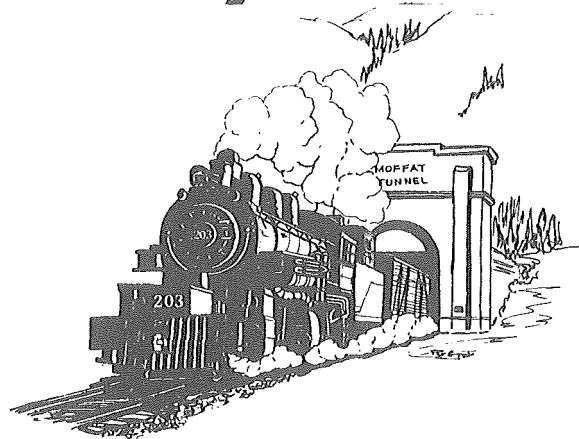


# Rocky Mountain Rail Report



## The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

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August, 1979      No. 239

CURRENT NEWS AND HISTORICAL NOTES OF  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROADING PUBLISHED  
MONTHLY FOR ITS MEMBERS BY THE ROCKY  
MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB

Editor - - - Darrell T. Arndt

MEETING NOTICE:    Date    . . Tuesday, August 14, 1979  
                          Time    . . 7:45 P.M.  
                          Place    . . Southeast wing of Christ Episcopal Church, 2900 South  
  University at Bates; off-street parking at rear (east)  
  of meeting hall. Please use building's south entrance.

PROGRAM NOTES:            "COLORADO MIDLAND: A TRAIN RIDE"  
  by Mel McFarland

The August program will be a one-hour slide show that depicts following a mythical passenger train from Colorado Springs to New Castle, using period and modern photographs. The program has been presented to various historical and railroad groups nationwide, but this program will include several views never before used in the presentation, as well as many never seen by most Colorado Midland enthusiasts.

Mel McFarland is a long-time fan of the Colorado Midland, and has just finished a book on the railroad. A member of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, the Westerners, NMRA, Historical Society of the Pikes Peak Region, and President of the Colorado Midland Chapter NRHS, Mel has written for the Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette, Model Railroader and the Colorado Midland Modeler. Being a "typical" Colorado Midland fan, he doesn't spend all of his efforts in researching the Midland Route, so in his spare time he teaches art and drafting at Fountain Junior High School in Fountain, Colorado. His presentation at the meeting is one that you won't want to miss!

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"It's not as easy as it looks" might be an appropriate comment after seeing the July program by Alex Asbridge and Erwin Chaim on the Rocky Rails '77 convention of the NMRA. Alex's fast paced, well organized slide show was thoroughly enjoyed and undoubtedly responsible for some of the people coming to the convention. Erwin candidly discussed the trials and tribulations of the people who worked on the convention, and the complications that had to be dealt with. Our thanks to Alex and Erwin for describing such a production from a different perspective.

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THE BOREAS PASS-COMO FIELD TRIP will take place on Saturday, August 18. Refer to last month's newsletter for details and ticket order blank. A reminder that tickets must be purchased in advance, \$7.00 adults, \$3.00 under 12. For those who have ordered theirs already, the tickets will be in the mail soon. Even if you have been over the pass, and many of us have at one time or another, this is still a good opportunity to refresh the memory (and the lungs), get first-hand information on the line, have dinner at the recently reopened railroad eating house in Como, and see a slide program on riding the line in the 30's. The drive is about 150 miles round trip from Denver, and will include little walking. Departure from Villa Italia Shopping Center is at 8:00 A.M., although if you wish to meet the group on the south end of Breckenridge, we will depart from there no sooner than 10:00 A.M. Bring a picnic lunch. If you have any questions, call Darrell Arndt at 321-2723, or Ardie Schoeninger at 238-4485.

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ALL MEMBERS should have received a flyer in the mail on the Grand Canyon trip on September 6-9. The \$179 fare (\$235 for single occupancy) includes all transportation from Denver, plus lodging. Two days riding the Southwest Limited, a day at the Grand Canyon, and a day visiting popular attractions in the Flagstaff area, mean that this will be an unforgettable trip. A \$50 deposit should be sent to Dick Lawrence by August 10. For further information, contact Dick at Westland Travel, 9797 W. Colfax, (P.O. Box 15606) in Lakewood, 80215.

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LOOKING for someone to share a room with on the Grand Canyon trip, is Andy Pitt. Andy can be reached at 1229 Bannock Street, No. 205, Denver, 80204.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE CLUB'S 8444 EXCURSION over the Union Pacific went off with nary a hitch on July 28. Although summertime cloudiness with thunderstorm activity has been the rule rather than the exception around here lately, clear skies prevailed most of that Saturday. Eight photo runbys were enjoyed by photographers, and expert handling by Union Pacific personnel resulted in on-time departures from Denver and Sterling and arrival back in Denver. We certainly thank all those who took it upon themselves to support this function by buying a ticket and by telling friends and acquaintances about it.

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DOWN BUT NOT OUT - A portion of the roof of the Needle Eye Tunnel on the Rollins Pass road collapsed in early July. Crews were to reopen it in several weeks, but it was reported still closed to traffic as of the end of July.

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NOT FOR THE ZEPHYR - The four streamlined steel passenger cars seen recently at the Rio Grande's Burnham shops are to be converted to outfit cars for the railroad.

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THE ATLANTIC COAST LINE DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE NO. 501, that has called Denver Union Station its home for most of this decade, was moved to the UP yards at the end of July, prior to its movement to the midwest. The historic unit was purchased from Richard McKinley several years ago by Glen Monhart, who hopes to restore it to operating condition. The engine was started up last November, although

no movement was made.

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IN SEARCH OF A LOCOMOTIVE - Mildred Purinton is attempting to locate a miniature steam locomotive built by her father, Arthur Heiser, when he was age 16. Mr. Heiser eventually sold it to Frank Root, who ran trains at Elitch Gardens. According to records, the steamer was subsequently purchased from the estate of Frank Root by a Virgil C. Hardy, and there the trail ends as Mrs. Purinton can find no record of Mr. Hardy still living in this area. The engine is a 4-4-0, 2-inch scale model with a 9 inch gauge. She believes it was about 18 inches wide, 30 inches high, and 60 inches in length. It ran around the family home at 3016 Osceola St. Mrs. Purinton would be grateful for any information that would help shed light on the engine's whereabouts. She can be contacted by writing her at 3005 S. Xeric Ct., Denver, CO 80231, or calling 755-1035.

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THE DENVER & INTERURBAN RAILWAY NO. 25 at the museum, has received a new coat of paint, thanks to the efforts of Rollin Cordill and Bryant McFadden. Some lettering and application of the C&S herald on the newly painted shop car was also accomplished.

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THE 8444 will pull the Treagle Football Special from Cheyenne to Laramie on Sept. 29, after returning from its duties in the Pacific Northwest. Oct. 13, it is all set to pull the Intermountain Chapter's excursion to Sterling.

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THE GREAT WESTERN DINKEY that worked the sugar plant yard in Loveland for years, was trucked to the Fort Morgan plant in June.

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RETIRED - Jens C. Jensen, Ass't. Vice President of the Milwaukee Roads Grain and Food Profit Center in Chicago, retired this past May. Mr. Jensen was former president of the Great Western Railway.

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GONE - The weatherbeaten timbers of the snowshed that protected part of the wye on Combres Pass couldn't take it any more after a June snowstorm, as a portion of it collapsed under the weight of the snow. Consequently, it has had to be torn down. The wye had been off-limits to locomotives this spring because of the shed's deteriorating condition, necessitating the undesirable routine of backing helper engines downgrade to Chama.

Another historic remnant of the narrow gauge past disappeared under the weight of the heavy spring snows. The picturesque Ames trestle that stood high on the mountain side between Ophir and Vance Junction near Telluride, collapsed into oblivion. It was one of the few Rio Grande Southern structures of substantial size still standing.

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WORK CONTINUES in Chama on the C&TS Railway's physical plant with the old engine house currently undergoing repairs to its brickwork. The floor in the depot's waiting room has been completely torn out and rebuilt. A door and 2 windows are also being put back into the ticket office.

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THE GREAT FREIGHT '79 turned out to be a successful operation, with six busloads of participants photographing the freight at various locations between Chama and Cumbres.

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ORGAN GRINDER CONCERT - The American Theater Organ Society will present a special concert at the Organ Grinder Restaurant, 2200 W. Alameda, on Sat., August 25, 11 A.M. to 2 P.M. Nationally recognized Jonas Nordwall will perform pop music and light classics in a manner to please the most sophisticated organ buffs. His selections will not be pizza music, and will include some railroad songs. Advance tickets are \$2.00 per person, \$2.50 at the door. Please send requests for tickets, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and check for payment, to Guy C. Powell, 695 S. Alton Way, 4-D, Denver, CO 80231. Checks should be made payable to Guy C. Powell. Mail orders should be sent by August 15. For further information, contact Alice Cutshall at 233-4716, or Guy Powell at 343-3930.

ATOS invites members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club and guests to stop by, have lunch (the food line will be open for business), and enjoy some special music!

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THE RECENT TESTING done on the Union Pacific's Challenger on display at Cheyenne, revealed a leak in a superheater tube. The test was just that, a test, and there are no plans by the railroad to do any work on the engine.

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A MESS - Some 80 cars in the Union Pacific freight derailed between Cheyenne and Laramie on August 1, blocking both tracks of the main line and a nearby interstate.

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GOOD TIMES FOR THE SILVERTON - The Denver & Rio Grande Western has signed on the dotted line with Charles Bradshaw of Orlando, Florida for the sale of the historic line. Mr. Bradshaw has accomplished what many others had tried and failed to do; pay cash, prove financial ability to operate, maintain and improve the line, meet the approval of not only government regulatory agencies (now pending) but the people of southwestern Colorado. The new corporation will be called the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad Co., and from what information that has been released, it appears that the famous line will finally have its potential exploited, something the Rio Grande has never had the notion to do. Seasonal round trips will begin the first weekend in May of next year, about three weeks ahead of the Rio Grande's schedule, and operate beyond the normal closedown date in early October. Also, there is the possibility of running trains on the nights of the full moon, perhaps winter trips, and possibly a Silverton based train. Three locomotives in Alamosa and two in Durango will be restored as required, and a sixth in Alamosa used for spare parts. Additional open cars will be built and bridges and track strengthened and curves modified to accommodate the larger locomotives from Alamosa. A complete car shop will be built in Durango, and four stalls of the roundhouse rebuilt. Water tanks at Hermosa and Needleton are to be restored. All of this reconstruction and preservation will be done to maintain the authenticity of the railroad. Even the fake "diamond" stacks on the three currently active locomotives, cosmetic changes made by Hollywood in the 50's for filming, will go. Extensive advertising will be an important part of the railroad's "new" life. The price paid for the line has not been released, but it appears to be somewhere between two and three million dollars. Mr. Bradshaw's handling of the entire affair has seemed to leave everyone with an interest in the sale with a favorable attitude.

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ED GERLITS, President

BILL GORDON, Secretary

ERWIN CHAIM, Vice-President

ARDIE SCHOENINGER, Treasurer