

CONVERSATIONS 2025

The annual conference of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art
May 16-18, 2025, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Lake Forest, Illinois



CRP&A | CENTER FOR RAILROAD
PHOTOGRAPHY & ART



NORTH

City of Lake Forest

Lake Michigan



LAKE FOREST COLLEGE

555 N. Sheridan Road
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045
847-234-3100
www.lakeforest.edu

Public Safety
847-735-5555

Saturday programs
8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.
1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Sunday programs
8:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

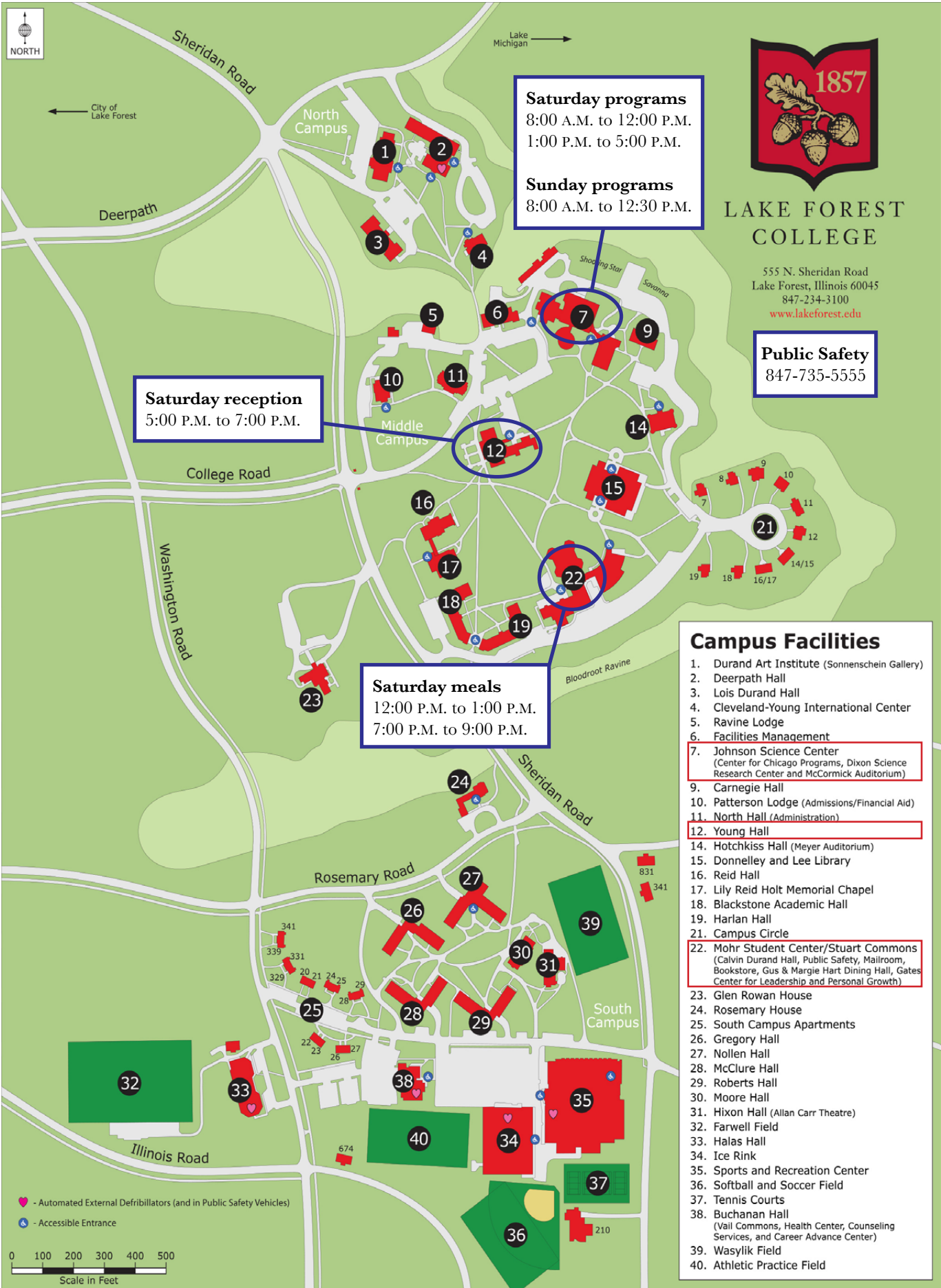
Saturday reception
5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Saturday meals
12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M.
7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Campus Facilities

1. Durand Art Institute (Sonnenschein Gallery)
2. Deerpath Hall
3. Lois Durand Hall
4. Cleveland-Young International Center
5. Ravine Lodge
6. Facilities Management
7. Johnson Science Center
(Center for Chicago Programs, Dixon Science Research Center and McCormick Auditorium)
9. Carnegie Hall
10. Patterson Lodge (Admissions/Financial Aid)
11. North Hall (Administration)
12. Young Hall
14. Hotchkiss Hall (Meyer Auditorium)
15. Donnelley and Lee Library
16. Reid Hall
17. Lily Reid Holt Memorial Chapel
18. Blackstone Academic Hall
19. Harlan Hall
21. Campus Circle
22. Mohr Student Center/Stuart Commons
(Calvin Durand Hall, Public Safety, Mailroom, Bookstore, Gus & Margie Hart Dining Hall, Gates Center for Leadership and Personal Growth)
23. Glen Rowan House
24. Rosemary House
25. South Campus Apartments
26. Gregory Hall
27. Nollen Hall
28. McClure Hall
29. Roberts Hall
30. Moore Hall
31. Hixon Hall (Allan Carr Theatre)
32. Farwell Field
33. Halas Hall
34. Ice Rink
35. Sports and Recreation Center
36. Softball and Soccer Field
37. Tennis Courts
38. Buchanan Hall
(Vail Commons, Health Center, Counseling Services, and Career Advance Center)
39. Wasylik Field
40. Athletic Practice Field

♥ - Automated External Defibrillators (and in Public Safety Vehicles)
♿ - Accessible Entrance



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Conference patrons

John Atherton, Eric & Katherine Baumgartner, Ted Benson, William & Kate Botkin, Ed Burkardt, Norm Carlson, Lyn Corder, Kit Courter, Dana & Jerri Davis, David Foote, Bon French, Richard Garabedian, Todd Halamka, Wayne Hansen, Paul Hensler, Daniel Higgins, Edward Johnson, Nona Hill & Clark Johnson, Drake Hokanson, John Kirchner, Al Louer, Neil MacCormick, Jeff Mast, Brian Matsumoto, David Mattoon, Tim McMahan, Greg Molloy, Peter Mosse, Steve Mueller, Martin O'Toole, Ken Rehor, Karl Sakas, David Saums, Chip & Leslie Savoye, Linda & Bill Schafer, Michael Schmidt, Thomas Szczesniak, Rich Tower

Sponsor

Everyone at the CRP&A extends our gratitude to the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society for their sponsorship of our Conversations conferences; be sure to visit their table in the lobby during the breaks and reception.

Front cover

Dennis Zieminski
Sunset Over the Arroyo
36x40 inches, oil on canvas

Rear cover

During a magnificent display of the aurora borealis on October 3, 2002, the multiple headlights of SD40-2 765 illuminate BC Rail's Fort Nelson Subdivision right-of-way a short distance north of Klua during the JN train's long journey to the railway's northernmost terminus. Photograph by Dale Sanders

Print raffles

THREE MATTED AND FRAMED prints are available in this year's raffle, a gelatin silver print from Dick Dorn, and two archival pigment prints from the Center's Wallace W. Abbey Collection. Drawings will take place at the end of the presentations on Saturday afternoon. Please note that you must be present to win, and any shipping needs will be the responsibility of the winners.

Tickets

Prices for each raffle are \$10 for one ticket, \$25 for three, or \$40 for five. You may purchase tickets from our staff on Saturday during the morning registration, morning break, lunch, and afternoon break.

About the prints

Dick Dorn has graciously donated a 16x20-inch gelatin silver print for the raffle. He took the photograph on February 9, 1978 at Norden, California, as one of Southern Pacific's rotary snowplows worked west back toward Emigrant Gap following a run to Truckee on the previous day. The crew stopped in Norden to fuel and water the rotary and accompanying B-unit that provides power, and they picked up lunches from the cook house while they were stopped. The rotary is seen after the stop, exiting the Norden snowshed and passing under the signal bridge—a style used on Donner Pass from Emigrant Gap, California, to Sparks, Nevada.

Wallace W. Abbey (1927–2014) had a long career as a railroad journalist and public relations executive. A native of Chicago and graduate of the journalism program at the University of Kansas, he joined the staff of *Trains* magazine in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1950, where he worked alongside legendary editor David P. Morgan. Transitioning to a railroad industry career in public relations, his insider access led to a singular perspective of railroading in the Upper Midwest spanning the dramatic period of the 1940s through the 1970s. The CRP&A took on his photography collection in 2012, with *Trains* magazine providing a \$10,000 preservation grant.



Above: Southern Pacific rotary snowplow at Norden, California, on February 9, 1978. Photograph and 14x19 gelatin silver print by Dick Dorn



Left: Chicago & North Western 4-6-2 no. 514 rides the turntable at the Erie Street engine terminal in Chicago in 1952. Photograph by Wallace W. Abbey; 14x13 archival pigment print by the CRP&A



Below: On Thanksgiving day in 1948, Union Pacific 4-6-6-4 locomotives wait beneath the cooling tower at North Platte, Nebraska. Photograph by Wallace W. Abbey; 13x19 archival pigment print by the CRP&A

Schedule

Friday

Grohmann Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Exhibition opening of *The Kalmbach Art Collection: Pairing Words and Imagery*

5:00 P.M. Reception begins
6:00 P.M. Gallery talk by Kevin P. Keefe
8:00 P.M. Conclusion

Saturday

Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois

McCormick Auditorium and Lounge of Lillard Science Center, no. 7 on campus map

8:00 A.M. Doors open, pastries and drinks available, *lobby*
Presentation of photographs by conference attendees on repeat in the auditorium
9:00 A.M. Welcome and opening remarks
9:15 A.M. Matt Heeren, Sayre Kos, John Ryan, Brian Schmidt, *We've Been Working on Our Railroad (Photography)*
10:15 A.M. Break
10:45 A.M. Scholarship recipients: Molly Engelman and Joe Stroppel
11:15 A.M. Kit Courter, *Fifty Years of Luminous Railroad Night*
12:00 P.M. Lunch, *Calvin Durand Hall of Mohr Student Center, no. 22 on campus map*
1:00 P.M. Scott Lothes, *Center Updates*
1:30 P.M. Bon French, *Age of the Streamliners: Photographs by Dick Neumiller*
2:15 P.M. Dennis Zieminski, *My Train Passion Expressed in my Paintings*
3:00 P.M. Break
3:30 P.M. Dick Dorn, *Winter in the Golden State*
4:15 P.M. Dale Sanders, *Northern Light: Creating a Portrait of BC Rail*
5:00 P.M. Raffle drawings for Wallace W. Abbey and Dick Dorn prints

Move to Young Hall, no. 12 on campus map

5:15 P.M. Reception with appetizers and drinks

Move to Calvin Durand Hall of Mohr Student Center, no. 22 on campus map

7:00 P.M. Dinner (separately ticketed)

Sunday

McCormick Auditorium in the Lillard Science Center, no. 7 on the campus map

8:00 A.M. Doors open, breakfast sandwiches and drinks available, *lobby*
9:00 A.M. Adrienne Evans, Heather Sonntag, and Gil Taylor, *Collection Updates*
9:45 A.M. Andrew Nelson, *The Pioneers of Railroad Audio in the Steam Era: John Prophet III, Howard Fogg Jr., and Brad Miller*
10:30 A.M. Break
11:00 A.M. Kristen Decker, *Chasing the Shot*
11:45 A.M. James House, *And a Railroad Runs Through It*
12:30 P.M. Conclusion

Lake Forest Wi-Fi instructions

1. On your device, choose ForesterNET.
2. Once connected to ForesterNET, a registration page should appear. If the registration page does not open, use a web browser to go to: lakeforest.edu
3. On the registration page, choose GUEST and enter your information, then accept the terms of service for ForesterNET.
4. The next page will show a progress bar while your access to ForesterNET configures.
5. Once configuration is completed, you will be temporarily connected to the wireless network.
6. Check your email and click the confirmation link. If you don't click on the link, you will only receive ten minutes of access.

Presenters



Kit COURTER, Torrance, California

Fifty Years of Luminous Railroad Night, Saturday, 11:15 A.M.

Kit Courter is a Southern California photographer who prefers to depict night scenes using available light in its various forms. An avid outdoorsman since childhood, he was inspired to photograph scenes at night to capture his experiences while camping in the mountains and deserts of the American West. This includes time-lapse images that record motion in a scene as well as images that explore the mystery of historical and larger-than-life mechanical subjects set in their own light.



Kristen DECKER, Stuarts Draft, Virginia

Chasing the Shot, Sunday, 11:00 A.M.

Kristen Decker is a coordinator for Virginia Scenic Railway, a conductor, and a passionate railroad photographer. She searches out quality over quantity, emphasizing composition, lighting, and creativity. She started photographing railroads in 2008 and found an appreciation for logos on rolling stock which eventually led to photographing the head end of trains. Kristen and her spouse (Danny) have two amazing children (Brigette & John) who also share a love for railroad photography. She has two pets (Toona and Thurmond), both adopted while on railfan adventures.



Dick DORN, Yuba City, California

Winter in the Golden State, Saturday, 3:30 P.M.

Dick Dorn has been photographing railroads for more than sixty years. His early interests were his hometown Sacramento Northern, Western Pacific, and Southern Pacific. He has written nearly forty magazine articles featuring his photography and co-authored two books. He is best known for his winter photography on Donner Pass, the main subject of his presentation. He taught elementary school for thirty-five years in Yuba City, where he lives with his dog, Jungo, on ten acres.



Bon FRENCH, Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Age of the Streamliners: Photographs by Dick Neumiller, Saturday, 1:30 P.M.

Bon is the chairman of Adams Street Partners. Since joining the company in 1980, he has helped build it into a global private markets investment firm with \$61 billion under management. He also serves on numerous boards including the Center's, which he has chaired since 2013. Often while traveling with his friend Dick Neumiller, Bon has photographed more than 700 railroads in the U.S. and Canada. He is an active model railroader, and in college he worked as an extra board brakeman for the Soo Line Railroad out of Schiller Park, Illinois.



Matt HEEREN, Roscoe, Illinois

We've Been Working on Our Railroad (Photography), Saturday, 9:15 A.M.

Matt recently celebrated his twentieth anniversary as a locomotive engineer at the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad, working out of Janesville and Madison, Wisconsin. Coming from a long line of railroad workers, Matt takes great pride in continuing this family tradition. He and his wife, Jennifer, have two children and a lively household that includes three cats and three chickens. He has deep passions for railroad history and moniker art, and he recently took up drone photography.



James HOUSE, Southbury, Connecticut

And a Railroad Runs Through It, Sunday, 11:45 A.M.

James was born in Maryland and grew up as the son of an avid railfan and former railroader. Railfans and railroaders were part of his everyday existence; the stories they told and the lifestyles they lived were major parts of what shaped him and his outlook on life. James has worked for the Chicago & North Western, CSX, Canadian Pacific, Montana Rail Link, and CT Rail. His fifty years as a railfan and now thirty-year railroad career have been a never-ending quest to carve out his own stories and experiences within the world of railroading.

Sayre KOS, Mundelein, Illinois

We've Been Working on Our Railroad (Photography), Saturday, 9:15 A.M.

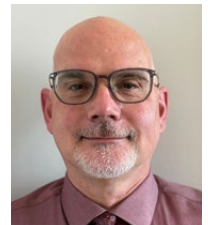
Since last presenting at Conversations in 2007, Sayre has worked for sixteen years in the railroad industry including fourteen years for Amtrak, where he was promoted from yardmaster to trainmaster; he later worked in the railroad's service planning department. In 2023, he began working at DB E.C.O. North America, consulting on various passenger rail projects in the United States and Canada. Sayre and his wife, Jennifer, have four children—Mikey, Christopher, Caroline, and Brooklynn—along with various pets.



Andrew NELSON, Belvidere, Illinois

The Pioneers of Railroad Audio in the Steam Era: John Prophet III, Howard Fogg Jr., and Brad Miller, Sunday, 9:45 A.M.

Andrew has been interested in railroads and their sounds since he was very young. He has been taking photographs since 1984, and he has written dozens of articles in various magazines and one book, *The Green Bay & Western Color Pictorial*. Andrew retired in 2022 after spending thirty-three years as a high school English teacher and administrator. He now works full-time as an instructor and student teacher supervisor for the Department of English at Northern Illinois University. He and his wife, Wendy, have been married for thirty-one years.



John RYAN, Alpena, Michigan

We've Been Working on Our Railroad (Photography), Saturday, 9:15 A.M.

Born and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan, John's interest in railroads started at an early age by various relatives who made sure he had access to railroad periodicals. His interest in photography started when his mother, Helen, started taking him to meetings of the Ann Arbor Train and Troll(e)y Watchers, a monthly slide show group. Steve Sobel and other various mentors significantly shaped his work. John still calls Michigan home, is self-employed, and spends a great percentage of the year traveling and doing freelance photography.



Dale SANDERS, Ferndale, Washington

Northern Light: Creating a Portrait of BC Rail, Saturday, 4:15 P.M.

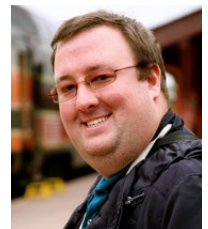
Dale Sanders was born in Oroville, California, in 1957 and earned a bachelor's degree in visual communications (printing technology, graphic design, and photography) from California State University, in Chico, California. He has worked as a professional photographer, graphic designer, and production artist. He is also a past editor of *CTC Board: Railroads Illustrated* (1978–2004), and he has authored or coauthored eight books of railroad photography and history.



Brian SCHMIDT, Waukesha, Wisconsin

We've Been Working on Our Railroad (Photography), Saturday, 9:15 A.M.

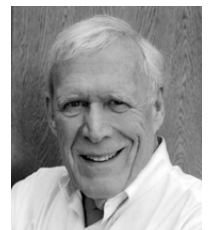
Brian is the editor of *Classic Trains* magazine, a role he assumed in November 2021. His full-time railroad publishing career started in June 2012 when he joined Kalmbach Publishing and the *Trains* magazine staff as assistant editor. He traces his railroad interest to growing up in northeastern Ohio. Today, he is as likely to be collecting and preserving historic railroad images as he is to making fresh ones trackside. He and his wife, Erica, have two boys, Cole and Logan.



Dennis ZIEMIENSKI, Glen Ellen, California

My Train Passion Expressed in my Paintings, Saturday, 2:15 P.M.

A native San Franciscan, Dennis graduated cum laude from the California College of Arts and Crafts. An interest in representational drawing and painting eventually led him to New York and a successful career in illustration. Since turning to fine art in 1999, his paintings have won numerous awards, and he was selected as the official artist of both the 2006 Kentucky Derby and Super Bowl XXIX. Dennis' strong and richly colored images borrow much of their inspiration from early twentieth century paintings and posters.



Images from presentations



Above: Montana Rail Link's "Night Gas" local freight train rolls west along the Clark Fork River near Lothrop, Montana, in March 2022. Photograph by James House

Opposite, above: As Amtrak 162 and Norfolk Southern 24M passed each other near Middle River, Maryland, on the morning of June 20, 2021, the air quality was poor. But the quality of light? Anything but. Photograph by Sayre Kos

Opposite, below: An advertisement featuring the magnetic tape recorder used by Howard Fogg Jr. and album covers of records he released. Slide from Andrew Nelson's presentation



Announcing
ADVANCED SERIES 400 RECORDERS

MODEL 400-A
 with Staff-Track Head
MODEL 401-A
 with Full-Track Head
 10 x 7 1/2" Inches Per Sec.

Full REMOTE CONTROL
 Universal operated mechanical units for all mechanical systems.

Featuring:

- **UNIFORM RESPONSE** ... to 15,000 cps of 7 1/2 ins. per sec.
- **LOW NOISE & DISTORTION LEVEL** ... signal-to-noise ratio over 55 db at either tape speed (as defined by NARTB).
- **PUSH BUTTON OPERATION**
- **LONG LIFE** ... precision built.
- **LOW MAINTENANCE** ... even with continuous use.

4 to 1 TAPE SAVING
 The exclusive tape saving and use of former 400 generation of double flange tapes. ...

PERFORMANCE ... beyond comparison!
 Detailed specifications of Ampex Recorders are comprehensive as they present track after track the same. ...

INTERCHANGEABILITY OF TAPES ... another important aspect of Ampex. ...

PORTABLE IN SINGLE CASE
 or Two BACK MOUNTING

AMPEX Magnetic RECORDERS
 AMPEX ELECTRIC CORPORATION
 260 SAN CARLOS AVENUE
 REDWOOD CITY, CALIF. 94061
 Distributors in Principal Cities

THE TALKING GIANTS
 HOWARD FOGG — NARRATION AND RECORDING

POWER OF THE PAST!
 HOWARD FOGG — NARRATION AND RECORDING

LONDON CONTROL
 PROCEEDINGS
 NIGHT FOUR
 MULTIPLE & DSD
 NEW YORK CENTRAL
 GRAND TRUNK WESTERN

THE WORKING SOUNDS OF STEAM 1954-57

the big steam ... UNION PACIFIC

all STEAMED UP!





Opposite, above: A fern grows out of the lettering on the side of former Southern Railway 1004, an SW-1 last used by the Louisville & Wadley. 1004 has been out of service and somewhat abandoned for roughly three decades as nature slowly reclaims the locomotive and tracks in Wadley, Georgia, on January 29, 2024. Photograph by John Ryan

Opposite, below: A moniker by “Conrail Twitty” on the side of a coal hopper destined for the University of Wisconsin’s Madison Heater steam generation plant. Wisconsin & Southern delivered coal until the plant converted fully to natural gas in 2013. Photograph by Matt Heeren

Above: Lightning flashes in the height of the 2011 Mojave Summer Monsoon at Ash Hill, California, as an eastward train illuminates the two main tracks of BNSF’s Needles Subdivision. Moist air from the subtropics blowing north over the southern California deserts can bring intense rain in the form of thunderstorms; here, four storm cells send lightning bolts streaming to the ground. The full moon had just appeared from behind a retreating thundercloud, adding light to the foreground. A series of five-minute exposures with a digital camera captured the scene over about twenty minutes. Layering in Photoshop Elements produced the final image. Photograph by Kit Courter





Opposite, above: Misty Mt. Joy stands above Steeles Tavern, Virginia, as Norfolk Southern train 12Z approaches on August 16, 2022. The location is a popular photography spot on the railroad's Roanoke District. Summer storms created a dramatic landscape as the train started to climb the Lofton Mountain grade. Photograph by Kristen Decker

Above: A round-end observation car brings up the rear of Missouri Pacific train no. 5, the westward *Missouri River Eagle*, as it passes through Leavenworth, Kansas, during its run from St. Louis, Missouri, to Omaha, Nebraska, on March 28, 1954. Photograph by Dick Neumiller

Opposite, below: A Reading & Northern excursion led by 4-6-2 425 and SD50 5033 passes the railroad's offices and station at Port Clinton, Pennsylvania, as it steams north on October 19, 2019. Photograph by Brian M. Schmidt



Union Pacific maintenance-of-way workers—still wearing Southern Pacific winter coats—dig snow out of a switch at Truckee, California, to get a flanger out for a trip west over Donner Pass on December 22, 1996. Photograph by Dick Dorn

All-time conference presenters

February 22, 2003

Lake Forest College

- John Gruber
- Don Horn
- David Plowden
- Brian Solomon
- Matt Van Hattem

March 20, 2004

Lake Forest College

- Mark Hemphill
- Joel Jensen
- Anne M. Lyden
- Bill Middleton
- Mel Patrick
- David Plowden and John Gruber

March 19–20, 2005

Lake Forest College

- Shirley Burman
- Steve Crise
- Tom Garver
- Robert Harr
- Sayre Kos
- Michael R. Valentine
- Jim Wrinn

March 25, 2006

Marquette University

- Jeff Brouws
- Chris Burger
- Kevin P. Keefe
- Sayre Kos
- Greg McDonnell
- Gil Reid
- Michael R. Valentine

March 24, 2007

Lake Forest College

- Steve Barry
- Simpson Kalisher
- Sayre Kos
- Miško Kranjec
- John Roskoski
- Jim Shaughnessy
- Walter E. Zullig, Jr.

April 12, 2008

Lake Forest College

- Jeff Brouws
- Victor Hand and Don Phillips
- Don Horn
- Scott Lothes
- David Plowden
- Tony Reevy

April 17–19, 2009

Lake Forest College

- Mark Hemphill
- Kevin P. Keefe and John B. Corns
- Stuart Klipper
- Scott Lothes, panel with Steve Barry, Mike Schafer, and Matt Van Hattem
- Kelly Lynch
- Kevin Scanlon
- Don Sims

April 23–25, 2010

Lake Forest College

- Frank Barry
- Ted Benson
- John Taylor
- Jeff Brouws
- Jim Brown
- Ian Kennedy
- Linda Niemann and Joel Jensen
- David Plowden
- Alex Ramos

April 15–17, 2011

Lake Forest College

- Lewis Ableidinger
- Lina Bertucci
- John Gruber
- Olaf Haensch
- Clark Johnson and Richard Solomon
- Stan Kistler
- Joe McMillan
- Gordon Osmundson
- Karl Zimmermann

April 13–15, 2012

Lake Forest College

- Bill Botkin
- Shirley Burman
- Steve Crise
- Tom Fawell
- Christian Goepel
- Drake Hokanson
- Joel Jensen
- Clark Johnson and Richard Solomon
- Henry Posner III
- Chris Starnes

April 12–14, 2013

Lake Forest College

- Wes Carr
- Pablo Delano
- Michael Froio
- Matthew Kierstead
- Cate Kratville
- Mitch Markovitz

- Tony Reevy
- Casey Thomason
- Steve VanDenburgh
- Jim Wrinn, panel with Steve Barry, Alexander Benjamin Craghead, Marc Entze, Don Phillips, and Matt Van Hattem

May 16–18, 2014

Lake Forest College, Chicago Hist. Museum

- Jeff Brouws
- Mike Danneman and Ron Flanary
- Travis Dewitz
- John Gruber
- Victor Hand
- Kevin P. Keefe
- Blair Kooistra
- Kathi Kube
- Mel Patrick
- Glenn Willumson

April 10–12, 2015

Lake Forest College

- Diane Bacha, with Ron Flanary, Don Hofsommer, Joel Jensen, Don Phillips, Jim Wrinn
- Ed Bartholomew
- Ted Benson, Dick Dorn, Dale Sanders, and Dave Stanley
- Justin Franz
- David Kahler
- J. Parker Lamb
- Jeff Mast and Michael R. Valentine
- Peter Mosse
- Bill Stewart
- James Swensen
- Axel Zwingenberger

April 8–10, 2016

Lake Forest College

- Steve Barry
- Wendy Burton and Kevin P. Keefe
- Charlie Castner and Ron Flanary
- John Gruber and John Ryan
- Todd Halamka
- Ronald C. Hill
- Emily Moser
- Steve Patterson
- Tony Reevy

- John Sanderson
- Alan Shaw
- J. Craig Thorpe

October 29, 2016

Univ. of Connecticut

- Mark Aldrich
- Robert Joseph Belletzkic
- Victor Hand
- Matt Kierstead
- Shaun O'Boyle
- Jim Shaughnessy
- J.W. Swanberg

April 28–30, 2017

Lake Forest College

- Drayton Blackgrove
- Katherine Botkin
- Jean Bublely and James J. Reisdorff
- Alexander Craghead
- Dan Cupper
- Nicholas Fry
- Eric E. Hirsimaki
- John P. Kelly
- Kevin P. Keefe
- Dennis Livesey
- Alan Miller
- Adam Normandin
- David Styffe
- Paul Wertico with David Cain and John Moulder

April 13–15, 2018

Lake Forest College

- Jim Wrinn
- McNair Evans
- John Austin
- George Hiotis
- Bill Stewart
- Robin Coombes
- Kevin P. Keefe and Scott Lothes
- Alan Furler with Victor Hand
- Robert Gould and Matt Kierstead

September 22, 2018

California State Railroad Museum

- Ted Benson and Tom Taylor
- Shirley Burman
- John Gruber and John Ryan
- Richard Koenig
- John Signor
- J. Craig Thorpe

March 29–30, 2019

BYU Museum of Art

- Alexander Craghead
- Dan Davis
- Barre Fong
- Justin Franz
- Victor Hand
- Drake Hokanson
- Christine Hult-Lewis
- Elrond Lawrence
- Ashlee Whitaker
- Additional panelists, Kevin P. Keefe and James Swensen

Sept. 13–15, 2019

Lake Forest College

- Ben Bachman
- Gil Bennett
- Jennifer Bodine
- Barre Fong
- John Free
- Oren Helbok
- Charlie Hunter
- Ron Perisho
- Eric Williams

April 18, 2020

Virtual Conversations

- Gil Bennett
- Travis Dewitz and Todd Halamka
- Adrienne Evans
- Fred Frailey and Kevin P. Keefe
- Justin Franz
- Oren Helbok and George Hiotis
- Elrond Lawrence
- Dennis Livesey
- Scott Lothes
- Ken Rehor
- Camron Settlemier

September 19, 2020

Virtual Conversations

- Apurva Bahadur
- Darryl Bond
- Frederick Simon
- Laura Smith
- Rolf Stumpf and Mike Valentine
- Roger Watt

April 10, 2021

Virtual Conversations

- Patrick Cashin
- William Gill
- Jonathan Glancey and Ian Logan
- Erik C. Lindgren
- Jeff Mast

- Kevin Scanlon
- Kevin Tomasic
- Yoichi Uzeki

April 8–10, 2022

Lake Forest College

- Lee Alban
- Adrienne Evans
- Kevin P. Keefe
- Natalie Kreckek
- Elrond Lawrence
- Mark Llanuza
- Dennis Livesey
- Scott Lothes
- Mike Raia
- Erin Rose
- Erik Shicotte
- Heather Sonntag

November 19, 2022

Virtual Conversations

- Brice Douglas
- Adrienne Evans
- Andrew Lynch
- Emily Moser
- Heather Sonntag

April 14–16, 2023

Lake Forest College

- Anthony D'Amato
- Nicholas D'Amato
- Eugene Armer
- Brian Caswell
- Steven Chen
- William Diehl
- Adrienne Evans
- Tom Gildersleeve
- Gordon Glattenberg
- Chris Guss
- Elrond Lawrence
- Erin Rose
- Steve Smedley
- Heather Sonntag
- David and Liné Tutwiler

June 14–16, 2024

Lake Forest College

- Steve Barry
- Tom Brown
- Adrienne Evans
- Jennifer Fowler
- Lou Gerard
- Dan Hadley
- Philip Hawkins
- Ben Kuhns
- Dee Matyas
- Tony Reevy
- Heather Sonntag
- Paul Springowski
- Gil Taylor
- Otto Vondrak

List of attendees

Cathleen Argyle & Adam Luckhardt Ann Arbor, Michigan a2honu@yahoo.com	Elizabeth Brown Durham, North Carolina brownelizabethanne@gmail.com	Dana & Jerri Davis Granite Bay, California danamdavis@comcast.net	Richard Garabedian Montgomery Village, Md. rsgarabedian@comcast.net	William Hayward Mundelein, Illinois billhayward1857@gmail.com	Clark Johnson Madison, Wisconsin clarkjohnson30@gmail.com
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Scholarship program

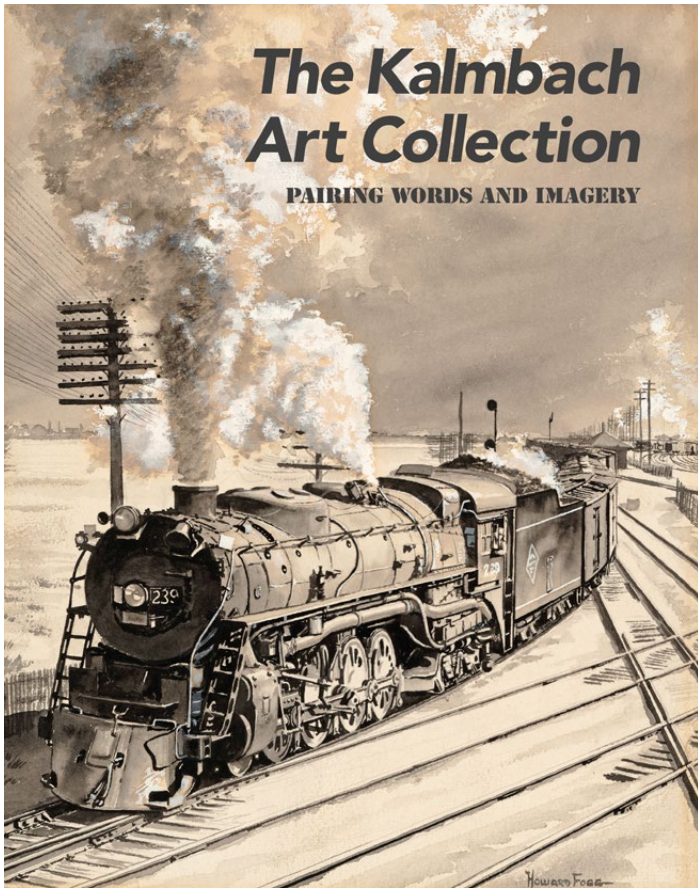


FOR THE PAST SEVERAL years, the CRP&A has offered scholarships for emerging photographers and visual artists to attend this conference. We are pleased to present this year's recipients: Joe Stroppel and Molly Engelman. Living on opposite coasts of the United States (New Jersey and Oregon), both will share their work on Saturday.

Gifts from the conference's many patrons fund these scholarships, covering registration fees, meals, and lodging for the recipients. All of us at the CRP&A extend our great thanks to our patrons for your support of the next generation of railroad photographers and artists.

Upper row: Molly, at far right, films Pacific Coast Railroad 2-6-2 no. 3 in Santa Margarita, California. She will discuss how she produced a short film on a tight schedule and even tighter budget for a student project for Lane Community College, in Eugene, Oregon.

Lower row: Joe, CRP&A's youngest-ever docent when he joined us in 2016, returns to Conversations 2025 after nine years spent applying what he has learned. A native of Glen Cove, New Jersey, Joe is currently a student at Hunter College in New York City, studying music and classical voice. His photograph, *Twilight Searchlight*, shows a southward Amtrak Empire Service train whizzing past searchlight signals at Tivoli, New York, in moody twilight.



Book sales

A NEW SOFTCOVER BOOK, *The Kalmbach Art Collection: Pairing Words and Imagery*, makes its debut at Conversations 2025. Conference attendees can be the first to own this beautiful publication, which will not be available to the public until July.

With eighty pages and full-color printing, the publication showcases fifty-three paintings and drawings of the Kalmbach Art Collection, which joined the Center's archive in 2024. The main essay by Kevin P. Keefe gives background and context to the artwork, most of which was commissioned by Kalmbach editorial staff for use in *Trains* and other magazines as well as books. Their creators are a who's who of railroad artists, including Howard Fogg, George Gloff, Gil Reid, Ted Rose, and John Swatsley. Additional essays by James R. Kieselburg of the Grohmann Museum and CRP&A staff members Adrienne Evans and Lisa Hardy dive into the importance of the collection, while interviews with former Kalmbach staff members add perspective.

Additional books

Several other books will be available this year during the day on Saturday, as well as on Sunday while supplies last. Look for the merchandise table in the lobby next to the McCormick Auditorium.

Please note that all books are available in limited quantities and will be sold on a first come, first served basis. The Center can accept cash, check, and credit card payments. Most of these books, along with several other titles, are available to order on our website: www.railphoto-art.org/books

Books published by the Center

- *Rio Grande Steam Finale: Narrow gauge railroad photography in Colorado and New Mexico*, edited by Scott Lothes and Elrond Lawrence, 2023, **\$60**
- *Burlington's Spectacular Steam Program*, essays by Norm Carlson and Justin Franz and photographs by John Gruber, 2024, **\$30**
- *The Kalmbach Art Collection: Pairing Words and Imagery*, exhibition catalogue, 2025, **\$30**

Books from other publishers

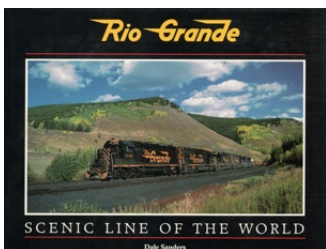
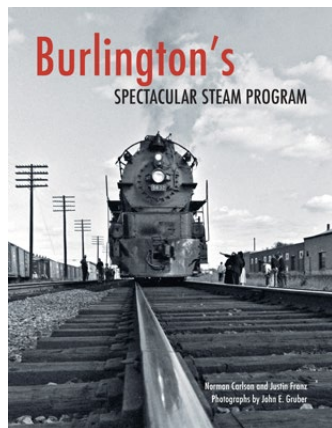
- *Rio Grande: Scenic Line of the World*, second edition, by Dale Sanders, White River Productions, 2024, **\$80**
- *Ziemienki*, by Dennis Ziemienki, 2024, **\$75**

CRP&A lens cleaning cloth

A new item available for **\$10** is a CRP&A lens cleaning cloth that can be attached to any bag, belt, or key chain.

Special for 2025

Buy any two books and receive one free lens cleaning cloth.



Directors, officers, and staff



Ronald L. Batory, Santa Fe, New Mexico, retired as the fourteenth administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. His prior career spanned forty-five years in the rail industry, including as president of both The Belt Railway Company of Chicago and Conrail.



Betsy Fahlman, Tempe, Arizona, is a professor of art history at Arizona State University. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Delaware and specializes in American Art, and she has interests in public art, American modernism, the New Deal, and industrial archeology.



Eric Baumgartner, Redding, Connecticut, is the Senior Vice President of Hirschl & Adler Galleries in New York City, having joined the firm in 1993. He holds a B.A. degree with honors in the history of art from Dickinson College, and he is also an avid rail enthusiast and photographer.



Justin Franz, Columbia Falls, Montana, has a degree from the University of Montana's School of Journalism and is the associate editor of *Railfan & Railroad* magazine. His work has appeared in numerous publications, including the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *Atlas Obscura*.



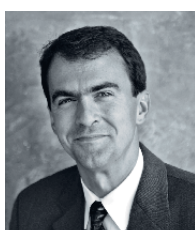
Jeff Brouws, Stanfordville, New York, brings the Center knowledge of nineteenth and twentieth century photography and a broad background in publishing, with seven photography books to his credit. His photographs can be found in numerous public and private collections.



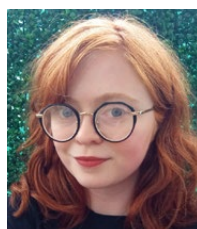
T. Bondurant French (chair), Glen Ellyn, Illinois, is chairman of Adams Street Partners, one of the largest and oldest managers of private equity investment in the world. A lifelong rail enthusiast, Bon has photographed more than 700 different railroads in the U.S. and Canada.



Norman Carlson, Lake Forest, Illinois, spent thirty-four years with Arthur Anderson where he led the transportation industry practice for eleven years. He is president of the Shore Line Interurban Historical Society and managing editor of its quarterly publication, *First & Fastest*.



Todd Halamka, Western Springs, Illinois, is a practicing architect and founder of Todd Halamka + Partners in downtown Chicago. His focus on railroad photography began in 2011, combining his lifelong love of trains and the outdoors with his fascination for image-making.



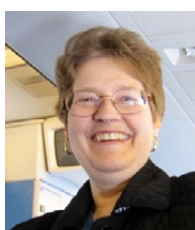
Jordan Craig (digital projects coordinator), Madison, Wisconsin, has spent a decade managing multimedia collections and metadata. She holds a bachelors degree in history and a masters degree in library and information studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison



Lisa Hardy (program administrator), Janesville, Wisconsin, joined the Center in 2024 after receiving a master's degree in arts administration from Southern Utah University. She grew up in Flagstaff, Arizona, and has previously worked for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.



Adrienne Evans (director of archives and collections), Madison, Wisconsin, received a master's degree from UW-Madison's School of Library Information Studies in 2014. She worked at History Colorado for two years before coming to the Center in 2017.



Nona Hill (treasurer), Madison, Wisconsin, is a lifelong rail enthusiast and advocate. She and Clark Johnson, her husband, managed High Iron Travel, operator of the *Caritas*, the most widely traveled private car in America. She helps lead multiple passenger rail advocacy groups in Wisconsin.



David Kahler (vice-chair), Pittsboro, North Carolina, practiced architecture for more than thirty years and has been recognized as a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. He is active as a consultant and advisor, and he authored *The Railroad and the Art of Place*.



Michael P. Schmidt (secretary), Owosso, Michigan, is an orthopedic surgeon and a collector of railroad photographs and paintings. He is vice chief of staff, chief of surgery, and serves on the board of trustees of his hospital. He grew up in Los Angeles where he biked to LAUPT.



Kevin P. Keefe, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is the retired vice-president-editorial for Kalmbach Publishing Co. He served as editor of *Trains* from 1992 to 2000. As a student at Michigan State, he worked on Pere Marquette steam locomotive 1225 and later authored a book about it.



Shelby Shull (administrative assistant), Madison, Wisconsin, is the newest member of the Center's team, joining in April 2025. Shelby holds bachelor degrees in music and English with a writing concentration from Edgewood College, in Madison, Wisconsin.



Natalie Krecek (processing archivist), Madison, Wisconsin, joined the Center in 2018. She received a B.A. degree in anthropology from North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, in 2017. Her past work experience includes an internship at Chicago's Field Museum.



Heather Sonntag (associate archivist), Madison, Wisconsin, joined the Center in 2020 and is now processing the Steinheimer Collection of color slides. Originally from New Mexico, she holds a Ph.D. in cultural history and a Master's in Library and Information Studies from UW-Madison.



Elrond Lawrence (acquisitions and marketing coordinator), Salinas, California, joined the Center in 2021. He grew up in Southern California and is a widely published author, photographer, and publicity veteran. His book *Route 66 Railway* follows the Santa Fe/BNSF and the "Mother Road."



Gil Taylor (reference and processing archivist), Madison, Wisconsin, is working on the Stan Kistler Collection after joining the Center in 2021. He holds a bachelor of arts from Bates College in Maine and a Master's in Library and Information Studies from UW-Madison.



Scott Lothes (president and executive director), Madison, Wisconsin, began working for the Center in 2008. He grew up around trains in West Virginia, and he is an avid traveler as well as a widely published author and photographer. He also edits the Center's journal, *Railroad Heritage*.



Richard Tower, San Francisco, California, has spent much of his career in the railroad industry with Southern Pacific and Amtrak, and as a consultant. Along with his wife Caroline, he manages the Candelaria Fund, which supports many community and nonprofit organizations.



Albert O. Louer, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, retired as the director of principal gifts at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. He worked in museums for fifty years, and he has research and collecting interests in the Pullman Company and Midwestern railroads.



Inga Velten (development director), Madison, Wisconsin, joined the Center in 2017 and has more than twenty years of experience in nonprofit fundraising and administration, with expertise in data management, prospect research, and major gift fundraising.



Peter Mosse, New York, New York, grew up in England and moved to the U.S. in 1977 to set up a precious metals trading subsidiary for the UK Rothschild banking group. He began collecting railroad paintings in 1980 and now owns more than 200 original works.



Davidson Ward, Duluth, Minnesota, is president of FMW Solutions, LLC, a railroad consulting firm he founded in 2016 that now employs more than twenty industry professionals. He holds a B.S. degree in architecture from the University of Minnesota.

About the Center for Railroad Photography & Art

FOUNDED IN 1997, the Center for Railroad Photography & Art (CRP&A) is a 501(c)(3) national not-for-profit arts and educational organization based in Madison, Wisconsin. As its mission, the CRP&A “preserves and presents significant images of railroading,” securing them in its archive and interpreting them in publications, exhibitions, presentations, and on the internet.

The CRP&A conducts its programs both in-house and with numerous partners throughout the country. Collaborations include the landmark Chicago History Museum exhibition, *Railroaders: Jack Delano’s Homefront Photography*, and 2019’s *After Promontory: 150 Years of Transcontinental Railroading*, which has visited a dozen venues throughout the western United States, including the Brigham Young University Museum of Art. The CRP&A also mounts and circulates traveling exhibitions about specific themes in railroading as well as individual photographers and artists such as Wallace W. Abbey, Joel Jensen, O. Winston Link, David Plowden, Ted Rose, and Jim Shaughnessy.

Efforts to preserve railroad photography and artwork have led to the CRP&A’s amassing more than 600,000 images—with standing commitments for that many more to come. Its team of professional archivists preserves, digitizes, and makes available these images from its offices and storage facilities, sharing them through an online database (railphoto.historyit.com) and social media (follow @railphotoart on most of the major platforms). A committee of the board of directors reviews potential additions to the archive and makes recommendations to the full board, which votes on all major accessions.

Publications include the quarterly journal *Railroad Heritage* as well as books. The journal features work by both historic and contemporary photographers and artists as well as selections from the archive and news about events and developments in the field. Books explore thematic topics in railroading and its visual culture, such as the notion of “the railroad and the art of place;” current book projects seek to showcase and reinterpret photographs from the CRP&A’s fast-growing collections.

Events in addition to this conference include free monthly online presentations (recordings are available at youtube.com/railphotoart) and an annual awards program named for John Gruber, the organization’s principal founder. Membership supports all of the CRP&A’s programs and projects; learn more and join at: www.railphoto-art.org



Top: Landmark exhibitions by the Center for Railroad Photography & Art include *After Promontory: 150 Years of Transcontinental Railroading*, shown here at the Brigham Young University Museum of Art in Provo, Utah, in March 2019. Photograph by Scott Lothes

Above: The Center hosts monthly online presentations like “I ♥ Trains” by Chip and Leslie Savoye, delivered live via Zoom and available for later viewing at youtube.com/railphotoart; follow @railphotoart on social media for news and updates.

Do you have orders for us?

Support a sustainable future by joining our Legacy Society

THE LEGACIES OF THOSE whose creative imagery captures the railroad landscape—and the imaginations of people all over the world—live on through the Center, and yours can, too.

The Center's Form 19 Legacy Society, founded in 2019, has expanded to forty-one members who have thoughtfully arranged for future gifts through their wills or estate plans. Their enduring commitments directly contribute to the Center for Railroad Photography & Art Endowment, securing the long-term stability of our programs to preserve, present, and celebrate railroad photography and art.

To learn how your gift today can leverage impact beyond your lifetime through the Legacy Society, reach out to Inga Velten, development director, inga@railphoto-art.org, 608-251-5785, extension 102.



FORM 19	CENTER FOR RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPHY & ART <i>To preserve and present significant images of railroading</i>	FORM 19
Legacy Society Commitment No. _____		
Dated: _____, 20____		
To: CHAIRPERSON AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	At: MADISON, WISCONSIN	
Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____		
IN ACCORDANCE WITH MY WISHES TO HONOR THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF RAILROADING THROUGH ITS RICH VISUAL CULTURE AS PART OF MY LASTING LEGACY, I INTEND TO DESIGNATE THE CENTER FOR RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPHY & ART ENDOWMENT (EIN 47-7373395) AS A BENEFICIARY OF MY ESTATE.		
Both the issuer and the recipient shall keep a copy of this commitment		
Title	Signature	Date
Chairperson		
Executive Director		

Sample bequest language

I commit ____% and/or \$_____ of my estate to the Center for Railroad Photography & Art Endowment (EIN 47-7373395), 1930 Monroe Street, Suite 301, Madison, Wisconsin, 53711, to provide funding for _____ at the Center for Railroad Photography & Art or the program(s) most in need as determined by the administration of the Center and its board of directors, and by the trustees of the Center's endowment fund.

Top: Pennsylvania Railroad 2-10-0 steam locomotive 4587 leads a freight train toward an operator handing up orders from Kendall Tower at the southern end of Southport Yard in Elmira, New York, in 1957. Photograph by Jim Shaughnessy, Shaughnessy-N-PRR-0147



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PHOTOGRAPHY & ART

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