



# 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.

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### 2013 MEETINGS

- 12 January – Williamston Depot-Museum
- 9 February – Capac Depot Museum
- 9 March – St. Johns Railroad Station
- 20 April – Niles
- 11 May – National Train Day
- 15 June – Vicksburg Historic Depot & Museum
- 20 July – Flushing Historical Depot
- 10 August – City of Milwaukee Train Ferry
- 14 September – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- October – Grand Haven (tentative)
- November – Albion Amtrak Depot (tentative)
- December – Executive Committee

Visit [www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org)  
Email [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com)

## Border Crossing Issues Difficult To Resolve

By Hugh Gurney

Border crossing issues were the focus of remarks by Kris Wisniewski at the MARP meeting in Williamston on January 12. Wisniewski heads the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition, a non-profit advocacy group working to improve the movement of goods and people between the United States and Canada. Members of EBTC include the states of Michigan, New York, Vermont and Maine and the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland & Labrador. In the course of a year, some 16 million people travel between the two countries and 75% of all trade between the U.S. and Canada crosses within the territories of member states and provinces.

Wisniewski represents member states and provinces in working with the federal governments of the U.S. and Canada, all of whom want to see goods and people move more easily between the two countries. Travel and tourism are major issues. The fact that most border crossings are at tunnels or bridges complicates matters as space is limited for infrastructure improvements. At the border, a U.S. inspector is attempting to carry out the mandates of 23 separate federal agencies!

At Montreal and Vancouver, efforts are going forward to have U. S. Customs and Immigration officials do inspections at the terminals, similar to the way air travel is handled between Canada and the U.S. Trains would be cleared at Montreal or Vancouver and proceed directly to the border without intervening stops. At the present time, U. S. officials are doing some review at the Vancouver station, but the real inspection continues to happen at the U. S. border.

U. S. inspections of trains and train passengers in Canada would require a treaty between the two nations, similar to the treaty that permits airport inspections in Canada. Inspection areas at Canadian airports are considered sovereign U. S. territory, similar to an embassy. Needless to say, the process will be fraught with complications. Unlike the situation in Europe, both the U. S. and Canada are very defensive when it comes to national sovereignty. The proposed treaty will deal with passenger rail, ferries and marine services. (Continues **BORDER**, page 2)



Photo Ron Kriesch Collection

**MARP MEMBER MEETING**  
**Saturday, February 9**  
**10:00 am – 1:00 pm**  
**Capac Historical Society Museum**  
401 East Kempf, Capac MI 48014  
Map & Directions

T.J. Gaffney, former Director of the Steam Railroading Institute and past Curator of Collections for the Port Huron Museum, will speak about his recently published book *Rails Around The Thumb*. Details on the website [www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org) or send email inquiry to [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com).

# A Visit to Capac

by Rosemary Horvath

The Capac Historical Society paid Grand Trunk Railroad one dollar to purchase the Capac Train Depot built in 1914. In 1988 the building was moved from alongside the tracks to its current location on the 2-acre campus of the Kempf Memorial Center. The former depot now houses museum exhibits.

John Grzyb, society president and Capac Village Council member, said moving the historic building cost \$11,000. With dimensions of 113 feet long and 28 feet wide, the depot was moved in two sections and is considered the largest depot between Port Huron and Durand.

Mr. Grzyb will open the depot on February 9 for MARP members and community friends to tour. He warns that the building is not heated so dress appropriately. You won't want to miss seeing the popular Kempf Model City, a miniature model 40 feet long and 4 feet wide built to scale and described as a mechanical and electrical marvel.



The 100th anniversary of the Kempf Model City will be observed in 2016. The Kempf Brothers charged spectators a dime when they traveled throughout North America to display this "Mechanical Wonder of the Ages" complete with commercial buildings, circus tents, harbor with cargo ships and lighthouse, suspension bridge, industrial smokestacks, parks, farm, train, and much more. The original model city had been destroyed in a train crash in Georgia.

Adjacent to the depot is the Kempf Memorial Center built in 2000 as a meeting hall and library. The Society has acquired historical papers and artifacts from an area stretching from Port Austin to New Baltimore. Grzyb said the research library has plat books as early as the 1800s when the area was settled. The Grand Trunk Railroad station opening in 1866 spurred development that led to Capac village incorporation in 1873.

Capac is located between Lapeer and Port Huron, along the route of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad and Old M-21. To reach the Capac Historical Society Museum, travel north from I-69 Exit 176 on Capac Road to the second blinking light, approximately 1.8 miles. Turn right (east) and look for the small museum signs

*Continues BORDER from page 1)*

For passenger rail crossings between Michigan and Ontario, the situation will be more like the crossing of the **Maple Leaf** at Niagara Falls. There, a new facility is being built on the New York side where all inspections will take place. While designed to facilitate efficiency, all passengers will be required to get off the train and pass through the inspection facility.

As to rail freight, talks continue on having overseas freight inspected only at the North American port of entry. For example, goods entering at Port Rupert, British Columbia would be inspected there, and the train could then enter the U.S. somewhere in North Dakota without an additional inspection. A similar situation could take place for goods destined for Canada entering at U.S. ports.



Amtrak's **Maple Leaf** crosses the border at Niagara Falls.

The EBTC has prepared a White Paper "Improving and Expanding Cross Border Passenger Rail Service through the Implementation of Pre-clearance". The paper may be downloaded from the website [www.ebtc.info](http://www.ebtc.info)

***If you received a 2013 dues notice in January, please return the renewal form with your check as soon as possible to continue receiving the benefits of MARP membership !***

## CNN's Attack on Passenger Trains

by Shira Orlowek

Did you see the Anderson Cooper 360 report this weekend? On Friday night, CNN ran a segment, titled "High Speed Rail Boondoggle," attacking the U.S. high-speed and inter-city rail program.

Cooper's show "investigates" a federal rail investment in Vermont--but the story fails to mention that the project eliminated the need for the train to wastefully change directions in Massachusetts, and allowed for additional, much-needed improvements to make the train more efficient.

At \$53 million, the Vermont program was a low cost project that gave a lot of bang for the buck. But you wouldn't know if by watching the unbalanced CNN report.

Cooper is planning to continue investigating high-speed rail projects all over the country in the months to come. But we need him to make sure those reports present our high-speed rail investments accurately and fairly.

The truth is, the Vermont program was exactly the kind of infrastructure project President Obama's federal stimulus package was meant to fund--projects that could be done quickly, create jobs, and have long-lasting value for our economy.

We need to encourage our elected leaders to continue investing in upgrading our railroads--our economic future as a nation depends on it. But it will be a lot harder to build public pressure and political will for increased federal investment in high-speed rail if mainstream media outlets like CNN create a perception that high speed rail is just another wasteful federal pork program.

Can you [CLICK HERE](#) to send a note to the producers of Anderson Cooper 360 today, and tell them we're watching, and we expect them to portray the high speed rail program responsibly?

Let's make sure the public is getting the whole truth on high-speed rail--not just sensationalist "gotcha" reporting.

*Shira Orlowek blog was posted 29 Jan on Midwestsr.org*

## this 'n' that . . .

### CHI-DET/PNT Passenger Rail Corridor Program - UPDATE

More than 700 comments were received from government agencies, stakeholder organizations and the general public during the scoping period that ended Oct. 15, 2012. The feedback provided valuable input on key issues to be addressed and helped the program team confirm and update the purpose and need statement.

The program team is currently evaluating route options in the area known as South of the Lake (SOTL), one of the busiest freight rail routes in the country - with few options for increasing capacity. Also, SOTL's proximity to Lake Michigan and its unique ecosystem present several environmental concerns. After the available route options in SOTL are complete, the program team will expand the route alternatives analysis eastward to include the full corridor between Chicago and Detroit/Pontiac, Mich.

The next program update is expected March 2013. Details will be provided for how, when and where to review and comment on the route alternatives being considered.

Visit [GreatLakesRail.org](http://GreatLakesRail.org) to view the comments received.

### All Aboard in Watervliet?

Watervliet area resident Rick Rasmussen has been working with Amtrak & MDOT on behalf of the Watervliet DDA over the last several weeks to advance the idea of a train stop in Watervliet. He has set up an email account to gather support for the idea. If you would like to add your voice, send a message to [watervlietrain@gmail.com](mailto:watervlietrain@gmail.com). Amtrak's Pere Marquette comes through town around 9:30 every morning on its way to Chicago and comes back through around 8:30 every night on its way back to Grand Rapids. The train stops in Bangor and St. Joseph.



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[BOOK TODAY](#)

## Our Mailing Address Has Changed!

Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers  
P.O. Box 180076  
Utica, MI 48318-0076

Our email address remains: [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com)

Visit us on the web at: [www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org)

### View from elsewhere . . .

*"The report on high-speed rail on the Jan. 25 edition of Anderson Cooper 360 presumed that investing in rail is wasteful if the trains do not go very fast and very often. Steadily rising ridership on most Amtrak services—not just the Northeast Corridor—over the past decade shows that American travelers do not agree."*

-- Ross Capon, Amtrak President & CEO; read entire statement at [tinyurl.com/marp00063](http://tinyurl.com/marp00063)

*"Together, we determined that a modern economy requires railroads and highways to speed travel and commerce, schools and colleges to train our workers. Together, we discovered that a free market only thrives when there are rules to ensure competition and fair play. Together, we resolved that a great nation must care for the vulnerable, and protect its people from life's worst hazards and misfortune."*

-- President Obama's 2013 inaugural address  
Read the text and watch the video at [whitehouse.gov/inauguration-2013](http://whitehouse.gov/inauguration-2013). Segment occurs at about 5:30 minutes.

*"In recent years, passenger rail has fallen on tough times, not because it isn't cost effective, convenient, or environmentally beneficial, but because governments in Canada have continually downgraded their commitment to this particular form of transportation."*

-- MP Carol Hughes, making the case to Canada's House of Commons for more passenger train service in Ontario's northern and rural areas



Photo by Mark McCoy

*"I regret the poor lighting, but that's what it looked like in Madison at the time, with solid gray skies, no sunlight, and darkness only a few minutes away . . . on the other hand, the gloomy day fit the occasion and the State Capitol is centered in the background in this shot."* This was the scene as described by WisARP's Mark McCoy as the first of four Talgo trainsets moved through Madison on Nov 30 bound for certification testing in Pueblo CO. Two of the trainsets will be put into service on the *Amtrak Cascades* route. The other two, ordered by Wisconsin, will remain at Talgo's Milwaukee plant, while a breach-of-contract lawsuit between the builder and the state is decided. Gov. Walker refused \$810 million in Federal funding for the proposed Milwaukee to Madison service. The State of Wisconsin has refused to finish paying for the equipment after the Legislature pulled funding for a maintenance facility.

## Share Your Transportation Story and Win Dollars for MARP!

What would you like to tell the world about train travel in Michigan? – the good, the bad, the ugly. Can you ride your bike to station? Does the train go where you want to go? What do you want decision-makers to know?



Trans4M, the statewide transportation coalition of which MARP is a founding member, is collecting videos (at least 25 seconds in length) to tell Michigan's transportation story. We'll use the videos to help state legislators make wise decisions about Michigan's transportation future.

Capture your transportation story on any video device. We'll post it on Trans4M's *Lights, Camera, Transportation* YouTube channel. You will be entered in a raffle to win one of twenty \$50 gift cards. In addition, the organization with the most videos will receive \$1,000 towards its transportation initiative of choice.

How to submit:

Step 1 – Capture your video and story. Check out the [contest rules](#)

Step 2 – [Fill out the form](#)

Step 3 – Submit your video to [marprail@yahoo.com](mailto:marprail@yahoo.com)

Step 4 – Check out the Lights, Camera, Transportation YouTube Channel

Contest deadline has been extended through February 24. More information at [trans4m.org/share-your-story](http://trans4m.org/share-your-story)



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