



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. The public is invited to attend.

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2018 MEETINGS

27 January – Member Meeting
Okemos Public Library

20 February – Executive Committee

March – Executive Committee

21 April – Member Meeting
MSU Detroit Center

May – Executive Committee

June – Member Meeting
Location TBA

July – Executive Committee

August – Executive Committee

September – Executive Committee

October – Member Meeting
Location TBA

November – Annual Meeting

December – Executive Committee

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

Is Your Mayor On Board?

We, as advocates, are often told that one of the most effective ways to get the attention of our lawmakers in Washington, D.C., is through our Mayors or other prominent local leaders. That was certainly the message that Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Association President (RPA), was emphasizing in the 27 February call-in briefing that drew well over 100 participants.

His message? Call your Mayor this week and ask that he or she “throw their support behind the full \$1.7 B in funding authorized by FAST Act rail grants for FY2019.” Ask your Mayor to pass along this message to your Congressional delegation. Tell your Mayor, “I live here, I vote here.” Tell him or her why the train is important to you and to your community.

If a phone conversation with your Mayor is not possible (they are busy people, after all), RPA has provided an easy way for you to send an email. Simply [CLICK HERE](#) to send a letter to your Mayor.

If you have an opportunity to talk with your Mayor, or any other elected official or community leader, RPA has provided a [series of one-pagers](#) to help you make your argument.

There are reasons for optimism when it comes to Congress. The **FAST Act of 2015** passed both houses of Congress by overwhelming majorities and annual budget bills since then have largely adhered to the funding levels authorized by the Act, including funding for Amtrak.

Each of us can make a difference by keeping in touch with our members of Congress. If you're not sure who represents you in Washington, RPA has created a very useful aid to help you [Find Your Elected Officials](#). If your U.S. Senator or Representative has a local office, get acquainted with the staff. Learn about town hall meetings or other local appearances. Ask to be put on the mailing list. Your voice will be more effective because you are seen as an informed and politically active individual.

Mathews always emphasizes how vitally important our “grassroots” voices are to the success of our national organization in DC. He signed off on the briefing call with this encouragement:

IT'S UP TO US TO FIRE UP THE NATIONAL IMAGINATION!



MARP Member Meeting

21 April 2018

10:00 am – Noon

MSU Detroit Center

3408 Woodward Ave, Detroit MI

[Map & Directions](#)

Note that there is no member meeting in March. Details of the 21 April meeting in Detroit will be made available as plans are finalized. Watch for an email announcement or check the website www.marp.org

Looking To a New Generation

By Adam Tauno Williams

At the end of 2017, the MARP executive committee resolved that the group needed to take a hard look at its practices, particularly around meetings and out-reach. MARP faces a not uncommon challenge: the aging of the Boomer generation.

MARP was founded in the early 1970s. This was, in large part, in response to the collapse of American passenger rail and the creation of Amtrak. This point in time also places MARP on the tail end of the wave of "voluntary affiliation", a sociological phenomenon which America experienced both near the end of the 1800s and again in the center of the 20th century, following the great wars. People at those two points in our history formed nearly all of the voluntary (mostly non-profit) organizations we are familiar with today. And nearly all those organizations are encountering the same challenges due to demographic changes and the aging of the population. Following the massive Boomer generation, the Gen-X generation was both smaller and facing greater economic challenges—leaving volunteer organizations facing challenges regarding succession. The participation of the subsequent generations in institutions of "voluntary affiliation", such as MARP, is notably lower.

Today the much-commented on Millennial generation is entering both the workforce and the civic spaces like a tidal wave. At some point in mid-2016, it was estimated that Millennials out-numbered the Boomers, marking a significant change in the demographic composition of America—and wake-up call to institutions.

In response to these circumstances, MARP has reduced the number of our "regular business meetings" to allow us to focus on out-reach and potential new venues. MARP plans to host additional meetings on university campuses, as well as new kinds of events, including, as an example, an artist showing at Art Prize 2018. The intention is to connect with those whom MARP does not connect with today—many of whom are unaware of MARP or its mission.

The Millennial generation has shown strong support for transit and related concepts such as urbanism. I feel MARP has a great deal to contribute in terms of experience and connections to those of the younger generation who are concerned or interested in these issues. To achieve that, MARP needs to get in front of them, as well as any group who will have us. Related to this is MARP's failure to engage deeply in issues of local [intra-urban] transit and last-mile issues that are critical to the success of an inter-city network. When engaging in those issues, local, deep, historic knowledge of a community are essential. This also calls for MARP to enter new spaces.

(NEW continues in next column)

Beat the Winter Blahs, Part III



The annual [Butterflies are Blooming](#) exhibition at the Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids is the largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibition in the nation. Tropical butterflies from around the

world fly freely in the Tropical Conservatory every March and April. Could there be a better way to escape a Michigan winter that is so determined to linger? If you happen to hit a warm spring-like day, wander outdoors through the Sculpture Garden and the Japanese Garden.

If it's blustery, a visit to the [Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library](#) is a good choice. The [Grand Rapids Film Festival](#) takes place April 13-15. The [Downtown Market](#) is full of gastronomic delights, among them a [BreakFast](#) on March 23 to celebrate the most important meal of the day. The [Meyer May House](#) is a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house in the [Heritage Hill Historic District](#). While you're in the neighborhood, take the [self-guided walking tour](#).

If you live in SW Michigan or the Chicago metro area, the [Pere Marquette](#) departs Chicago at 6:30pm, conveniently at the end of your workday. The 6:00am departure from Grand Rapids gets you back home in time to get in most of another workday. Mid-Michiganders can take advantage of [Indian Trails](#) service between Lansing/East Lansing and Grand Rapids. There are even options for people along the [Wolverine](#) route: take the early morning train to Kalamazoo with a thruway bus connection to Grand Rapids.

Once there, you can [Ride The Rapid](#), to most places you want to go. Catch your bus right next door to the Amtrak station. Or use your [Lyft app](#) to hail a ride.

Plan your getaway with the help of either of these visitor's guides: [Experience Grand Rapids](#) or [Grand Rapids Now](#).

(NEW continued from previous column)

The challenge of this noble intention is that it requires a distinctly different constellation of social capital than MARP has developed through its previous efforts.

Which brings us to my call-out: MARP needs you! If you have connections to universities, venues, neighborhood associations, community groups, or even art galleries, please consider how those connections could help bring MARP through this transitional period. Contact me at awilliam@whitemice.org. We are open to suggestions and novel—but, yes, inexpensive!—ideas.

Adam Tauno William is an At-Large member of the executive committee with responsibility for meeting venues and programs.

Annual Meeting

Midwest High Speed Rail Association

Saturday, March 24, 9:00a - 3:00p

Maggiano's Banquets

111 W Grand Avenue, Chicago IL 60654



The Midwest High Speed Rail Association is celebrating its 25th anniversary with an exciting line-up of speakers for the Annual Meeting in Chicago on March 24.

The Keynote Speaker is **Martin Ritter, CEO Stadler USA**. The Stadler FLIRT is the first trainset to use modernized safety regulations that make trains safer, more cost-effective and more attractive to passengers.

Bruce Horowitz, Principal, Rail Transport Economics for ESH Consult will provide insight on the recently released Tier-1 EIS for the Texas-Oklahoma (I-35) Passenger Rail Study. The study reinforces the values of the Phased Network Approach that Rick Harnish spoke about at MARP's annual meeting last fall, an approach that is he sees as key to building high-speed rail in the Midwest.

Chen-Yu Lin, Graduate Student, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who gave an interesting presentation at the Midwest Rail Conference in Kalamazoo last August, will speak on his research on shared-use rail corridors (shared by freight and passenger trains) to identify major train accident causes, construct risk assessment models, and develop risk mitigation strategies.

Levar Hoard, Managing Director, Urban Development Lab will speak about the development of hydrogen fuel cells to power trains, a technology that our neighbor Ontario has recently looked at.

(Midwest continues in next column)

(Midwest continued from previous column)

Audrey Wennink, Director of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Council has titled her presentation "Show me the Money: The opportunity for sustainable transportation funding in Illinois." Maybe some ideas for Michigan?

Chris Kopp, Transportation Planning Practice Leader, HNTB Corp., will share his thoughts on a Midwest Regional Rail Plan in light of the recent FRA-led study.

Other speakers include **Illinois Senator Steve Stadler**, Vice-Chairman, Senate Transportation Committee; **Kitty Kurth, President of Kurth Lampe** speaking on how to get your ideas heard; **Dave Winters, Midwest High Speed Rail Association**, with a legislative update; and **Rick Harnish, Executive Director, Midwest High Speed Rail Association** with an overview of progress made and opportunities for the future. [CLICK HERE](#) to Register

Take the Train to Chicago and Get DOUBLE POINTS!

Regional Transit Gets New Lease on Life!

THIS JUST IN: Before a packed RTA meeting on 15 March, Wayne County Executive Warren Evans presented a revised transit plan for the four counties of SE Michigan. Dubbed **Connect Southeast Michigan**, the plan calls for leveraging "existing rail line for more frequent service between Ann Arbor and Detroit, with new complementary feeder bus service to rail stations in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti." The plan also adds fifteen high-frequency regional routes, fifteen express routes for commuter and airport service, and infrastructure improvements along five premium routes to increase reliability. View the full document [here](#). A map is available [here](#). Read media coverage [here](#).

Support MARP with Your Easter Purchases

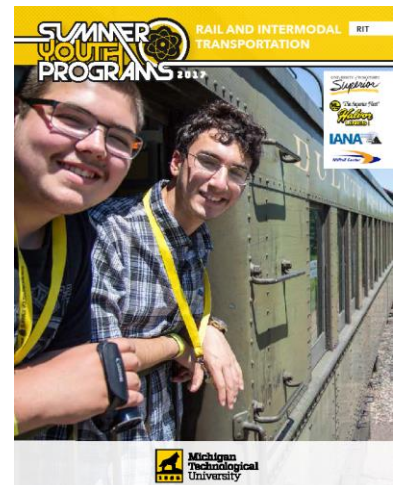
Make your first Amazon purchase through Amazon Smile between March 12th and 31st and Amazon will donate 1.5% of your total purchase to support inter-city passenger transportation in Michigan.

Just [click here](#) and follow the link to place your order.



Calling all 9th – 11th Graders

Students currently in the 9th through 11th grades are invited to explore rail and inter-modal transportation and have some fun doing it. Scheduled for July 8-14 at Michigan Technological University, the program features hands-on classroom activities and numerous field trips to give you a first-hand look at the Rail & Intermodal Transportation Industry - the people who keep the world on the move! Visit BNSF and CN railyard facilities and explore the North Shore Scenic Railroad & Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth MN.



FULL SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MAY 1

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION VISIT

www.rail.mtu.edu/event/rail-intermodal-transportation-summer-youth-program-2018

View from elsewhere . . .

"The recent spate of fatal passenger rail accidents leaves the impression that we have a rail safety problem in America. The truth is we do. Not only do we have too many accidents, but we also don't have enough trains. If our country prioritized rail and its infrastructure, we could build an awareness and a familiarity with train travel that would get people off the roads and onto safer, well-maintained, and well-run trains."

--Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Association CEO, in the **March issue** of Passengers Voice, where he also makes a case for greater attention to the human factors that are a leading cause of rail accidents.

"We will assist our commuter partners, where we can, to reach the deadline or to find viable alternatives to bridge the gap. It would not be prudent to force more commuters onto our highways in already congested urban regions; rail remains the best and safer solution."

--Richard Anderson, Amtrak CEO, in testimony before the **Senate Commerce Committee** in March. He said that NJ Transit and Metro-North "could be banned" from Amtrak tracks if they don't meet the PTC deadline.



First Ever Grand Rapids Coffee Crawl

This is one of the coolest ideas we've seen in a long time. During the First Ever Grand Rapids Coffee Crawl, just show your coffee crawl ticket to the driver and ride free, compliments of The Rapid, to your next caffeine fueling station. Ticket sales benefit the [Heartside Gleaning Initiative](#) that aims to increase access to healthy food for residents of disadvantaged downtown neighborhoods. The April 7-8 event is sold out, but you could visit [the coffee crawl website](#) to see the list of participating coffee shops to map out your own coffee crawl. Then use The Rapid's [trip planner](#) to plan your crawl. The [Coffee Crawl Video](#) will bring a smile to your face.



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