



ON TRACK

The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

www.marp.org

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The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc. (MARP) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation established in 1973 to improve passenger train service, travel conditions for passengers, and to work for the preservation of historic rail stations.

Monthly meetings are held at locations around the state. Check the website for dates and venues. Everyone is welcome.

MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2012-2014

Robert Tischbein	Chair
Larry Krieg	Vice-Chair
Dave Randall	Treasurer
Hugh Gurney	Secretary
John Langdon	Governmental/Public Affairs Coordinator
Kathleen Newell	Membership Coordinator
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
Jim Wallington	Meetings Coordinator
Don Monteith	Northern Region Chair
Jim Hinkins	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Open	West Region Chair
Rosemary Horvath	East/Central Region Chair

*The Michigan Passenger Editor and Webmaster, Larry Sobczak
ON TRACK Editor, Kay Chase*

2013 MEETINGS

- 12 January** – Williamston Depot-Museum
- 9 February** – Capac Depot Museum
- 9 March** – St. Johns Railroad Station
- 20 April** – Niles Depot
- 11 May** – National Train Day
- 15 June** – Vicksburg Historic Village & Depot Museum
- 20 July** – Flushing Historic Depot
- 10 August** – S.S. City of Milwaukee Train Ferry
- 14 September** – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- October 12** – Bangor Depot
- November** – TBA
- December** – Executive Committee

Visit www.marp.org
Email marprail@yahoo.com

MARP Turns Forty

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. On May 1, 1971, an era of failing passenger train service ended with the establishment of the National Passenger Rail Corporation (Amtrak) and the prospect of a better day ahead for train travelers. With a hugely truncated network and years of neglect, there was much work to be done to revitalize train stations and rebuild passenger enthusiasm for travel by train.

Aware of the challenge and determined to do something about it, John DeLora and a group of like-minded individuals got together and formed The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc. (MARP). From the beginning, MARP has sought to improve passenger train and intercity bus services, travel conditions for passengers, and to work for the preservation of historic rail stations.

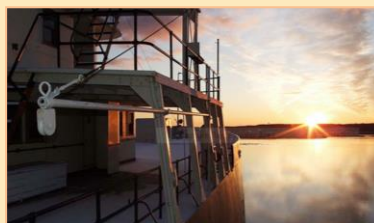
MARP will celebrate the trials and triumphs of four decades of working to enhance and expand passenger transportation in our state when we hold our **40th Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 14** at the beautifully restored Durand Union Station, still boarding passengers daily.

In preparation for this anniversary, we are looking for any and all records of MARP's activities over the years. Do you have documents (membership cards, flyers, brochures, letters, meeting notes), photos of people and events, or memorabilia that you can share with us?

We are also interested in **your stories**. What can you tell us about:

- Waking on May 1, 1971, to find trains no longer serving your town
- Forming the Michigan Passenger Foundation
- Scrubbing down the waiting room of the Kalamazoo train station
- Serving as a Passenger Service Aide
- Petitioning to restore Grand Rapids-Chicago service
- Building ridership during the lean years
- Twisting arms to ensure adequate state funding for trains

If you have stories, documents, or memorabilia, let us know. Send email to marprail@yahoo.com or phone Hugh Gurney at (517) 545-2979 or Kay Chase at (269) 388-3777.



MARP MEMBER MEETING

Saturday, August 10

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**S.S. City of Milwaukee Rail Ferry
99 Arthur St. (US-31), Manistee MI**

[Map & Driving Directions](#)

MARP will meet on the deck of this historic railcar ferry. Joint activities begin at 9:00 am with the group responsible for preserving and maintaining the ship. Details on the website www.marp.org. Or email marprail@yahoo.com.

FLUSHING WELCOMES MARP

Meeting Notes by Hugh Gurney

MARP members were warmly welcomed to the beautifully restored Flushing Railroad Depot by Mary Wilson, Museum Director of the Flushing Area Historical Society and Don Wilson, Treasurer for the organization. In his presentation, Don Wilson explained that the depot was constructed in 1888 by the Cincinnati, Saginaw and Mackinac Railroad which, in fact, ran between Durand and Saginaw, never reaching Cincinnati or Mackinac. The depot was saved from demolition in 1966 and became a restaurant. A fire in 1980 left only the walls standing. The Flushing Area Historical Society acquired the property in 1984 and began restoration in 1986. Opened as a museum in 1997, it is open to the public on Sunday afternoons, May-December. Passenger service at the Flushing Depot ended years ago, but four freight trains rumble by in each direction on weekdays, servicing mainly Dow Chemical in Midland.

In other business, Secretary Hugh Gurney was appointed Resident Agent for MARP, succeeding Treasurer Dave Randall, who now lives in Texas. The State of Michigan requires the Resident Agent for an organization to live in Michigan.

Chuck Merckel was appointed Outreach Chairman, succeeding Robert Tischbein, who had been serving in that capacity in addition to being Chair. Merckel hopes to reach out more to young people, especially college students, who are likely train riders. He also plans to contact travel clubs, making them aware of passenger train travel options.

The Executive Committee voted to appropriate \$1,000 to the City of Ypsilanti to help support the display of commuter rail equipment adjacent to the Freight House in that city as part of [YpsilantiHeritageFestival](#), August 16-18. While MDOT is paying to move the train set to Ypsilanti and return it to Owosso at the close of the festival, the City of Ypsilanti must come up with \$20,000 for fencing, ADA accessible ramps to the train, generators while the train is parked and other expenses. MARP's donation will be taken from a grant received from Transportation for Michigan ([Trans4M.org](#)). The commuter rail equipment on display is the equipment that will be used on both the proposed Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter line and the Howell-Ann Arbor (WALLY) line. Ypsilanti would be a major stop on the Ann Arbor-Detroit line.

Larry Krieg and Robert Patterson have applied for appointment to the SE Michigan Regional Transportation Authority's Citizens Advisory Committee. The RTA may be the organization overseeing the operation of the of the proposed Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter rail line. Krieg senses that many on the RTA Board may support

(NOTES continues in next column)

It's Our Birthday!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Plan to attend

MARP's 40th Annual Meeting

Durand Union Station

14 September 2013

Keynote Speaker

Kevin Keefe

editor/publisher TRAINS MAGAZINE

Watch your mailbox for your reservation form.

(NOTES continued from previous column)

commuter rail rather than the bus rapid transit proposal for service between the two cities.

Kaz Fujita raised concerns about the adequacy of the planned East Lansing Intermodal Station slated to get underway in August. The proposed terminal building appears to be no larger than the current, woefully inadequate, station. During construction, a temporary station will be located along the CSX tracks, a long walk to the trains running on the CN tracks. Parking will be limited and there will be no trackside shelter from the weather.

Foundations have been poured for the new rail station in Grand Rapids. Hopefully, the new facility will be ready by August 14, 2014, which is the 30th Anniversary of *Pere Marquette* service.

Rosemary Horvath is working with Indian Trails on the design and distribution of a flyer to make students at Alma College and Central Michigan University aware of *Indian Trails* motor coach service to those campuses. A stop is proposed across the street from Alma College.

Jim Wallington announced that overnight accommodations aboard the *S.S. City of Milwaukee* are still available in conjunction with the August 10 MARP monthly meeting in Manistee. We will be joining the organization which maintains the ship for a picnic lunch. Tours of the ship will be available in the afternoon.

Larry Sobczak is working out the final details before electronic sign boards at Pontiac become operational. The boards will show the arrivals and departures of Amtrak trains, *Indian Trails* intercity buses, and local transit *SMART* buses. Partial funding has been provided by Transportation for Michigan ([Trans4M.org](#)), *Indian Trails* and *America By Rail*. A donation from *SMART* is anticipated. The sign boards will be located so they can be viewed through the windows when the station is closed.

Michigan Operation Lifesaver Quarterly Meeting

Friday, August 9, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm

Learning Resource Center, Washtenaw Cnty Sheriffs' Complex
4135 Washtenaw Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48107

The meeting will feature interesting guest speakers and updates on education, engineering, and enforcement initiatives. Attendees will be guests of Jon Cool, President of the Mich. Railroads Assoc., for lunch following the meeting. The Learning Resource Center is near Hogback Road. Exit US-23 at Exit 37-A (Washtenaw Av). The location is ¼ mile east of the freeway, behind St. Luke Church. **Please RSVP to samcrowl@comcast.net** or phone him at 248-823-7037.

Ypsilanti Heritage Festival

August 16-18, Riverside Park, Ypsilanti MI 48197

The railroad freight house in Depot Town will feature a model train exhibit and tours of the **MI-Train** equipment that has been refurbished for use on the proposed Detroit to Ann Arbor and WALLY commuter routes. Admission is FREE. Complete information at YpsilantiHeritageFestival.com.

Michigan Rail Conference

Tuesday, August 27, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Lansing Community College, West Campus Conference Center

MDOT, in collaboration with Michigan Tech and National University Rail Center (NURail) will host this first Michigan Rail Conference to discuss the latest developments in passenger and freight rail, today and in the future. Register at www.rail.mtu.edu/mi-rail-conf to attend in person or online.

2013 Michigan Rails Conference

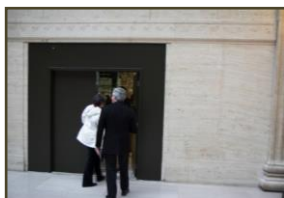
Saturday, September 21, Library of Michigan

Keynote speakers include Michael H. Hodges, author of *Michigan's Historic Railroad Stations*, and railroad scholar (and MARP member) Graydon Meints, author of *Railroads for Michigan*. MDOT will talk about their ongoing work throughout the state and MARP Vice-Chair Larry Krieg will discuss current day passenger travel. Other highlights include the opportunity to learn about the railroad material in the *Martha W. Griffiths Rare Book Room*. Continental breakfast and box lunch are included in the \$15 registration fee. Program schedule and registration at www.surveymonkey.com/s/HCXFFNQ

12th Michigan Railroad History Conference

5 October, Hilton Hotel, Downtown Bay City MI

Kevin Keefe, editor of *Trains Magazine*, will give the keynote presentation "*Motor City Limited - Long before Amtrak, the Detroit-Chicago Route Defined Fast, Competitive Corridor Service*". Also of interest is a presentation by Mark Worrall on "*Logging and Mining Railroad Carferries in Michigan*". Optional field trips on Oct 4 and Oct 5. Visit MichiganRailroadHistory.org for Early-bird registration and information on discounts for hotel accommodations.



**Where does
THIS door
lead?**

SEE PAGE 4

Do you think more U.S. cities should adopt policies and strategies that encourage economic development around rail and transit stations?

Yes  88%

No  11%

Total Votes: 171 Poll conducted 7/27/13 by
www.twiigs.com/poll/Business/110445

Congress Goes Home Leaving Much Undone

Following a contentious week of wrangling over the FY 2014 transportation spending bills, Congress threw up its hands and recessed until after Labor Day, at which time they will have only 9 session days to finish work on next year's budget.

Amtrak dodged a bullet or two with the overwhelming defeat of a proposal by Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA) to eliminate Amtrak's capital grant and the likelihood that a "flakey" proposal by the eponymously named Arizona Senator to eliminate Amtrak food service will not be brought to a vote. NARP President, Ross Capon, lauded NARP members for their help in beating back these anti-train proposals.

However, even with the defeat of the Broun amendment, the House is threatening to cut Amtrak funding \$400 million and to eliminate the high-performance rail grants which have been so important to Michigan and the Midwest in moving toward greater reliability and efficiency.

While lawmakers are in district during the next month, you have the opportunity for a face-to-face meeting to tell him or her **why it is important to you** that they **support the Amtrak funding levels endorsed by the Senate**.

Lawmakers often schedule town hall meetings or other public appearances during this time. [CLICK HERE](#) to find your Congressperson's website. Then contact their district office to set up an appointment or to obtain information about planned public meetings.

Comparing 2014 Transportation Budgets

Senate		House
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$1.45 b	Amtrak	\$1.05 b <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$550 m	TIGER grants	\$0* <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$1.94 b	New Starts	\$1.82 b <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$500 m	Bridge repair grant program	\$0 <input type="checkbox"/>

*House also takes away \$237 M from this year's TIGER funding.

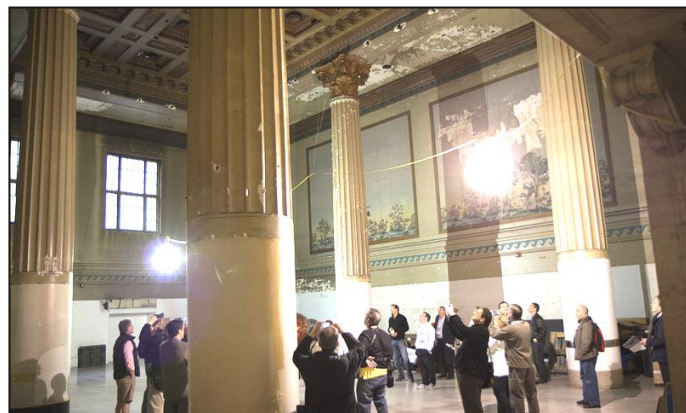
View from elsewhere . . .

"While people are thinking about renovating and improving Union station, I hope serious consideration will be given to providing general passengers with a dignified and beautiful place to wait for the trains. Like, um, how about the Main Hall? Move all those fine benches Amtrak has put elsewhere back into the Hall. Let its classic elegance be enjoyed by passengers, the way it was meant to be. Now, of course, they sit in a low ceiling cramped set of rooms that makes one feel like a sardine in a can. (If the first class passengers can have an elegant space back, why not the masses, I mean, us?)."

-- Louise Knight, Evanston IL, commenting on blogpost cited at right

"If freight railroads perceive they no longer face penalties for giving freight trains priority over passenger trains, and the passenger-train delays are extensive, the result could be a de-facto imploding of Amtrak."

-- Frank Wilner, transportation economist and author of *Amtrak: Past, Present and Future*, quoted in an [article](#) on a Federal court ruling stripping Amtrak of power to set enforceable on-time standards for freights; read NARP's commentary [HERE](#) on page 5 .



Activate Union Station !

Last month, a group of curious onlookers was given a peek into the hidden nooks and crannies of Chicago Union Station. Some MARP members may recognize the door pictured on page 3 above, but few have seen the former Women's Lounge pictured above, located off the NW corner of the Great Hall. Read [Ryan Griggin-Stegink's blog](#) and see more of CUS's hidden spaces. The two winning entries in the [Activate Union Station](#) place-making contest were announced August 5, each receiving \$5,000 to [bring their ideas to life](#) for 10 days between August 24 and September 2. Take a look.

Contact Your Lawmaker

Congressional Switchboard
202-224-3121

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