

# RAIL REPORT

May - June 2009 • NO. 591



Rocky Mountain Railroad Club • Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation

## Rio Grande Diesel Action

Presented by Bill Botkin

May 12th, 2009 • 7:30 PM

From the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s, Bill spent many weekends documenting the Rio Grande Zephyr in the most scenic locations from Denver to Salt Lake City and freights on the Tennessee Pass line. While his focus was still photography, Bill also shot sound movies during that period and has selected two reels of Rio Grande diesel action for our meeting in May.

Please come join us for an enjoyable, educational evening at Christ Episcopal Church at 2950 South University Boulevard, University at Bates, where there is plenty of off street parking at the rear of the complex. Enter into Barnes Hall, where we hold the monthly meetings, on the mid-south side doors. Please bring a guest. **All programs are intended to provide an educational experience on railroading. The general public is welcome to attend. There is no charge for this meeting.**

**Please Note That There Is No Meeting In Barnes Hall In June, July Or August**

### RMRRRC Calendar

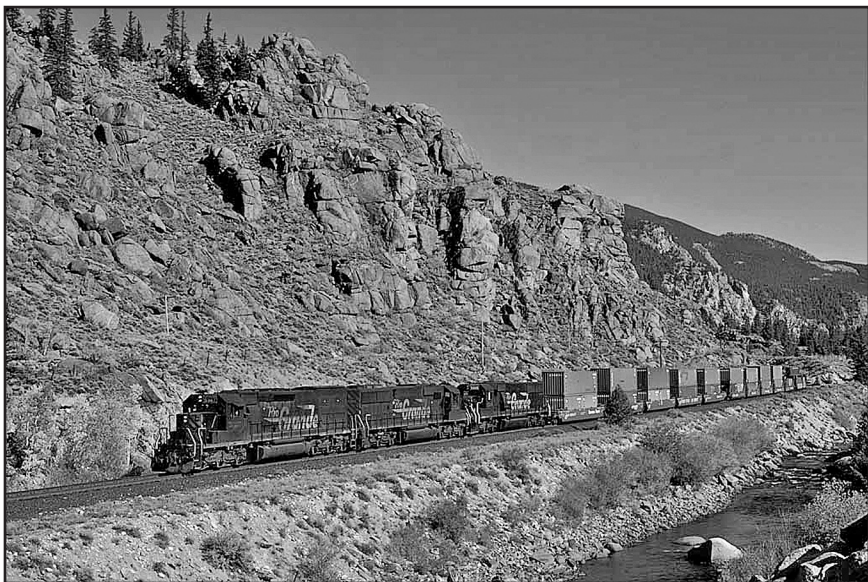
June	No meeting in the summer.
July	No meeting in the summer, Colorado Railroad Museum 50th Anniversary.
August	No meeting in the summer.

The Club's future program listing will provide members adequate advance information for planning. Proposed 2008 meeting and event dates are shown. Due to circumstances beyond our control programing and dates are subject to change without notice. Please contact Joe McMillan at [jmcmillan20@comcast.net](mailto:jmcmillan20@comcast.net) or phone 303-456-4564 with program ideas.

## Rio Grande Diesel Action



The Rio Grande Zephyr at Denver Union Station in August 1974.  
– Photo © W. E. Botkin.



The D&RGW near Granite, Colorado in September 1991. – Photo © W. E. Botkin.

## From The President



The Ski Train sits at the Burnham yard in Denver on April 22, 2009, awaiting its move to Canada. – Photo © 2009 Dave Schaaf.

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## From The President

By Dave Schaaf

### End Of The Ski Train Era

The Anschutz Company has sold the Ski Train to a subsidiary of Canadian National (Algoma Central Railway) in Ontario, Canada. This ends a Colorado tradition of service that goes back to the 1930's. The reasons given for this sale include a lack of profitability, cost of liability insurance, operating issues with freight traffic, uncertainty about the re-development of Denver Union Station, and the weakened economy.

Years ago, some of the older Ski Train cars had also gone to the Algoma Central. This most recent set was never actually owned by the Rio Grande, even though they wore that name. It is unknown right now if the three private cars were included in the transaction. There

will not be a summer season for this train in Colorado.

### A Small Excursion For Club Members

I announced at the April meeting that we will have a charter with the Fort Collins Municipal Railway on Saturday, May 16, 2009 at 10 AM. We will have the trolley car for a one-hour round trip, with the opportunity to tour their car barn afterward where a second car is being restored. With the large attendance at our meeting and good response, there are only about ten spots remaining for this trip. If there is a lot of interest, we might do another trip again this year.

The remaining seats will be reserved on a first-call basis, at \$7 each. Since it is short notice, you will need to call me



## From The President



Irv August, holding RMRRRC card 2 celebrated his 95th birthday. Back row from left, Jim Ehernberger, Al Chione, Neil Reich, Ed Gerlits and Tom Klingler. Front row from left, Darrell Arndt, Irv August, Bill Bond. – Photo © 2009 Bill Bond.

to add your name to the list of attendees, and we need to collect the money by the May 12 meeting. As it is a low-cost outing, we are only accepting cash or checks for this one. Members may contact me, Dave Schaaf, at 303-988-3456.

### At The Colorado Railroad Museum

The tender for #346 has returned from Pennsylvania with a new stainless steel tank. The Rico is in the roundhouse, and coach #280 is now out on display and ready to roll. The weekend of May 9 & 10 is the Mother's Day Galloping Goose fest. The re-created motor #1 will be there, along with all of the others except for numbers 3 and 4.

On a related note about RGS Geese, the April meeting of our Club included the world premiere of *Tin Feathers & Gasoline Fumes*, a television program produced by Richard Luckin, in association with the Colorado Railroad Museum. This TV program is now on DVD, only available through the Museum. If you missed it, the broadcast option in the Denver area is KBDI channel 12 on June 27 at 6 PM. It should also be available on many public stations around the country. Check your local listings to be sure.

### Colorado RTD Light Rail

In Colorado, RTD has spent \$10 million so far on West Corridor light-rail

## From The President

construction, and by June the pace of constructing this FasTracks train line will accelerate, with spending on the project hitting \$10 million a month, according to agency officials. The 12.1-mile West line from Denver to Lakewood and Golden is expected to be fully funded and open by May 2013.

Major structures will include a 1,574-foot-long flyover bridge that will take light rail over West Sixth Avenue near Indiana Street and a tunnel that will take the train under Interstate 70 on the north side of West Sixth Avenue. The West line will terminate at the Jefferson County government center. Other key elements of the project include a new Federal Boulevard bridge and a new Sheridan Boulevard bridge over the tracks between West 13th and West 10th avenues. Contractors are expected to begin laying track next year, and Rocky Mountain Steel in Pueblo will begin rolling West Corridor rail in the next few months.

Some funding should be in place to begin restoration work on the depot in Como, Colorado, sometime this summer. We will keep you posted if there is a Club visit or work opportunity in that part of Park County.

Ray Rossman, US Forest Service Archaeologist, is looking for sources to possibly do stone wall stabilization at the Section House and Engine House at the Alpine Tunnel. He may be obtaining unexpected funding with a quick turn around for implementation. He is also looking for an interested partnership to begin designing and constructing new interpretative signs for the Alpine

Tunnel Historic District. There is an approved interpretative plan for the work. Please contact Ray Rossman by e-mail at: [rrossman@fs.fed.us](mailto:rrossman@fs.fed.us)

Boulder County Railway Historical Society has an agreement with the city of Boulder, Colorado, to start repairing the burned-out D&RGW caboose #04990 that had been in the park.

In Chama, New Mexico, Engine #487 is back in steam, and the ash pit has been remodeled.

I mentioned in February that AT&SF #3415 is steaming again. There will be a ceremony at the depot in Abilene, Kansas, on May 23rd, and some runs will be made on that weekend and four others this summer. The reservation phone number is 785-263-1077.

Union Pacific steam loco #844 is touring California until it's mid-May return to Cheyenne, Wyoming. It should also run to Frontier Days from Denver in July, and be in North Platte for a rail fest on September 17.

The Durango & Silverton NGRR is now building a new wye at Home Ranch, about six miles north of their main yard. This will be used for turning special event trains.

The National Model Railroad Association's Rocky Mountain Region is holding its Spring Convention in Greeley, Colorado, over Memorial Day weekend. There will be tours such as the UP Steam Shop in Cheyenne and Intermountain Model Railroad Company, along with

## From The President

layout tours, operating sessions, and modeling clinics. There will also be a special presentation on the Great Western Railway by historian Ken Jessen.

In conjunction with the convention there are two additional events. The Greeley Freight Station Museum will be holding its Grand Opening that weekend. The primary attraction is the Oregon, California, and Eastern model railroad, certainly the largest and most elaborate model railroad in this part of the country. And the 2009 Trains on the Plains Train show will fill the Island Grove Park hall with 25 vendors, 9 layouts, and 3 additional displays.

For more information see:

Convention web site:

<http://www.2009-rmr-nmra.org/>

GFSM web site:

<http://www.gfsm.org/>

Train show site:

<http://www.trains-on-the-plains.com/>

The Intermountain Chapter of the NRHS will sponsor the Mile High Rail Fair on July 25, 2009 from 9 to 4. This event at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds will offer a wide selection of merchandise, with the main focus on railroading, and a garden-scale model RR layout by the DGRS. Vendor details can be had at 303-298-0377 or online at [www.cozx.com/nrhs](http://www.cozx.com/nrhs)

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### Picturesque Colorado

The Picturesque Colorado exhibition at the Byers-Evans House Museum, 1310 Bannock Street in Denver features vintage railroad advertising photographs

including examples of William Henry Jackson's work for the Denver & Rio Grande. The exhibition is open daily, except Mondays, from 11 AM to 3 PM through May 31st. Admission to the gallery is free.

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### Creede Branch Schedule

From the Denver & Rio Grande RR Company: The 2009 season of the "Scenic Line of the World" will commence on June 21, 2009, and daily excursions will be being made by our converted personal carrier the "Silver Streak," 7 days a week until we receive our classification by the FRA and we feel secure in operating regular trains, at which time we will be using our 44-ton GE diesel with a consist of an open air gondola, RPO, and caboose. Further down the road the D&RGRR's steam locomotive 148 will begin daily service in 2010. Ticket prices are as follows for the 2009 season.

### Round Trip Excursion South Fork To Wasson

Adult	\$35.00
Senior (65+)	\$30.00
Child (2-12)	\$20.00

Infants under 2 not occupying a seat ride free

### Afternoon Round Trip Excursion South Fork To Wagon Wheel Gap

Adult	\$25.00
Senior (65+)	\$20.00
Child (2-12)	\$15.00

Infants under 2 not occupying a seat ride free

If you have any other questions please direct them to Mike Spera, General Superintendent & Master Mechanic, or

## From The President

the D&RGRR Depot in South Fork, Colorado, at 719-873-2003

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The Rio Grande Modeling & Historical Society is looking for anyone who would like to share a clinic, slide show, model building or other clinic during the 2009 convention in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The dates are September 16-19, from 1:00 to 5:00 PM. If you have anything to share, contact Nathan Zachman at [riograndenut@gmail.com](mailto:riograndenut@gmail.com)

Registrants of either the Rio Grande Modeling & Historical Society or the 29th Annual National Narrow Gauge Convention have full access to all the events of both Conventions.

Link to the RGM&HS site:

<http://www.drgw.org/>

The Narrow Gauge Convention site:

<http://www.29nng.com>

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The Value Recovery Group ([www.valuerecovery.com](http://www.valuerecovery.com)) is planning to purchase the Colorado Railcar Manufacturing Co. and continue the production of DMUs. They are very optimistic about the possibilities and their ability to continue the manufacturing of this one-of-a-kind product.

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Disney will send a train on a nationwide tour in support of its upcoming remake of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas*

*Carol* starring Jim Carrey. The diesel-powered train will depart Los Angeles in late May, and will visit 41 cities in the U.S. and Canada. The touring consist will include five cars: a baggage car, three display cars, and the heavyweight observation car Lamberts Point, which the train's staff will use. The three display cars were previously part of the Art Train while the baggage car is leased.

Four of the five cars are being transformed by Disney into a representation of 19th century London and will have a variety of interactive displays for visitors. Disney has a staff of approximately 30 working on the train in the Los Angeles area, completely refurbishing it for the project. Planned motive power is to be a pair of Amtrak locomotives, which along with the display cars will be "wrapped" in Disney promotional material.

Please look at the Club website from time to time. News items and photos are constantly changing, and there is a page for quality photos that are of interest, but not necessarily "news." The web address is [www.rockymtnrrclub.org/](http://www.rockymtnrrclub.org/) On the upper left side of the home page, you can click on "news & photos," and we would like to have our members send in a few shots to news page manager Wally Weart. As always, Club members may contact me at 303-988-3456 or [ds5280@comcast.net](mailto:ds5280@comcast.net).

### *In Remembrance* **Richard G. Anderson**

Richard Anderson passed away on March 29, 2009 at the age of 91. Richard had been a Club member since 1948.



From the footbridge to the Laramie, Wyoming, roundhouse area, we watched engine 3967 return to our excursion train. – Photo © 1953 James L. Ehernberger.

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## Looking Back – My First Union Pacific Excursion

By Jim Ehernberger

On Sunday, May 17, 1953, the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club operated their first UP special excursion train from Denver to Laramie, Wyoming. The purpose of the trip was to allow the passengers to view and photograph trains on Sherman Hill prior to the opening of the newly constructed alternate main line through Harriman. Most westward trains required helper engines, an operation that would soon be discontinued

when the new line was placed in operation during the following week.

Challenger engine 3967 (4-6-6-4) handled the 11-car train departing Denver Union Station under a clear sky. Further northward clouds formed and the weather turned cool.

I was not a member of the Club yet, but had read a newspaper article an-



## Looking Back – My First Union Pacific Excursion



UP 3967 during a photo stop on the Club excursion at Buford, Wyoming.  
– Photo © 1953 James L. Ehernberger.

nouncing the trip. The Cheyenne UP ticket agent made arrangements for five people to board the train at Borie (nine miles west of Cheyenne) where the Denver line connected with the mainline toward Laramie. The fare covering this portion was only \$2.35!

At Buford, our train took siding and the passengers were allowed to get off and take photos of the morning fleet of westward trains. Several streamliners passed (without helpers), but there were seven other opportunities to photograph trains (most did have helpers) before departure. In the meantime, the cool high altitude weather brought rain drops that froze and passengers hurried aboard, as the ground turned white with the hail stones!

Upon arrival into Laramie, it was “open house” and by using the footbridge to the roundhouse area, everyone

spent most of their time observing the servicing of Big Boys and several Challengers (including the 3967). There were no restrictions what-so-ever!

Inside one of the stalls in the roundhouse was UP’s oldest (built in 1890) locomotive (1242) receiving mechanical work. The 1242 was assigned to the UP’s 44-mile Encampment Branch from Walcott (21 miles east of Rawlins) over the 60-lb rail to Encampment, once a mining settlement. Many wanted a photo of this locomotive, but with it inside of the roundhouse that was a problem, so the foreman had a hostler crank up a diesel switch engine, and they graciously towed the 1242 out of the house, and placed it on a track where we could photograph it in nice sunlight. Wasn’t that great?

One of my favorite photos (taken with a 116 folding Kodak) was made off of the footbridge showing engine 3967 re-

## Looking Back – My First Union Pacific Excursion



The UP hostler towed their oldest locomotive, Number 1242, out of the Laramie roundhouse and placed it on a track for the group to photograph.

– Photo © 1953 James L. Ehernberger.

turning to our train. In this view it was obvious Laramie was a distributing point for coal cars serving UP Coal Company mines at Hanna and Rock Springs. These big locomotives, of course, used plenty of coal.

Richard Kindig maintained a log of photographs he took on this trip and all totaled he made 27 exposures on his postcard Graflex. Interestingly, his log book also had my name and address

written on a page. This was the beginning of my exposure to the rail-fan community, and it was also the reason I eventually owned a Graflex camera for action photography.

Looking back, it was like a dream come true, and life was so accommodating and simple and easy then. Not one person even got a scratch, and obviously the railroad welcomed us to Laramie!

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### Anniversaries!

The Colorado Railroad Museum officially celebrates their 50th Anniversary with a special event on Saturday July 11th culminating in a fund raising dinner that evening, so mark your calendars.

It's a banner year not only for the Museum, but for the entire Front Range,

as the 150th anniversary of the gold rush and the 150th anniversary of several front range communities, including the Museum neighbors of Denver and Golden are this year.

2009 also marks the 25th anniversary of the Denver Garden Railway Society.

# Current Railroad Happenings — Private Varnish SIERRA HOTEL



Amtrak train 6 in Coal Creek Canyon with SIERRA HOTEL.



Libby from California bid farewell to fellow passengers after enjoying her first ride on SIERRA HOTEL. Amtrak train 6 departed Denver Union Station April 15, 2009 and the SIERRA HOTEL continued on to Chicago. – Two photos ©2009 by Chip.



## Uranium Mill Tailings Moving by Rail

By Chip with thanks to Wendee Ryan at the U.S. Department of Energy

The scenic but quiet Cane Creek Subdivision built by the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad will see increased rail traffic starting April 2009. This Union Pacific branch line in recent years has seen the Potash Turn operate out of Grand Junction, Colorado, on Fridays. The train rolls west to Brendel Siding then turns south to Potash, Utah, near Moab. The line has been upgraded with continuous welded rail on the curves, additional ballast, grade crossing signals with gates and other improvements to handle U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) uranium mine tailings rail movements. Uranium mining near Moab, Utah, has long since disappeared but the stored radioactive uranium mine tailings remain. Concern that radioactive material might get into the Colorado River prompted the DOE to move the material to a new storage location near Union Pacific's Brendel Siding, AKA Crescent Junction on Utah road maps.

On March 31, 2009, the DOE announced that Moab would receive an additional \$108 million to accelerate removal of uranium mill tailings. The work will be accomplished by increasing the number of railcars and shipments.

"Construction was completed on the (EnergySolutions) railroad spur at the Crescent Junction site that will facilitate the loading and unloading of containers from the railcars." The spine cars will carry covered burgundy containers that will operate in unit trains over 25-miles of the Cane Creek Subdivision. The load out area is near the Moab Tunnel portal along 1,600 feet of (new) rail siding,

where all 88 empty containers will be removed from 22-railcars and replaced with filled containers.

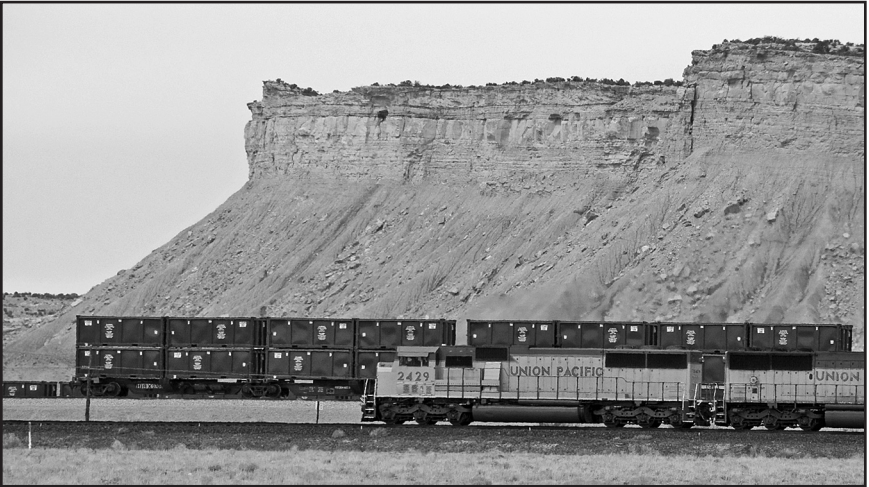
Union Pacific RR maintenance forces were busy upgrading the branch line built in the 1960s that primarily serves Intrepid Potash, LLC. The track north of the tunnel has been rebuilt. According to *Tailings Times*, "Because the slope of the existing Cane Creek Subdivision line was too steep for loading the tailings train, 3,800 feet of the rail line beginning at the tunnel portal had to be temporarily removed to lower the rail bench to the allowable grade. The rail bench was lowered 14 feet at its maximum to attain the necessary 0.4-percent grade."

"The existing track, which had been in place since the early 1960s when it was originally installed, was removed in early January 2009. DOE coordinated the timing of this 2-month effort with Intrepid Potash, LLC, to minimize the impacts to its once-a-week rail service. The new rail was welded together into 800-foot sections and then positioned on ties for final welding into one continuous piece. Union Pacific resumed its service to Intrepid on March 6.

"A new spur was installed in March that runs parallel to the Cane Creek Subdivision line for 1,800 feet and joins the line at the north end of the Moab site boundary. In early April (2009), the project began receiving the intermodal containers and railcars that will be used to carry tailings to the Crescent Junction disposal cell." Target date for beginning train movements was 4/20/09.



## Uranium Mill Tailings Moving by Rail



Union Pacific's Potash Turn with SD60M 2429 and 2321 passed the newly built yard for EnergySolutions at Department of Energy uranium mill tailings disposal site on 4/10/09. The UP has been moving spine cars and covered containers to Brendel (Crescent Junction, Utah, is the nearby map location). Unit trains of radioactive uranium was expected to commence movement by rail on the Cane Creek Subdivision (AKA Potash or Moab branch line) in late April 2009. Book Cliffs are in the background. – Photo © 2009 by Chip.



Still lettered for Burlington Northern, rotary plow BN 972559 was being pulled southbound at Palmer Lake on March 27, 2009. Drifts in the Trinidad area had already been cleared by the time it arrived. – Photo © 2009 Dave Schaaf.

## Colorado Railroad Museum 2009 Scheduled Special Operation Days

For information call 303-279-4591

<http://www.coloradorailroadmuseum.org/event-listings>

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May 9-10	Mother Goose Event
June 20-21	Father's Day Train
July 11-12	50th Anniversary Steam
August 8-9	Dog Days of Summer Steam
September 12-13, 19-20, 26-27	Day Out With Thomas
October 24-25	Halloween Train Steam
December 12-13	Christmas Train Steam

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### Saturday Special:

Ride in Goose 7 or in a 19th century passenger coach pulled by Locomotive No. 4. Rides begin at 10:00 AM Every Saturday, Weather Permitting  
Adult / Senior Fare: \$4 per ride  
Child Fare: \$2 per ride

### Other Special Events:

July 11  
50th Anniversary and Fundraising Dinner

July 24 through 26  
Buffalo Bill Days  
No Train But Lots Of Activities!

August 8  
Wine and Cheese Fundraiser Event

### Operate A Locomotive:

Call for reservations to operate Locomotive No. 4. \$150 puts you in the Engineers seat of this diesel for an hour!

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Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Members in good standing, and upon presentation of a current membership card, are entitled to free admission. Members are invited to join the Colorado Railroad Museum (a Museum membership provides certain merchandise discounts), and members may participate in restoration or other maintenance programs as volunteers.

Please contact the volunteer coordinator at the CRRM, telephone 303-279-4591.

## Intermountain Chapter, NRHS 2009 Event Schedule

For information call 303-298-0377

<http://www.cozx.com/nrhs>

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Friday, May 15th, 2009

Dinner meeting at Lone Star Steakhouse

Donald Tallman, Executive Director of the Colorado Railroad Museum, will present *The March of Time — The Colorado Railroad Museum, Past, Present, and Future*. Donald will share Richard Luckin's production celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Colorado Railroad Museum, followed by all the planned 50th anniversary events, plus sharing news of current restorations at the museum. We hope you'll come out and join us.

Friday, June 19th, 2009

Dinner meeting at Lone Star Steakhouse

Richard Luckin will show his latest documentary, *Tin Feathers and Gasoline Fumes*, a history of the Galloping Geese. This program includes interviews with several passengers who rode the Geese, along with vintage footage taken by Otto Perry. Recent footage was supplied by Dave Gross of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club. The Colorado Railroad Museum's three Geese, numbers 2, 6, and 7, also are featured in the program. Rocky Club president, Dave SchAAF, is the on-camera talent.

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**PLEASE NOTE:** Dinner meetings are in the Alamo Room of the Lone Star Steakhouse at 7450 W. 52nd Avenue, Arvada (exit north on Wadsworth off I-70). Reservations are STILL necessary, so call the office (303-298-0377) EARLY in the week, or by Noon on Thursday, before the program. "Social Hour" and dinner ordering will be from 6:00 to 7:15 PM. The evening's program begins at 8:00 PM and should end around 9:00 PM. Supporting the guest speakers also supports the Intermountain Chapter. Because Lone Star provides us with a private room without charge or set-up fees, we have guaranteed them that each attendee will spend a minimum of \$10.00 in the purchase of food and/or drink, excluding the 18% automatic gratuity.

## **Publishers Statement — Rocky Mountain Rail Report**

The Rocky Mountain Rail Report (ISSN 1040-9223) is published by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club and the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation.

First class postage paid at Denver, Colorado.

Postmaster, send address changes to:

Rocky Mountain Rail Report, PO Box 2391, Denver, CO 80201-2391

### **Club Information**

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### **Club Officers**

	President	Dave Schaaf
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	VP - Club	Pat Mauro
	Secretary	Roger Sherman
Web: <a href="http://www.rockymtnrrclub.org">http://www.rockymtnrrclub.org</a>	Treasurer	Keith Jensen

### **Membership Information**

Membership in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club may be obtained by sending the annual dues to the Club address listed above.

Regular membership dues are \$35.00. Overseas regular membership dues are \$45.00.

Contributing membership is \$50.00. Sustaining membership is \$70.00.

Patron membership is \$100.00. Golden membership is \$500.00.

An associate membership for spouses and children is \$25.00 additional.

Members joining after April may send a payment of \$3.00 for each month remaining in the year.

Members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club are also members in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club.

### **Board Meetings**

Members are always welcome to attend any board of directors meeting. Please contact any Club officer for the date, time and location.

### **Newsletter Contributions**

Newsletter contributions and items for publication should be sent to:

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Rocky Mountain Rail Report  
PO Box 620579  
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Fax: 303-978-0402  
E-mail: [selectimag@aol.com](mailto:selectimag@aol.com)

**Items for the July - August Rail Report should be sent by June 19th.**



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# *FIRST CLASS*

