

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB
P. O. BOX 2391
DENVER, 1, COLORADO

February, 1963

Newsletter No. 42

The February, 1963, meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be held on Wednesday, February 13, 1963, in the basement auditorium of the new Western Federal Savings skyscraper, 718 - 17th St., Denver, at 8:00 p.m. This will be "Audience Participation Night" with the subject being "The Last Ride of C&S #638." Each of you who plan to attend is invited to bring up to 10 of your best slides of this run. To wind up the evening, the Rio Grande is making available a new color movie on construction of its 35-mile spur serving the Texas Gulf Sulphur Co. potash plant near Moab, Utah, down the other side of Bootlegger Canyon.

Over 175 members and friends were in attendance for our January program, the first in this new meeting place. With a few "bugs" ironed out, it is hoped the location will prove satisfactory for our monthly meetings.

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Another reminder: 1963 dues are now payable - \$3.00 if you reside in Colorado, or \$2.00 if you are an out-of-state resident.

To answer some inquiries about membership cards, we would like to mention that these require careful, extra work to produce the embossed lettering (in silver, this year) which gives the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club membership cards a touch of distinction. The additional work is performed by volunteer labor in member Charles Ryland's home print shop (appropriately named the Smoking Stack Press, of course), and requires very careful work in the process of producing the raised date and membership number. Names must then be typed on the cards and each one signed by the President and Treasurer. Cards for 1963 paid-up members will be ready very soon, but a few weeks' extra time is required for this quality job.

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BURLINGTON STEAM EXCURSION ---- SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1963.

Starting sometime in April, Chicago, Burlington & Quincy steam engine #4960, a coal burner, will begin working its way toward Denver, stopping daily while enroute to make short trips with school children. The locomotive is scheduled to arrive in Denver on May 9th, 1963, and will make a run for school children out to Tampa and back on Friday, May 10th. The engine has been made available for use by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club on Sunday, May 12, when we will run an all-day excursion east of Denver on the Burlington. Fares will be held to a minimum and everybody is invited. You are cordially invited to be aboard, and to bring your friends! When the destination is determined, and the fare established, notices will be printed and distributed. Look for more details in the Marsh Newsletter; meanwhile reserve Sunday, May 12th, for this event.

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Mayor Harold Merson, of the City of Trinidad, has advised the Club that formal dedication ceremonies for C&S engine 638 will be held on Sunday, February 10th. This sturdy old friend, whose final service was to power the Club's special train to Trinidad in December, has been donated to that City by the Colorado & Southern and Burlington lines for permanent exhibition. The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club has been asked to take part in this dedication by sending representatives to participate in the official ceremonies, and Mayor Merson cordially invites all members of our organization to join in the celebration at Trinidad on Sunday, February 10th, at 2:00 P.M.

He also states that, for the nominal price of 50 cents, the City of Trinidad will send a commemorative souvenir pass, as well as a two-color brochure which includes the formal dedication of the engine, its history and service record, and a page devoted to the coming of the Colorado & Southern to Trinidad.

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The Burlington's "Steam Choo-Choo" excursions for grammar school youngsters attracted over 45,000 passengers in 1962. Approximately 7,000 football fans were passengers on their football "Specials" during the year.

Football "Specials" run by the D&RGW -- primarily to the Air Force Academy games -- were patronized by about 5,600 fans. Trains up to 20 cars long were run -- two sections being necessary in some cases.

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One unique piece of freight handled recently by the D&RGW was a 105-year-old Colorado Blue Spruce which became the official Christmas tree at the White House in Washington, D. C. The 75' high tree, cut near Salida, Colorado, was wrapped in 300 yards of burlap for protection enroute. It was loaded aboard two 53'6" Rio Grande flat cars for the 2,000 mile trip to Washington, where it was decorated with 6,000 lights and ornaments and put on display at the White House grounds.

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Recent reports are that the Santa Fe and Rio Grande are considering the consolidation of their train operations to a single track between Sedalia and Pueblo, Colorado. The move is under study for economic and other reasons, since the AT&SF is faced with moving a sizeable amount of track near the site of the proposed Air Force Adademy air strip north of Colorado Springs.

The present paired-track arrangement, whereby the Santa Fe and D&RGW now maintain separate, often closely parallel lines between Pueblo and Denver, affording one-direction traffic over each track, was inaugurated by the USRA during World War I. Rerouting of all traffic primarily to the Rio Grande's trackage through Castle Rock and Colorado Springs would involve installation of a centralized traffic control system, with extensive automatic signal devices and additional sidings.

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The January, 1963, issue of "The Colorado Magazine", published by the State Historical Society of Colorado, contains a number of articles about life in the "South Park" region of the state. The stories relate numerous incidents of historical interest to rail fans, one very interesting article having been written by Club member George W. Champion, who piloted the narrow-gauge rotary snow plow on its last round trip from Como over Alpine Pass and return.

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The D&RGW ordered 100 50-ft., 70-ton cushion-underframe box cars from ACF recently; 100 50-ton bulkhead flat cars from Bethlehem Steel, and 25 70-ton TOFC flat cars from Pullman-Standard. They also ordered 15 2,250-hp diesel-electric locomotives from EMD for delivery in February.

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I. E. August informs us that the world's first cog railway, which wends its way to the summit of Mt. Washington (6,288') in New Hampshire, is changing owners. Dartmouth College recently sold the railway (opened in 1869) to the railway's operator, Arthur S. Teague.

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The CB&Q announced it will spend \$20,719,000 for 1,225 roller-bearing equipped freight cars and 12 2,250-hp GP-30 locomotives during 1963. Freight car orders will include 600 extra-wide-door box cars; 200 jumbo-size covered hoppers; 200 100-ton-capacity open-top hoppers; 150 box cars with foamed-in-place insulation; 25 "damage-free" box cars with load braces and cushioned underframes; and 50 radio-equipped all-steel cabooses.

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First steps in a million-dollar-plus program to develop the tourist attractions of Durango and its historic Durango-to-Silverton narrow gauge line were announced recently by the D&RGW. The railroad has purchased all the property on the west side of Main Avenue in Durango for two blocks north of the depot, as well as the half block across Main Ave. from the station. With expenditure of more than \$500,000 for the purchase, present structures will be re-built and remodeled in early Western style. The development starts one block south of the Strater Hotel and extends from 4th and 6th Streets. Most of the buildings in the three blocks were built in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Tourist enthusiasm for the 46-mile, 80-year-old narrow-gauge branch line between Durango and Silverton, over which each season's service has been inaugurated by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club's annual Memorial Day excursion for the past 14 years, has boomed. Last year nearly 39,000 railfans and sight-seers rode the train. Company officials say the three 470-series "Sports Model" steam locomotives used as motive power for this run are good for years of future service.

D&RGW's Burnham shops are presently working on narrow gauge Business Car B-7, baggage car 126, and coach 350 (formerly parlor car Alamosa), renovating, rebuilding and reinforcing underframes, trucks and carbodies as necessary. Two additional coaches -- the first to be built in many, many years -- are in the course of planning and construction! Offsetting this good news, however, comes word that seven of the narrow-gauge engines will be retired from Alamosa-Durango freight service in 1963.

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In a year-end report of MoPac operations, President Downing B. Jenks said that the company's 1963 capital investment program calls for the expenditure of \$16,579,000 for new equipment, mostly for 1,200 new freight cars; \$11,695,000 for improvements to track and structures, and about \$8,000,000 for 56 new diesel locomotives. Included in the railroad's capital expenditures in 1962 were the purchase of 1,477 new freight cars and the repair of 2,700 others. Also placed in service were 100 new and more powerful locomotives.

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At the 43rd annual presentation of safety awards in New York recently, it was reported that railroad passenger trains provided the safest form of public travel in 1962. Last year, travel by train was:
22 times safer than auto
4 times safer than domestic airline
1.5 times safer than buses

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It was estimated that the railroads handled most of the 6.4 billion Christmas greeting cards and gift packages delivered by the Post Office Department this past Christmas. The year-around mail load is about 65 billion pieces. The railroads receive an average of less than 1/2 cent for each first-class letter.

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Cold weather recently plagued the railroads of Colorado--especially during the weekend of January 12 and 13, 1963, when some of the D&RGW mountain stations reported temperatures of -40° and -50°. Many trains ran 8-10 hours late due to freeze-up of equipment. Luckily, little snow was present, so there was no trouble from that quarter. During the cold snap, the D&RGW still retained their sense of humor, as noted in the following taken from their employe newspaper, "The Green Light":

Teacher: "Spell 'weather'."
Jack: "W-E-T-T-H-U-R"
Teacher: "That's just about the worst spell of weather we've had in a long long time."

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J. C. Thode, President
E. R. Lewandowski, Secretary
R. A. Ronzio, Vice-President
Ane O. Clint, Treasurer