

Bill Jewett Award

Dave Sprau is a familiar name to regular readers of the *DO*, having authored a stellar series of articles on Timetable and Train Order dispatching and operations, soon to be released in book form along with modeling-specific contributions from Steve King. Dave's deep knowledge of the subject derives from broad experience with a variety of jobs on multiple Northwest railroads.

Dave grew up in Monroe, Washington, observing trains on the Great Northern mainline and Milwaukee Road Everett Branch, unloading gondolas for his dad's coal dealership, and pestering the depot agent/operator. He began his own railroad career as a telegrapher on the Northern Pacific's Tacoma Division in 1960, transferred into their Relay or Communications Division in 1961, returned to the Tacoma Division in 1962, and became a train dispatcher at Tacoma, Washington, in 1964. He resigned in 1969 to accept employment as a locomotive fireman with the Great Northern Railway's Cascade Division, where he was promoted to train dispatcher just before the BN merger in February 1970, remaining as dispatcher and night chief dispatcher in offices at Havre, Montana, and Vancouver and Seattle, Washington, until leaving BNSF in 1997 to accept a position as superintendent of Tacoma Rail, a local shortline, where he retired the following year. Dave served as General Chairman of the BN System Committee, American Train Dispatchers' Association, from 1981 until 1984, and as Vice General Chairman at other times from 1973 until 1992.

Dave is a well-known Northwest rail historian, noted for his great passion and respect for the art and science of railroading, and for the men and women who made it happen. He

is generous with his time, patient with silly questions from civilians like me, and scrupulous with the facts, aided by a near-photographic memory for details. Dave has lectured at the White River Museum (Auburn, Washington) and other venues; provided research for numerous articles, books and video productions; and is active with the Great Northern Railway Historical Society (GNRHS) and Northern Pacific Historical Association (NPRHA). He currently resides in St. Helens, Oregon, with his wife Linda, a former BN train order operator, train dispatcher, and Pacific Division Chief Dispatcher. While Dave has great respect for the rulebook, ask him sometime how fast a locomotive can transit the Cascade Tunnel if necessary, and how he knows this.

Dave's significant contributions to railroad history, and especially to our deeper understanding of historical operations, make him a tremendously deserving recipient of the Bill Jewett award. —*Bill Sornsin*

