



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. The public is invited to attend.

MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2016-2018

Steve Vagnozzi	Chair
Open	Vice-Chair
Stewart Bolinger	Treasurer
Elizabeth Green	Secretary
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
John Langdon	Gov'l/Public Affairs Coordinator
Robert Tischbein	Membership Coordinator
Adam Tauno Williams	Meetings Coordinator
Open	Northern Region Chair
Warren Fritz	West Region Chair
Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Open	East/Central Region Chair
Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair

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

2017 MEETINGS

- 14 January** – REO Town Depot (former Grand Trunk Depot), Lansing
- 18 February** – Kalamazoo
- 18 March** – St. Johns
- April** – TBA
- 13 May** – Chicago Union Station
- June** – Executive Committee
- July** – TBA
- August** – Tentative Bangor
- 23 September** – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- October** – Tentative Grand Rapids
- November** – TBA
- December** – Executive Committee

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

Years of Living Dangerously

Commentary by Kay Chase

Are you familiar with the television documentary series *Years of Living Dangerously* airing on the National Geographic Channel? Now in its second season, the film sends journalists and celebrity activist investigators around the world to document the ways in which climate change is affecting the earth and its inhabitants.

I was unacquainted with the series, that is, until the local Sierra Club chapter sponsored a special showing recently in my community. The **episode shown** on this occasion dealt with ways in which society is learning to cope with the some of the challenges brought by climate change. This episode, titled "**Safe Passage**", focuses primarily on the development of electric and autonomous vehicles.

The buzz generated at recent **auto and consumer electronics shows** in Detroit and Las Vegas, respectively, certainly does reinforce the impression that self-driving cars are "the next big thing". We hear that Uber is using autonomous vehicles in Pittsburgh. And Michigan, the birthplace of the automobile, is making a serious commitment to connected and autonomous vehicle technology with the establishment of the **Mobility Transformation Center** at the University of Michigan. The **MTC** "aims to revolutionize the movement of people and goods in society" through research and development that will "lay the foundations for a commercially viable system of connected and automated vehicles".

To all of this hype, I want to say "Wait a minute!" Don't we already have "connected" vehicles moving people and goods safely and efficiently? They're called "trains". Convoys of "connected" trucks moving freight on rubber tires will never beat the energy efficiency of "**steel wheels on steel rail**". Proponents of autonomous vehicles focus on the safety aspects of the technology, an undeniably huge benefit in a society that saw **38,300 traffic fatalities in 2015**. Yet we know that passenger and commuter trains already offer one of the safest ways to move people from place to place, a point reinforced in a **rail safety study** recently released by the

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MARP Member Meeting

Saturday, January 14

10:00 am – Noon

REO Town Depot (former GTW Depot)
1203 S Washington Ave, Lansing MI 48910

Map & Directions

Tim Hoeffner, Director of MDOT's Office of Rail, will provide an update on the Michigan and Midwest rail projects as well as what to expect for Michigan passenger trains in the coming year. More information about the meeting can be found at marp.org/?p=6553. Or email marprail@yahoo.com.

2017 Dues are Due

It's Time to Renew Your MARP Membership

MARP memberships come due on the 1st of January each year. If you joined as a NEW MEMBER in the last quarter of 2016, your membership runs through December 2017. Everyone else is urged to renew their 2017 membership now.

Click here NOW to go to the MARP website and use Pay Pal to renew your membership. It is quick and easy. When you have finished your renewal, you may **click the Donate button** if you would like to make an addition contribution.

If you prefer, you may download a form **here** and mail it, along with your check, to MARP, Inc., PO Box 1368, Okemos MI 48805-1368.

Please let us know if you are not receiving your print issues of *The Michigan Passenger* newspaper. If you are not receiving the monthly on-line bulletin ON TRACK or the announcements of the monthly meetings, it is because we don't have your email address. You may send that information to us at **marprail@yahoo.com**. Or, if you are **mailing in a membership form**, please include your email address on the form.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Meet MARP's Newest Officers

When **Stewart Bolinger** retired from a long career as a government auditor, he decided to return to his roots in Michigan. Having worked with the Bay Area Rapid Transit system in California, he is no stranger to rail issues and he immediately set about exploring the scene in Michigan. Learning of the vacancy in the position of MARP Treasurer, he threw his hat in the ring and was appointed by the Executive Committee in July to fill the position. When he is not chasing trains, he likes to chase birds and spent several weeks last fall in Africa observing the spectacular avifauna in that corner of the world.

Elizabeth Green has been personally involved with the Amtrak station in Bangor as owner of the Railroad Café located within the station. When she learned of the opening for MARP Secretary, she immediately stepped up. Her interim appointment by the Executive Committee was confirmed by membership vote at the Annual Meeting. When not baking delectables for the Café, she helps with MARP outreach events and enjoys the local music scene. Ask her about her interest in exotic automobiles.

MARP Welcomes New Members

During the past year thirty-one Michiganders, two Buckeyes, and one Floridian have climbed aboard to join nearly 300 other MARP members as advocates for improved and expanded passenger train services in our state and region. Please give our new colleagues a warm welcome.

You have an important role to play in helping these new members find their niche within the organization. If you live in or near their community, you might invite them to chat over coffee in their hometown or offer them a ride to meetings. We can put you in touch if you send an email to

marprail@yahoo.com

David Seely	<i>Albion</i>
John A Rasmussen	<i>Ann Arbor</i>
Ron McCready	<i>Ann Arbor</i>
Yuri Popov	<i>Ann Arbor</i>
Frances Williams	<i>Auburn Hills</i>
Kenneth Irwin	<i>Beulah</i>
Jim Talbot	<i>Canton</i>
Peter Voorhees	<i>Detroit</i>
Stewart Bolinger	<i>East Lansing</i>
Andreas Hoffrichter	<i>Holt</i>
Paul Howland	<i>Grand Rapids</i>
Mark Cowles	<i>Howell</i>
Dirk Bartley	<i>Kalamazoo</i>
Kenneth Jones	<i>Kalamazoo</i>
Paul Michael	<i>Kalamazoo</i>
Nicholas Little	<i>Lansing</i>
Paul DeNapoli	<i>Livonia</i>
Dennis Day	<i>Manhattan</i>
Jim Sawyer	<i>Mason</i>
Larry Betzler	<i>Milford</i>
Claudia Douglass	<i>Mt Pleasant</i>
Tom Ralya	<i>Nunica</i>
Radford Jones	<i>Oakland</i>
Thomas & Sheila Moore	<i>Okemos</i>
Mark Miller	<i>Oscoda</i>
Robert Schmidt	<i>Pinckney</i>
Jacob Wootten	<i>Potterville</i>
Merry Benson	<i>Rochester Hills</i>
Todd Schultz	<i>Saint Joseph</i>
Karen Bennett	<i>Sterling Heights</i>
Tom Beal	<i>Ypsilanti</i>
Eugene Brown	<i>Naples FL</i>
Paul Knapp	<i>Germantown OH</i>

Is This the Job for You?

Do you have a home computer? A high tolerance for tedium? The freedom to give some quality volunteer time to MARP?

If you answered “Yes” to any of the above, our Governmental Affairs Coordinator, John Langdon, has just the thing for you. He needs someone to use online information sources to determine the legislative and Congressional districts of each of our members and add this information to our membership records.

An important part of our work as a 501c3 non-profit organization is to keep our decision makers in Lansing and Washington, D.C., informed about the issues we care about: intercity passenger trains and buses and local public transportation options. Thus informed, they are better able to represent the interests of you, their constituents.

— Other Volunteer Opportunities —

- ✓ Representing MARP at train shows, green fairs, and other public events.
- ✓ Contributing ideas or articles for *The Michigan Passenger* newspaper or the monthly on-line bulletin ON TRACK.
- ✓ Visiting legislators in their Lansing offices or when at home in their districts.

If you are interested in helping with any of these activities, let us know with an email to marprail@yahoo.com.

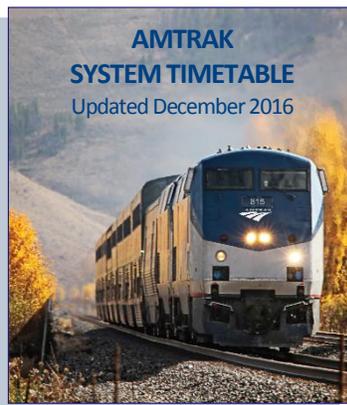
Amtrak System Timetable

Amtrak is no longer printing the National System Timetable. However, the publication will be available for viewing online or to download and print.

The online address (url) will change each time an update is published. However, you should always be able to link to the most recent issue by going to

amtrak.com/train-schedules-timetables

and clicking on the link [Amtrak System Timetable](#)



Amtrak no longer prints copies of the National System Timetable

To View the December 2016 Update

[CLICK HERE](#)

To Download and Print

The *Midwest Rail Report* is Back

The Midwest High Speed Rail Association announced last month that it is reviving *The Midwest Rail Report*, an occasional publication last seen in April of 2014.

The front page of the current issue features East Lansing’s new multi-modal station along with a nice photo taken by MARP’s staff photographer, Steve Sobel. Also featured is a short article about the 20 Midwest folks — including MARP’s past chair Larry Krieg — who traveled to Japan in October to ride on, and learn about, that country’s amazing high-speed rail system. You will also learn how the **Phased Network Approach** can be used to bring high-speed rail to the Midwest. Read the full articles [here](#).

In addition, MHSRA is offering the opportunity for you to contribute as a “sponsor” and ensure a hard copy of the newsletter is mailed to key officials at the state and federal levels. You may phone Dylan at 773-334-6758 or email Dylan@JustBuildIt.org for details.

TRU Annual Meeting

Transit Riders United (TRU) invites you to attend the annual meeting on Monday, January 30, 2017, at the MSU Detroit Center, 3408 Woodward, Detroit MI 48201. The program features transit updates from TRU, RTA’s Michael Ford, DDOT’s Dan Dirks, SMART’s John Hertel and M-1 Rail’s Sommer Woods. Doors open at 5:30pm for registration, refreshments and interactive small group activities. The program will run 6:00 – 8:00pm. A \$5 donation is suggested to cover event costs. **Please RSVP on Facebook** by Jan. 25. Or call 313-963-8872.

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OneRail.org, which finds that “shifting one percent of auto trips could save up to 200 lives a year”.

What makes all this worrisome is the fear that the nation will continue to underinvest in public transportation while chasing the shiny, new thing that itself requires huge amounts of capital and whose benefits may prove elusive.

Kay Chase is a long-time member of MARP and serves on the citizen advisory committee of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study. She believes that better public transportation is critical to creating livable communities, improving safety and mobility for all, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and preserving habitat.

82% of Michiganders live within 30 miles of a rail or bus station served by Amtrak.

Ridership on Michigan trains has increased 11 percent while population has increased only 0.2 percent.

View from elsewhere . . .

"The bizarreness of this idea speaks...for itself. Why should we offer a whole lane to cars that drive themselves...the more obvious, more rational thing to do is to just upgrade the tracks on the Van/Sea line and purchase bullet trains."

— **Commentary** by Charles Mudede inspired by a **New York Times article** that suggests building a separate highway lane between Seattle and Vancouver dedicated to self-driving cars.

"Increasing market share for rail by getting more goods and people onto trains would save lives and reduce injuries, significantly improving the overall safety of the nation's transportation system."

— Anne Canby, director of OneRail.org which has just published the 2016 edition of **Rail Safety in the United States**.

"It was great to experience the world-renowned bullet trains up close. I was impressed by how their punctuality is maintained along with their speed."

— Phil Darling, one of the group of 20 Midwest folks who visited Japan in October 2016, riding the newest of the high-speed trains, *The Shinkansen*. Read about their trip in the recently revived **Midwest Rail Report**.



Illinois Dedicates a New Station

Dwight IL began welcoming train passengers to its new station in October. The station is one of seven new or remodeled stations that are part of the upgrade of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor that will soon see trains running at 110-mph, powered by next generation **Siemens Charger SC-44 locomotives**. Attendees to the **annual meeting** of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission last fall enjoyed an outstanding on-board presentation during the train trip to St. Louis. IDOT project manager, John Oimoen, pointed out significant elements of the project along the way, including some of the 250 grade crossings, 39 miles new 2nd main, use of concrete ties & welded rail, and safety fencing in urban areas. He emphasized the complexity of this 250-mile long project involving scores of local jurisdictions and multiple funding sources. **View the presentation**.



BEAT THE WINTER BLAHS. Enjoy 20% Savings on Travel in Michigan during Amtrak's Annual Winter Sale. Jump on the *Wolverine*, *Blue Water* or *Pere Marquette* to explore Grand Rapids, Holland, Detroit, East Lansing, Port Huron, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, Chicago or several other destinations.

Valid for Sale

Now through March 30, 2017

Valid for Travel

January 3 - March 31, 2017

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202-224-3121

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Sen. Gary Peters

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