

PACIFIC NORTHWEST RAILROAD ARCHIVE

NORTHWEST NEWS

ARCHIVES ACTIVITIES FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2023

ELECTRIFYING STORIES FROM CEDAR FALLS

Cascade Rail Foundation and the Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive collaborated with the Maple Valley Historical Society and the Renton History Museum for 'Electrifying Stories from Cedar Falls' starring former Milwaukee Road employees Frank Zellerhoff and Allen Miller. This fun, two date event, had over 50 attendees including those on the live stream on Saturday September 9, 2023. Frank, one of the last living substation operators on the Milwaukee, explained how the Milwaukee's electrification moved trains over the Cascades. Allen provided an insightful history of the town of Cedar Falls (previously named Moncton) and described operations on the railroad in the 1970's.

CRF obtained permission from the Center for Railroad Photography and Art, in Madison, Wisconsin, to use timeless photographs of Cedar Falls by world famous photographer Richard Steinheimer. Additional images, some not seen publicly before, were provided by Blair Kooistra, Walt Ainsworth and Jeff Moreau. The Ainsworth and Moreau photos are part of the extensive CRF collection at PNRA.

CRF and PNRA are already planning on a new series of events including events in March 2024, on the Seattle and North Coast Railroad

WELCOME TO THE FRIENDS OF THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The FOBNR society has joined as a member of the Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive and is now one of the railroad history organizations active at PNRA.

The focus of FOBNR is preserving the history, and chronicling the operations of the Burlington Northern Railroad, its successors, and the Montana Rail Link.

FOBNR hosts an active and informative website (fobnr.org), publishes a quarterly journal titled, The BN Expediter and hosts an annual convention.

Their archives consist of nearly 100 cubic feet of materials relating to all aspects of BN operations. In addition, their online archives provide direct access to sixteen searchable categories and indexes.

The society serves over 350 members as a 501c3 nonprofit organization.



BN1, Springfield, MO, May 13, 1994, by Chuck Zeiler

Food Drive

Bring donations of non-perishable foods to PNRA between Nov. 8 - Nov. 25. All food collected will go to Highline Area Food Bank in Burien. THANK YOU!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Nov. 12, 6pm - Elrond Lawrence presents Route 66 Railway (online)

Nov. 8-25 - Food Drive

Nov. 18, 5pm - Volunteer Appreciation Party

Nov. 22, 1pm - Wayne Monger (online)

Nov. 24, 25 10am-3pm - Open House

Dec. 3, 11am-3pm - Bookmarks & Landmarks

Dec. 6, 1pm - Lowell Smith on Alaska Railroad's 100th Anniversary (online)

Dec. 20 - Rob Leachman on Union Pacific in the Blue Mountains (online)

Northwest News

Russell Holter Board President
Richard Wilkens Director of Collections
Virginia Wright Editor, Interim Executive Director

PNRA receives support from



COLLECTIONS

THIRD QUARTER COLLECTIONS UPDATE

For the end of the third quarter the collection at the archives increased in a sizeable way. In Mid-September Richard Wilkens made a trip to Vancouver, WA to attend the SP&S convention and while there he picked up for the PNRA the Fred & Bob Wenzel collections from Ed Austin and this consists of many slides taken in the 1950's and 1960's in Oregon with a large amount being of logging near Keasey, OR. Also picked up was a large collection of Southern Pacific steam locomotive photographs that Jonathan Fischer purchased from Ed and donated to the archives. The final collection that was to be picked up was three boxes of personal railroad items that were donated by Konnie Wager and these came from her father-in-law John Wager who

was an SP&S locomotive engineer. This included all of his time slips and time books from 1940 up to his retirement, personal papers during his career, copies of the SP&S Dope Bucket employee magazine and much more.

While at the SP&S convention Richard was approached by Ed Berntsen to take a look at a collection he wanted to donate to the archives. In a 10' x 10' storage locker in Portland was approximately 250 Bankers Boxes of primarily SP&S records. These had been given to Ed from the Burlington Northern in July 1975 and they had moved around from storage in an old caboose, a box car and finally to the storage unit. Over the last two weeks of September Richard made three trips to Portland and the collection is now at the archives. A vast majority of these records are from the same group as the ones already in the SP&S collection that had been donated many years ago by Walt Grande. About 80% of the records from Ed are from the SP&S and its subsidiaries with the remaining 20% being from Great Northern, Northern Pacific and the Oregon, California and Eastern.



Collections Manager Richard Wilkens with some of the new acquisitions.



Some of the boxes of additions to the archives.

J. M. FREDRICKSON COLLECTION

In 2009 the Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive was born in the Tacoma home of retired Northern Pacific-Burlington Northern train dispatcher Jim Fredrickson. Thousands of company documents rescued from destruction by Jim—mostly from the Northern Pacific but also Great Northern, Union Pacific, and other Northwest railroads—formed the heart of the collection, now contained in dozens of bankers' boxes in the 'JMF general' files at PNRA. Volunteer Kurt Armbruster is now cataloguing the contents of each, and thus far six boxes have been itemized and added to the database. These JMF files are a rich trove of all aspects of Pacific Northwest railroad operations from the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY!

We appreciate the dedicated work done by our fantastic team of volunteers. We're having a party to celebrate this work and we want all of you to come!

Saturday, November 18th • 5PM - 7PM
Food and beverages will be provided.

Highline Heritage Museum
819 SW 152nd St • Burien, WA 98166

PNRA LAUNCHES NEW INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

By Dean O'Neill and Russell Holter

PNRA volunteers are getting older. Diversifying our base and attracting young people is paramount to the organization's long-term viability. The PNRA must strengthen our volunteer base and give the organization a much-needed transfusion. Former Executive Director Jonathan Fischer and Board President Russell Holter worked to develop a graduate-level internship program.

An internship is a short period of work (typically three months) in businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. They are usually undertaken by students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills and experience in a particular field. In return, the host organization will evaluate and provide feedback to the intern while also completing some work or projects that are mutually beneficial. PNRA gives the college feedback on the intern's job performance and professionalism.



Dean O'Neill, Lily Woodard

Last winter, the PNRA hosted a graduate-level intern from the University of Washington School of Information Science – Eric Flores. Interestingly, Flores reached out to our organization, but we were not seeking an intern then. However, we realized the value of such a program and quickly set up the logistics to achieve our mutual goals. Eric worked at the archive every Thursday from January through March and Dean O'Neill mentored him.

The PNRA's fall graduate intern was Alex Soriano of Bainbridge Island. Soriano was keenly interested in learning about archival management, record keeping, and the creation of finding aids. His work at PNRA concluded in the end of October. Lily Woodard is the intern from the University of Washington MLIS program, and she is part way through her work with PNRA, focusing on categorization of data and developing documentation.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE ON THE PNRA WEBSITE.



Alex Soriano, Dean O'Neill

NP COLLECTION UPDATE

Maps, maps, maps, is the continuing story of the NPRHA collection work. Several single day events have been completed where 1350 large maps, donated by BNSF in 2008 have been scanned. Each crew takes over the full workroom to prepare, scan, document and re-box the maps in a production line process.

FILE STORAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Work is continuing to cleanup and preserve our growing digital assets. We now have established a server (PNRA45) for use by all our volunteers where daily work and projects are stored. Once projects are completed the digital files are moved to our long-term preservation server, named PNRA50. This unit has restricted access and is backed up on three different external systems on a rotating basis, every two weeks. We now have over 13.1 Terabytes of storage on the preservation server.



BOOKMARKS & LANDMARKS

Read the Book, See the History

PNRA is partnering with SoCoCulture and the King County Library for "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles," the latest in the Bookmarks & Landmarks series. The train related events will take place at the archive on Saturday, December 2, from 11am-3pm.

11-11:30AM STORY TIME WITH CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN, LYDIA.

11:30AM-12PM CHILDREN'S BOOK DISCUSSION:
I SURVIVED THE WELLINGTON AVALANCHE, 1910
BY LAUREN TARSHIS.

The Wellington snow slide in the Cascade Mountains was and still is the deadliest avalanche in America's history. Two trains sat stranded at the Wellington train station, blocked in by snow slides to the east and west. Some passengers braved the storm to hike off the mountain, but many had no choice but to wait out the storm.

2-3PM ADULT BOOK DISCUSSION
SMALL WORLD BY JONATHAN EVISON

Jonathan Evison's *Small World* is an epic novel for now. Set against such iconic backdrops as the California gold rush, the development of the transcontinental railroad, and a speeding train of modern-day strangers forced together by fate, it is a grand entertainment that asks big questions. A historical epic with a Dickensian flair!



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PNRA

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