and K ensuite, and N for Grandpa and Grandma, in the all bedroom car *Palm Spring*. Almost immediately the parade of sleeping car passengers went past on their way to the wine and cheese party in the lounge car. The kids came back loaded to the hilt with fruit, veggies and chex mix. Martha and I decided to let the crowd pass. Big mistake. The goodies were pretty well picked over by the time we got there, though wine was still available.



The author and wife enjoying a decidedly upscale dining experience on today's Auto Train. Photo by Allison Ometz

It seemed in no time we began to move. Checking my watch, I was amazed to see an on time departure of 4 pm. My grandson Elijah had a ball exploring all the room controls including the door lock. He invited us to their suite. When we got there both doors were locked and a maniacal laugh came from the room.

We had the 5 pm dinner seating. On boarding, the dining car steward announced that the dinner seatings would be delayed a little due to the late stocking of the dining cars. I don't think the delay was more than 30 minutes. The diner was the next car forward, so we all trooped in on the initial announcement. The service attendant seated the family in across the aisle tables. Mart and I were seated with a nice couple from suburban Philadelphia. Tossed salads and rolls were already present. I think all the adults had the New York strip steak and baked potato with strawberry covered cheesecake for dessert. I think the kids had something like chicken tenders.

After dinner we returned to our bedrooms. The kids were playing travel games, while Grandpa watched the countryside go by listening to the railroad scanner. When it came time for the lounge car movie, *Julie and Julia*, Allison, granddaughter Lexie and Mart went to the lounge car. I moved into the bedroom opposite my son-in-law, Derrick, who was reading Elijah his bedtime stories. With that item finished, he turned off the lights in that bedroom and joined the rest for the movie while I kept watch over Elijah through the door between the rooms with the night light on in my side. All went well until the conductor announced quiet time would begin at 9 pm. Unfortunately the room speakers were on and poor Elijah woke up. I frantically tried the volume control wheel to no avail. I pulled the attendant call button to find out how to turn the

speakers off. It turns out you use the channel selector. I successfully turned the speakers off just before the coach dining car steward announced the last seating.

Believe it or not, there's a right way and a wrong way to make up the upper berths in the bedrooms. The "correct way" puts the head of the bed at the reading light end. Unfortunately, that's wrong! It also puts your head under the air conditioning outlet. These outlets do have a lever to close them. Unfortunately they don't close tight, so you still get a cool breeze on your head. I wound up putting a towel over my head.

This is a remarkable operation. Aside from the occasional speed restriction for curves, bridges, etc., the wheels keep rolling at 69 mph all night long, stopping only for service at Florence, South Carolina.

We were awakened by the early announcement of our 1 ½ hour EARLY arrival in Sanford. So we all hustled to get dressed and headed for the diner. The lounge this trip was actually a diner lounge. For breakfast both cars were set up with bowls, milk, cups for coffee or tea and a selection of cold cereals, muffins and bagels. By the time we finished, our room was made up and it was only a few minutes until we stopped at the switch to the Auto Train terminal. Switching out the autocarriers seemed to take quite a while. It took 35 minutes to detrain. From that time to the delivery of the minivan was only about 30 minutes. Switching was done by a P-32 515.

Return was on Friday, April 2nd. The deadline for loading vans and oversized vehicles was 2:00 pm. Between the traffic jam on I-4 outside of Disney World and missing our exit at Sanford, it was white-knuckle time. Luckily we made it into the line of cars stretching outside of the terminal onto the street by 1:50 pm. We checked in shortly after 2 and were boarding promptly at 2:30 pm. As of last October only one bedroom was left. Allison's family had to take the only family room left and Martha and I took the last available bedroom in an adjacent car. Much to our delight we discovered reservations people had put us all in the same car, all bedroom *Palm Harbor*.

We departed at 3:59 pm. This time we didn't miss the lounge car wine and cheese party. By the time we got the goodies and returned to our bedroom departure was only a couple of minutes away. It was the time to check out each other's rooms. I'm afraid Allison and family are spoiled. They found the family room on the lower level somewhat noisy. Lexie liked the private lavatory facility of the bedroom and was back numerous times to use ours.

On departure the conductor or on board service manager announces the passenger loading. Southbound we had 503 passengers but only 74 vans and 67 cars in 27 auto carriers and 16 passenger cars. Northbound we had a sold out train, but with only 463 passengers, 47 vans and 203 cars in 26 auto carriers. Clearly there were more families on the southbound train, more northern snow birds on the northbound train.

This time the 5 pm diner seating was on time and Martha, I, Derrick and Lexie were again seated across the aisle from each other. Allison had taken Elijah, my railfan

buddy, on a walk of the train. They got back just in time to order their meals. This time I enjoyed the red wine. I didn't realize the glass would be refilled each time the server spotted it empty. That resulted in two more refills!

Photographing the train from on board is nearly impossible as there are not that many sharp curves on the route. The best opportunity is at Jacksonville with a 20 mph sharp left curve northbound.

At Savannah, Georgia we overtook the northbound *Silver Meteor*. The Savannah station is out in the boondocks. The city is almost completely out of sight. Only a freeway and attendant billboards gave any hint we were near a major city.

This night the sleeping car attendant made the upper berth bed up with head at the outside wall end, away from the a.c. vent, a very much more comfortable configuration.

The next morning we again were awakened by an early breakfast announcement. Once again we were 1 ½ hours early. Apparently Allison and family didn't get the word and were still getting ready after Martha and I finished breakfast. Nevertheless they were able to get breakfast.

While we entered the Auto Train siding at 7:53 am, the announcement was made that the full station staff, which are to report at 8:00 am, hadn't all arrived and detraining passengers with special needs would be slower than usual. We detrained at 8:15 and were on the road 23 minutes later!

Additional photos and train logs are included in the electronic version extra pages.

Trains Newswire

Milwaukee 261 sold, will continue operating

Published: Saturday, May 08, 2010

MINNEAPOLIS - The longtime operator of Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 steam locomotive No. 261 will buy the engine for \$225,000 and continue operating it in excursion service. The deal, announced May 8th, ends a long-standing feud between the engine's owner and operator that nearly saw it returned to static display.

While Sandberg's group now owns the engine, hurdles remain. The group had to use much of the cash it had originally earmarked to restore 261 on the purchase, which means it now doesn't have enough money on hand to complete the rebuild. Sandberg said that while crews will resume work on the 261's rebuild immediately, the group would also concentrate on fund-raising.

Railway Age Breaking News

Another Twin Cities LRT line advances

Thursday, May 27, 2010

The Metropolitan Council, the regional transit planning agency for Minnesota's Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Wednesday, May 26th, approved a 14-mile Southwest Corridor light rail line linking Minneapolis to Eden Prairie, MN.

The locally preferred alternative (LPA) was recommended to the council by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and the communities that the corridor will serve. The route also will serve Minnetonka, Hopkins, and St. Louis Park. The route is projected to cost as much as \$1.25 billion.

Met Council amended the region's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) to include LRT as the mode of choice for the route, making the project eligible for federal funding.

"World class cities have growing, vibrant transit systems," said Council Chair Peter Bell. "The selection of the mode and alignment for this corridor is an important step forward. It moves the

project to the next level and continues the process of building out the region's rail corridor network."

The LRT route will link with the existing Hiawatha LRT line at Target Field Station in Minneapolis, offering connections to Northstar commuter rail services at that station and access to the Central Corridor LRT route serving St. Paul, now beginning construction.

Met Council will submit a New Starts application to the Federal Transit Administration this summer, asking for permission to begin preliminary engineering on the project. The route is expected to generate 28,000 rider trips per day by 2030, which Met Council says is comparable to current ridership on Hiawatha LRT.

From the Chicago Tribune

Metra boss Phil Pagano's suicide

John Kass, May 9, 2010

For the past 20 years, Phil Pagano was the respected boss of Metra, the commuter rail agency that, unlike the Chicago Transit Authority, actually keeps the trains running on time.

Over the past week or so, Pagano was under siege, facing investigations both federal and local, suspected of finagling a bonus of more than \$50,000 by finessing vacation time, among other things.

He'd been placed on administrative leave. Metra was about to drop the bureaucratic hammer on him, publicly, on Friday, May 7th.

So just before 8 am, the 60-year-old drove to the Metra rail line near his Crystal Lake home. He parked his car and walked out into the middle of the tracks in front of an oncoming train.

In his pocket was found a final mocking gesture flipped at the organization that was about to humiliate him: It was a Metra manual on how to handle service disruptions in the event of a suicide.

Chapter Participates in Train Day By Bill Dredge

On Saturday, May 8th, the Northstar Chapter of the NRHS participated in the National Train Day at the Amtrak Midway Station in St. Paul, MN. Our contribution to the 5000+ attendees was as follows: A video produced by Russ Isbrandt, a 50 year NRHS member, on high-speed trains of the 1930's through the 1950's, and the race from Chicago to the Twin Cities between the Burlington Zephyrs, the Milwaukee Road's *Hiawathas*, and the Chicago and Northwestern's 400. It was a true masterpiece. Russ adapted the script from the 2004 NRHS Convention seminar by noted photographer and writer of *The Hiawatha Story*, and *The 400 Story*, Jim Scribbins. In addition we had a HO gauge display of trains which have served St. Paul and Minneapolis from 1900 to the present. Trains modeled were the current (Superliner) Am-



Bottom left:
Bill Dredge's
models of
Twin Cities'
streamliners.
Right: The
chapter's
Train Day dis-
play in the
Amtrak station
lounge.
Photos by Russ
Isbrandt



trak *Empire Builder*, the Great Northern *Empire Builder*, the Northern Pacific *North Coast Limited*, the Soo Line *Mountaineer*, the Burlington *Twin Cities Zephyr*, Milwaukee's *Hiawatha*, North western's 400, and the Northstar Commuter Rail serving Minneapolis and suburbs to the northwest including Anoka, Elk River, and Big Lake, Minnesota. I was the provider for the HO trains, and glad to do it. This event was very successful, and I hope it will be done again next year.

Meeting Minutes from May 15th Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by chapter president Cy Svobodony in the Jackson St. Roundhouse with about 25 members and guests present. Those present were asked to introduce themselves. Cy asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of the April 17, 2010 meeting, as published in the May 2010 issue of the Northstar News. There were none, so there was a motion made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes, as published.

Dan Meyer presented a report on chapter membership and gave the treasurer's report. The Northstar Chapter currently has 78 members, consisting of 65 Regular members and 13 Family members. In addition, we have 3 Chapter Only members. Our current checking account balance is \$2,338.50 and we have \$31,712.93 in our investment account, as of April 30, 2010. Dan noted that he is investigating a savings account that pays higher interest than we are now getting on our investments.

National director Bill Dredge reported on matters discussed at the recent NRHS Board of Directors meeting in Huntington, WV and other national developments. Sales of trips and other events at this year's NRHS national convention in Scranton, PA are going well and planning is under way for the 2011 convention in Tacoma, WA and for 2012 in Cedar Rapids, IA. Upcoming BOD meetings will be Lancaster, PA in early November of this year and at Champaign-Urbana, IL next April.

John Goodman reported on trips and programs. Next month's meeting will be here at the Jackson St. Roundhouse. Marty Swan will present various items. John said that he will put on the program for the July meeting. We will have our picnic in August instead of having a regular meeting, but John is looking for programs for meetings after that, including the holiday party in early December. John reported on plans for the future of the St. Paul Union Depot and current status of the project. We are planning to take a trip to Big Lake and back on the Northstar commuter train on Saturday, August 14th. We could meet at the 28th Avenue station in Bloomington and take the Hiawatha Light Rail train down to the Northstar station in downtown Minneapolis. There would be a long layover (about an hour) at the Northstar station in Big Lake before the return trip. John noted that, after the trip, we could have lunch together in downtown Minneapolis. Our chapter picnic is planned for Saturday,

August 21 at the park adjacent to the BNSF track at Prescott, WI. John Cartwright talked about the chapter library. Members of the library committee have been discussing how to have the library open to chapter members on a regular basis.

Russ Isbrandt reported on National Train Day. He prepared a DVD on high-speed train service between the Twin Cities and Chicago in the pre-World War II era. Several other chapter members also helped represent the Northstar Chapter at the event. Estimates of attendance at the event were in the range of 5,000 to 7,000 people.

Marty Swan reported on the Cheer Committee. He had sent a card to Bob Clarkson, who gave thanks for the card. Former chapter member and active local railfan Steve Kopacz is seriously ill. Marty said that he would send a card to him.

A question was asked about the name badges discussed at several recent meetings. Dan Meyer spoke briefly about the procedures for ordering them. It was announced that exchange newsletters from other NRHS chapters are available at the front table. Members sang "Happy Birthday" to Bill Dredge.

President Svobodny asked if there was any other New Business. There was none, so a motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and carried at 7:26 1/2 pm. There was a brief break. It was announced that pop was available. John Goodman noted that our new meeting location at the Jackson St. Roundhouse is what he described as "a work in progress." He asked members how they like meeting here. The program was presented by Dawn Holmberg. It included the first steam-up of Northern Pacific steam locomotive #328 in 1981, after it had been restored by the Minnesota Transportation Museum. Then there were also pictures of the MTM's operations at Osceola, WI, the town depot at Frederic, WI (which is now a museum,) and the White Pine Line.

Northstar News
Northstar Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
4036 Birch Knoll Drive
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Address Correction Requested

Since there was more time available for the program, a new DVD on the Minnesota Transportation Museum was shown.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Norman, Secretary Northstar Chapter NRHS

Upcoming Chapter Events

July 17th Meeting will have a special program.

Kerck Kelsey of South Freeport, Maine is a historian of the Washburn family of Livermore, Maine. His third book about the Washburns, titled *Prairie Lightning, The Rise and Fall of William Drew Washburn*, will be published in Minnesota next month. In connection with that event, his planning a lecture tour of the states where William was most active, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota. Because of William's involvement with building of the M&STL, the Soo Line, and Twin Cities Rapid Transit, he'd been hoping to connect with rail historians in the Twin Cities area while he's there. He will have a good story to tell about early railroading in the upper midwest. Besides drilling a tunnel through the empty Wisconsin woods, the story of the Soo Line involves bank panics, great vision and nerve by the flour millers, friends and enemies from the Bank of Montreal to the halls of Congress, rival railroad barons, rioting construction crews, a deeply displeased James J. Hill, and a unique railroad built by amateurs in the wrong direction without a penny of government aid or support.

Big Lake Northstar Trip - August 14th

Chapter members will meet at the 28th Ave. Hiawatha Station in Bloomington to take the 10:36 am train to the Target Field Northstar Commuter Rail Station for the 11:30 am departure to Big Lake. The train arrives at Big Lake at 12:19 pm and departs again at 1:23 pm. A late lunch can be had at Gaviidae Commons afterwards. Do NOT pack a lunch as eating is not permitted on the trains nor even in the Big Lake Station parking lot.

Chapter Picnic August 21st

The annual chapter picnic will be held in the river front and track side park at Prescott, WI starting about noon. The chapter will provide beverages and chips.



March 6, 1976, riding the dome of the Auto Train night club car just north of Bowling Green, KY on the Louisville and Nashville mainline. Photo by Russ Isbrandt



Above: Auto Train being serviced March 7th at 3am at Montgomery, AL. Photo by Russ Isbrandt



Above: Former Northern Pacific steam heat car and a sister car already in Auto Train paint at Sanford, FL March 12, 1976. Photo by Russ Isbrandt



Above: A Baldwin VO 660 switcher was used by Auto Train on March 12, 1976 to do the switching at Sanford, FL. Photo by Russ Isbrandt



Ex-Santa Fe dome ready for paint at the Sanford, FL Auto Train Shop March 12, 1976. Photo by Russ Isbrandt



Above: An ex-Santa Fe dome gets "new shoes" during a truck replacement in the Sanford Shop. Photo by Russ Isbrandt

Lorton, VA - Sanford
Train 53 The Auto Train

		Actual
Lv	Lorton	3:50 PM
Ar	Sanford	7:55 AM

Consist

39001	Transition dorm
32080	Idaho Sleeper
33100	Auto Train Diner Lounge
38053	Diner
32505	Palm Springs All Bedroom Sleeper
32105	Oregon Sleeper
32089	Massachusetts Sleeper
34132	Coach
34118	Coach
34123	Coach
34121	Coach
33102	Auto Train Diner Lounge
38051	Diner
38067	Diner

Inbound power was 19,207,203

Outbound power 161 unk, unk

Pass count 503

Vans 74

Cars 67

Auto Carriers 27

Pass Cars 14

Total Consist 41

Notes:

3:53 PM Stop on Lorton Lead for train assembly
 4:03 PM Leave Lorton Lead
 4:15 PM NB Amtrak
 7:58 PM Passed Rocky Mount
 11:23 PM Lv. Florence
 8:35 AM Train split and spotted for passenger deboarding

Sanford, FL - Lorton
Train 52 The Auto Train

		Actual
Lv	Sanford	3:59 PM
Ar	Lorton	7:59 AM

Consist

207	Lorton switcher 799
18	
184	
39002	Transition Dorm
32087	Maine Sleeper
32108	South Carolina Sleeper
32503	A Phillip Randolph All Bedroom Sleeper
33104	Auto Train Diner Lounge
38054	Diner
32504	Palm Harbor All Bedroom Sleeper
32114	Virginia Sleeper
32102	North Dakota Sleeper
34119	Coach
34128	Coach
34129	Coach
34130	Coach
33103	Auto Train Diner Lounge
38041	Diner
38052	Diner

Pass count 463

Coach Pass. 288

Sleeper Pass. 175

Vans 47

Cars 203

Auto Carriers 26

Pass Cars 16

Total Consist 42

Notes:

There were 28 on board service people with 2 conductors and two engineers.
 Train length as reported by equipment defect detector varied from 4083 ft. to 4166 ft., with 4080's being most common.
 Overtook Amtrak 98 at Savannah
 Left Florence at 1:30am
 Stopped at Auto Train lead at 7:52am
 Pulled into the Auto Train lead at 7:53am.
 Unloading special needs passengers starting at 8:03am.
 Since the train was early there were only two employees to unload those passengers.
 8:07am southbound Amtrak train passed.
 At 8:15am we deboarded. Received the van at 8:38am.



Top Right: Arrival of a three hour late Lorton originated Auto Train at the Sanford, FL terminal March 12, 1976.

Middle Right: An all bedroom Amtrak Superliner sleeper. The only visual means of identifying it as such is the 32500 series number. This one is the *Palm Springs*.

Bottom Right: The upper vestibule area of an all bedroom Superliner sleeper. Note the roominess due to the elimination of the upper level lavatory. All photos by Russ Isbrandt