

# DANVILLE FLYER

*A PUBLICATION OF THE DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, INC. NRHS*

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The *DANVILLE FLYER* is published monthly by the **DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER** of the **NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** for its members and other interested persons.

The **DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, NRHS**, is a not-for-profit corporation organized to preserve the history of railroading in Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana and operates a museum located in the former Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad depot on East Benton Street in Rossville, Illinois. The museum is open weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day and features many railroad displays plus a large operating HO model railroad.

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading. Dues per year are \$17.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$20.00 for NRHS membership. Meetings are held on the third (3rd) Sunday of each month (except June, July, August and December) at the Pizza Inn Restaurant, Gilbert Street (Illinois Route 1) and Williams Street, next to CSX, in Danville, IL. with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.

## OFFICERS FOR 2006 - Our 38th Year

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Visit our Chapter WWW Home Page On-Line - <http://www.prairienet.org/djc-nrhs/>

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Danville Junction - created in 1880 when the Wabash Railroad was crossed by the Indianapolis, Bloomington and Western, disappeared into history on January 25, 2006 when the P&E (CSX) diamonds were removed from the Norfolk Southern line. The original depot stood where the trees and buildings are. The original station was closed in 1917. Photo by Doug Nipper

## Coming Events

*February 19, 2006*

**Danville, IL - Chapter Meeting at Pizza Inn, 1:00 PM CDT, meeting at 2:00 PM,**

*March 12, 2006*

Danville, IL - Monthly Chapter meeting - **note date change**

*March 11 & 12, 2006*

Cisco, IL - Train & Circus Show, 10-4, Cisco Center at firehouse

*March 18 & 19, 2006*

Urbana, IL - 29th Annual Train Show and Swap Meet, Lincoln Square Mall, 10-6 on Saturday and 11-5 on Sunday, no admission

*March 25 & 26, 2006*

Bloomington, IL Central Illinois Railroad Club Train Show, Interstate Center, West Route 9, 9-3 each day.

*April 8, 2006*

Chicago Rail Trip - Chapter trip to the Windy City. Ride Metra around Chicago, Depart Danville/Champaign area to Blue Island, see schedule this issue.

*April 9, 2006*

Wheaton, IL - Great Midwest Train Show - DuPage County Fairgrounds, 9:30 - 3 PM, \$7.

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## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, February 19 at the Pizza Inn. As usual, we meet around 1:00 PM, order from the menu and start the meeting around 1:45 PM. At the last meeting a date was set for the Chapter's first Chicago rail trip in many years. This year we are planning to make the trip on Saturday, April 8. A schedule is listed in this issue so get the date on your calendar and plan to attend. Since the chapter meeting would be a week later on Sunday a "rolling meeting" will be held somewhere on the trip. (The April meeting was moved up a week to avoid Easter)

Allen Cooke has lined up a neat trip for riding Metra and checking out various rail lines in the Chicago area. The ticket cost is only \$5 for the day and you get to ride the former Rock Island, former CB&Q and former CNW. Not bad for 5 bucks. In addition he has planned to ride on the new extension on the former CNW route.

During this meeting we will be setting some dates for getting records catalogued and packed to go to the Vermilion County Museum. We plan to wait until a warmer weather but we should start in late March and April to get records boxed and moved. Have you gotten your copy of the "History and Romance of Danville Junction", reprinted by the C&EI HS, yet. If not you really need to pick up one and Bob M. may have some at the meeting. There will still be two model sessions at Rossville so check out the schedule in this issue.

Remember, if we have over 6 inches of snow we may not be having a meeting or operating session at the museum. Check with some members before heading out.

## Operating Sessions

*Rossville Museum,  
CI&E, 12:30 to 3:00  
PM*

Saturday, February 4, 2006

Saturday, March 4, 2006

April 1, 2006 (no fooling)

*Danville and Western  
Railroad,  
1819 Coventry Dr,  
Champaign 12:30 to  
4:00 PM*

**Saturday, February 18, 2006  
(Canceled)**

Saturday, March 25, 2006

Saturday, April 15, 2006

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## The End of the Danville Junction Triangle

*by Doug Nipper*

Back in 1991 I wrote a short essay on the operations of the P&E and successors Penn Central and Conrail through Danville Junction and Cory. At that time North Yard was still open, Conrail still ran the trains and the two crossings at grade were still quite active, if only for local jobs on the Olin Secondary. The closing of North Yard was still a year away, but even then I never thought that two points of the "Danville Triangle" would cease to exist.

But on Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the beginning of the end happened with CSX pulling the diamond at Cory. Then two days later, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Allen Cooke reported that the two NS diamonds were gone at Danville Junction. It may have taken two days to complete this task since another railroad was involved. The process of straight-railing

Continued on Page 2

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## Membership

The NRHS and local membership renewal forms have been sent out to you. Please send these back to Allen Cooke as soon as possible to keep you on the list. Since the national was late in sending out we will give you a grace period of one month to get back on board.



a crossing is pretty straightforward, and in most cases the signal system can be left alone. Diamonds are insulated from the track circuit and jumpers carry the current around them, so the new straight rails take the place of those jumpers. In the near term, this is just what they did and CSX is still lining trains at what NS calls "Conrail Crossing". I am sure that NS will change this eventually and move their Electrocode cabinet up to North Yard.

In my photo survey of January 27<sup>th</sup>, I found that one diamond did survive the massacre at Danville Junction, that which carries the old City Main to Lauhoff over the old P&E. It is quite a contrast to have that track running parallel to the NS mains. True to their reputation, NS came in with new ballast and a tamper to properly line the new rail where the diamonds once were. The City Main, by contrast, looks a bit like spaghetti thrown on the ground. I would almost be willing to bet that they'll leave that old diamond in for quite some time, perhaps until the next time they dump some loads that they're pulling out of the bean plant. Yes, it's not a mainline, but the NS yard at Williams St. shows what industrial trackage should look like!

The only other oddity is that the signals for the old Olin Secondary at Cory are still lit, but those at Danville Junction were extinguished. I'm sure they'll recover the Cory signals as they are newer aluminum types, but the ones for Danville Junction may stand as a memorial to what this place used to be. Rick's write up will reflect on the long history of that crossing, but for me I remember lining signals 30R and 30L at North Yard for trains like INPE, PEIN, INIH, IHIN, the Mopac Villa Grove local, and numerous switch runs. This was a mainline well into 1980's, and had a unique flavor and history. Its "death of a thousand cuts" is unfortunate, but at least the line wasn't completely abandoned through Danville.

*May the "Danville Triangle" be long remembered.*



The Barringer photo, taken in the late 1930's, is from the rear platform on a westbound Wabash train. This is Danville Junction, the same location as the cover photo. The P&E is the line crossing left to right by the shanty. The C&EI "City Main" is on the left and the "Westville Branch" is the curve track toward the photographer. The crossing was protected by a "target" signal. The arm is up for a "highball" for the Wabash. When this crossing was electrically interlocked it was transferred to the "tower" at the mainline crossing, some 1/4 mile behind in this photo. Photo by Barringer, from the collection of the DJC.



Here's what Cory looked like right after the diamond was removed. The view is looking east towards Griffin St. 1-27-06 photo by Doug Nipper

## Wheel Report

### The History and Romance of Danville Junction

#### *When Rails were the Only Trails*

From 1880 to 2005 Danville Junction lived in the timetables of three railroads that served Danville. When the Indianapolis Bloomington and Western crossed the Wabash Railroad the junction was born. The C&EI later crossed the IB&W with a line to the North Street Station and the Evansville, Terre Haute and Chicago later crossed the Wabash and C&EI to create a station west of the Wabash. The Danville Junction Station served the area until 1919 as the main station in Danville.

For those of you that are interested in the history of Danville and Railroads in Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana the book of the above name, published in 1942, gives you a glimpse into the past and how the railroads, and the area, came to be. This book is really a must reading for all of you. The photos we have published in this issue give you a glimpse into the past as well as today. The reprinted book has many more photos, including maps, that will tell the story of Danville Junction and the history of the area.

If you live in Danville, or a surrounding community, it is very possible your ancestors came to Vermilion County by train and got off at Danville Junction. Some 30,000 passengers per month moved through the station around 1900. Remember, there were no highways, as we know them. Westville, Belgium, Georgetown and Grape Creek are some of the communities that were formed by immigrants that arrived to work in the coal mines in the area. Without the good transportation to Danville they would have gone elsewhere. Too many people today forget that the railroads built this country, and our community.

As Doug Nipper notes, the area of Danville Junction really encompassed a "triangle" area bounded by the P&E on the south, the Wabash/C&EI on the west and the curved part of the C&EI mainline on the east. There was Danville Junction (P&E, Wabash, C&EI), Danville (North Yard) (C&EI, Wabash) and Cory (C&EI, P&E) that formed the points of the triangle. Each location was about ¼ mile from the other and no train could pass without having a signal across the other at two locations. Except for the City Main only one train, or one set of trains, on one railroad could only move at one time. As a result someone was always waiting.

I first became more aware of the area when friend and society member Bob Barker became one of the operators at North Yard, or Danville, in the middle 1960's. Through the years of "hanging out" at the "tower" I have very fond memories of the area, watching the various moves across the diamonds. There are a lot of stories I could tell, well, maybe not all of them, but it was a neat place and a chapter in railroading that is gone. The interlocking machine that controlled all of the crossings rests in our museum in Rossville. Today the CSX dispatcher's office in Jacksonville, Florida controls the crossing.

When we formed our chapter in 1968 we felt that Danville Junction had to be the name. We hope that someday a photo of the depot will surface and we can get a "true picture" of our namesake. Keep on the lookout, if you find one let us know.

*Rick Schroeder*

Canadian National announced that it was withdrawing as a participant in the Chicago CREATE project. Alluding to only \$100 million in federal funding for the project being provided by the new SAFETEA-LU Act, a CN spokesman commented that "we were a unique partner in that an entire corridor had to be built before we started getting benefits from it... That left us in the uncomfortable position of having to provide funds for something we weren't getting any benefits from." The CREATE project includes plans to consolidate several existing rail routes through Chicago into 5 rail corridors, including eliminating several rail chokepoints and numerous city grade crossings.

Kansas City Southern announced that they had completed a test run of a double-stack train between Laredo, TX and Port of Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico. A KCS spokesman said that the test represented "the first international, in-bond, double-stack train" operated between KCS and its Kansas City Southern de Mexico subsidiary railroad. The spokesman added that the train's container shipments, which originated in China, arrived at their final destination 2 days faster than their customary routing through the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach

The village of Bourbonnais, IL closed the McKnight Road crossing. The crossing is where, in 1999, Amtrak's "City of New Orleans" passenger train struck a truck, resulting in the 11 deaths and over 100 injuries to passengers aboard the train. A village spokesman said that the crossing was closed as a result of improvements to another crossing nearby that allowed vehicular traffic to be rerouted.

On 1-18 CSX announced that it had completed sufficient repairs to its Gulf Coast line to allow resumption of local freight service. A CSX spokesman said that through freight service on the line would likely resume in early February, after which Amtrak will likely resume operating its "Sunset Limited" passenger train between New Orleans, LA and Orlando, FL. The line was severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina in September, 2005, with total damages estimated at approximately \$250 mil-

lion.

A committee of the California state legislature called for an end to push-pull operation of passenger trains in the state without locomotives on both ends of a train. "There is no doubt in my mind that push operations are a killer and should be made illegal," said California Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer, who went on to cite the 2005 grade crossing crash near Glendale, CA, which resulted in 11 deaths and 180 injuries. A spokesman for Southern California commuter rail operator Metrolink denied that push operation with cab cars was unsafe.

#### *Operating notes:*

R.J. Corman announced that they had begun operating 36.6 miles of industrial track in the Memphis, TN and Olive Branch, MS areas. The track is being leased from BNSF.

Watco Companies marked the first full week of their operation of the Vicksburg Southern Railroad. The VSOR operates 21 miles of track between Redwood, MS and Cedars, MS leased from Kansas City Southern. A Watco spokesman said that the company now operates 17 shortlines.

The City of Richmond, BC announced that they had reached agreement with Canadian Pacific Railway to purchase the west leg of CP's Van Horne Spur Line. Richmond's mayor, Malcolm Brodie, said that the acquisition would "allow us to build the next link in critically-needed new road works to service our city centre."

The Western, New York & Pennsylvania filed to lease, from Norfolk Southern Railway, and operate approximately 46 miles of line between Meadville, PA and Rouseville, PA.

BNSF and Canadian National announced that they had entered into a new operating agreement that they said would "increase capacity and dispatching efficiencies in Vancouver, BC and Chicago, IL, and between Memphis, TN and Centralia,



IL." Under the agreement, CN will obtain operational, dispatching, and maintenance control of 12 miles of joint track between the Fraser River Bridge in New Westminster, BC and ocean terminals on the south shore of Burrard Inlet near downtown Vancouver; BNSF will obtain control of CN's Corwith, IL interlocking, as well as trackage rights on CN for 30 miles between Corwith and Joliet, IL, and on 2 miles of CN's 49th Street line; and BNSF will gain trackage rights on CN's line between Memphis and Centralia.

RailAmerica announced that it had sold 3 of its Alberta, Canada shortlines to Canadian National: the 21-mile Central Western; the 120-mile Lakeland & Waterways; and the 600-mile Mackenzie Northern. A RailAmerica spokesman said that the company's remaining Canadian holdings include the Goderich-Exeter, the Ottawa Valley, and the Southern Ontario Railways

The Yakima Interurban Lines Association filed to abandon approximately 12 miles of its Naches Branch, between Yakima, WA and Naches, WA. And the New Amsterdam & Seneca Railroad filed to lease, from Sunny Farms Landfill Corporation, and operate approximately 2 miles of line near Fostoria, OH

### **R. J. Corman leases Memphis-area line from BNSF**

On Sunday, R. J. Corman Railroad Co. began moving trains over more trackage in the Memphis, Tenn., area. The company's Tennessee Terminal short line recently leased 36.6 miles of industrial track from BNSF Railway Co. — R. J. Corman's first trackage deal with the Class I — to serve more shippers in and around the city as well as attract new customers in nearby Olive Branch, Miss.

Now, the short line will interchange with CSX Transportation and BNSF along its Memphis line. The railroad's marketing officials are meeting with shippers to promote the short line's transportation and industrial switching services.

"Our goal is to provide quality transportation solutions to customers in the Memphis area," said railroad company President Pete Petree in a prepared statement. "The only way to do that is to meet with the customers and define what 'quality service' means to them."

### **CN to move some CSXT traffic; CSXT to sell Ontario line to CN**

The Class I's continue to forge track-sharing or haulage agreements aimed at speeding up traffic. New case in point: Canadian National Railway Co and CSX Transportation recently reached a long-term agreement under which CN will move some CSXT traffic and CSXT will sell a line to CN.

CN will move CSXT traffic to and from Sarnia, Ont., and to and from CSXT connections in Buffalo, N.Y., and Toledo, Ohio. CN also will move CSXT's long-haul traffic destined for Canadian Pacific Railway to London, Ont. Currently, CSXT and CPR interchange in Chatham, Ont. CSXT will sell to CN 12.5 track miles between Chatham and Blenheim, Ont., enabling CN to gain control of trackage connecting its network to Windsor yards and the Detroit-Windsor rail tunnel.

"The CSXT traffic will be a welcome addition to our network in Ontario, Michigan and Ohio, increasing freight densities and improving economies of scale," said Keith Creel, senior vice president of CN's Eastern Canada Region, in a prepared statement.

CSXT will retain track in Sarnia, continue to serve its customers in the city, and maintain operations on 27 miles between Sarnia and Wallaceburg, Ont. The Class I also will abandon about 26 track miles between Wallaceburg and Chatham in accordance with the Canada Transportation Act.

"CSXT's Sarnia customers will see better service and faster transit times via CN

compared with the more circuitous routing their traffic now takes via Chatham, Windsor, Detroit, Plymouth, Mich., and Toledo," said Dean Piacente, CSXT vice president of chemicals and fertilizer.

## **KCS buys RailCruise America luxury passenger equipment**

Kansas City Southern has purchased 4 locomotives and 8 luxury passenger cars from RailCruise America, based out of St. Louis, according to the KCS and information from the RailCruise America Web

site. Minor modifications are to be made to the equipment, which will then be used to augment KCS's existing "Southern Belle" fleet of business cars and locomotives. With the larger fleet, KCS will be able to position some equipment — which provides passenger service for dignitaries and KCS business associates — in Monterrey, Mexico.

The luxury train, popularly and informally known as "the green train" for its primary exterior color, was available for corporate, leisure, and social private charter travel to and from "anywhere you want to go." The train, powered by the company's own F-unit locomotives, made regular trips from St. Louis Union Station, and would frequently go to Chicago.

Why sell? Rising costs and railroad congestion, apparently. A statement by RailCruise America chairman Ed Boyce on the firm's Web site said, in part, "Although we ran 'full' to 'sold-out' much of the year, we have decided to take a step back and analyze what the future would be like. In the prospect of continuing escalating costs of fuel, trackage fees, insurance, city taxes, meat, and tomatoes, something would have to change, and that would be our prices, at least 20-25 percent."

"In addition [to] these items," Boyce's statement said, "the increasing congestion on the railroads resulted in a certain unpredictability of departure and arrival times. Higher prices with uncertainty do not make for good customer relations.

"We will continue to look into several other options so that Union Station and the City of St. Louis may still have its very own train...but this will take some time."

RailCruise America's 4F units include two former Maryland Commuter (MARC) F9PH cab units rebuilt from 1950's Baltimore & Ohio EMD F7A's and two EMD F7B's from Union Pacific, which it had picked up from Chicago & North Western's business-train fleet when UP bought C&NW in 1995. C&NW had the B units since its 1968 takeover of the Chicago Great Western. RailCruise America's passenger cars, mostly 1950's vintage, had a variety of backgrounds. For its own "Southern Belle" business train, KCS has three FP9's/F9B's of VIA Rail Canada/Canadian National heritage.

*Via Trains On-Line*

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## **Rail Earning Up - Railroads Making a Comeback**

It was up, up and away for the Class 1s in the last quarter of 2005. Here's some figures. Operating ratios (expressed as operating expenses as a percentage of operating revenue) improved (i.e. declined) for all of the Big Six. The parenthetical figure is the OR for the fourth quarter of 2004. One time gains or charges against income are excluded from the earnings figures. CN and CP figures were determined using US dollars.

CN: earnings up 14%, revenues up 9%, operating ratio 61.8 (64.0)

NS: earnings up 37%, revenues up 16%, operating ratio 73.7 (76.3)

CP: earnings up 45%, revenues up 14%, operating ratio 74.1 (77.2)

BNSF: earnings up 24%, revenues up 19%, operating ratio 76.8 (77.1)

CSX: earnings up 45%, revenues up 2%, operating ratio 81.3 (85.6)

UP: earnings up 27%, revenues up 13%, operating ratio 85.3 (86.0)

Data for the entire year was also impressive. The revenue figures are a bit misleading since the last quarter of 2004 had an extra week in it, but even counting that, revenue increases were less than profit increases. CSX's figures are disappointing in that respect; the big increase in earnings vs. the tiny increase in revenue indicates that most of the profit came from charging higher rates and cost cutting. Also, a lot of the 45% increase was due to non-rail revenue. From what I could tell, if the non-rail earnings were excluded, CSX's earnings would have increased about 33%. Still, their operating ratio improved nicely.

CN's operating ratio continues to amaze everyone who follows the railroad business. Their stock soared during 2005.

Demand for rail services has increased so much in the past year that the rates Class 1's could charge greatly outweighed their increased fuel costs. The downside is that shippers are beginning to grumble about capacity restraints and hence slower service.

*Bill Gustason via Illiana Group*

### ***Thirty Years***

**Thirty years ago the Chapter moved into the Rossville Station. For many of us it's hard to remember what it looked like inside. The first years were a lot of hard work inside and out. We are all getting older and thank goodness we don't have to start over again.**

**We have lost a lot of great members that helped get this museum started. Check out their names on the wall, they got us to where we are today.**

## Photo Section

Since Rick left your publishers with one whole blank page to fill , I figured more recent images from my digital camera might be appropriate. I wasn't really sure about the camera model I have when I first bought it, but now that it's obsolete I feel I have a pretty good grasp of its capabilities! Since some companies are ceasing film production, it's also good timing I suppose.

-Doug

Right: What started the process to eliminate the diamonds at Danville Junction and Cory was the new connection at Daisy Lane. This project was complete on February 6th when the signal system was placed in service.



This is the rail dump portion of the Vermilion Transmodal facility. They have received three trainloads of Western coal at the time of this writing. 2-6-06



Here is another view of the old Danville Junction location looking about due east on the former P&E. The "City Main" diamond still remains. 1-27-06



I always liked this view looking west on the P&E at Bowman Ave. The signal was for eastbounds at Cory. 1-27-06



Daisy Lane just a couple of years ago. The train is about where the frog of the new turnout is located. 2-22-04

