

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB
P. O. BOX 2391
DENVER, COLORADO 80201

December, 1964

Newsletter No. 64

The December, 1964 meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, which will be the official annual meeting and election of our organization, will be held in the basement meeting room of the Western Federal Savings Association skyscraper - 718-17th Street, Denver - on Wednesday evening, December 9th, at 8:00 p.m.

Preceding the entertainment portion of the evening's program, there will be a short business meeting at which we will elect officers and directors to serve during 1965. Upon completion of balloting, a program of old-time silent movies -- melodrama of the 1913-1915 era -- with much of it involving hairbreadth railroading activity, will be presented by Club member Carl E. Steele. Helen Gibson will be featured in "Ghost of the Canon," and famous serial queen Ruth Roland will dramatize the thrilling aspects of escaping the villain.

All members and their friends are invited to attend this annual meeting. Only members in good standing, and showing current 1964 membership cards at the meeting, are authorized to vote in the election for officers and board members.

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Club member Tom Gray presented a completely fascinating program at our November meeting -- a visit in sight and sound to such far-away places as the Isle of Man, New Zealand, the Fiji Islands and several countries in Europe. His production technique, using tape recorded commentary complimented by delightful background music, was outstanding and added a great deal to the program. Members were treated to little-known railroading scenes in spots where few of us knew that railroads existed. Tom gleaned an encyclopedic knowledge of much of the motive power and lines shown from a number of sources, and his continuing flow of facts and figures made the entire production a railfan's delight.

The presentation, prepared especially for our meeting, obviously involved many hours of work and preparation on Tom's part and we are grateful for his efforts, and for the outstanding program they produced.

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Another important annual meeting to occur in the near future is that of the State Historical Society of Colorado, which will convene at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday night, December 8th - the night preceding our Club meeting - in the basement of the First Baptist Church at East 14th Avenue and Grant Street, next door to the Colorado State Museum Building. Among the features of the program will be presentation of two awards of interest to Rocky Mountain Railroad Club members.

Granted by the American Association for State and Local History, an Award of Merit will be presented to Club member R. W. Richardson for the Colorado Railroad Museum, where the five items of motive power and rolling stock owned and maintained by our organization are prominent among the large quantity of equipment on display - part of the "unique program of collecting, preserving and interpreting Colorado railroad history" for which the award is being made.

In addition, a new type of award, a Certificate of Commendation, recognizing excellence of individual effort, is to be presented to Club member Ronald F. Ruhoff for his outstanding color, sound-synchronized movie on Colorado's ghost towns, entitled "Legends of the High Country."

Congratulations to these two members for this well-deserved recognition. The meeting room is commodious, and a large representation from the membership of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club would be most appropriate in acknowledging the awards to these two Club members.

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The Nominating Committee, M. C. (Mac) Poor, Arl M. Cuthbert, and Jackson Thode, has been reviewing qualifications and contacting members for inclusion in the slate of nominees to

be presented at the December meeting. The encouraging response to inquiries made so far by the Committee is very gratifying.

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Accompanying his recent order for a copy of the Club's new railroad history - COLORADO MIDLAND - was a delightful and welcome note from long-time Club member Richard C. Overton, prominent professor at the University of Western Ontario and official historian of the Burlington. In the hope that he will not chastise us too severely, we are taking the liberty of quoting Dr. Overton:

"Finally, after 14 years of toil, the manuscript for my single-volume history of the Burlington, to be entitled BURLINGTON ROUTE, has gone to the publisher (Knopf). Provided all the art work, maps, charts, and proof reading can be done on schedule, we hope to have it out by next spring; probable price \$10. Will keep you posted.

"Wich Denver were a bit closer, for it's been years since I've attended a RMRC meeting, but one of these days I'll make one yet. Good luck!"

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Union Station at Kansas City, Missouri, one of the nation's largest and most attractive railroad stations, which was dedicated on October 30, 1914, has just celebrated its 50th anniversary. To observe the "birthday" of this station facility which, with its train sheds, covers 18 acres in the heart of the city, the railroads serving Kansas City, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, sponsored a four-day Exposition of Railway Equipment. Included were the latest in freight and passenger cars and diesel locomotives.

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In response to inquiries from a number of members regarding the future of D&RGW's trains number 1 and 2, the Royal Gorge, we have obtained the following information from the road's transportation department:

The Rio Grande has been authorized to remove the Royal Gorge from service between Salida and Grand Junction, Colorado, effective December 8. We have been advised, however, that the road plans to continue operation of both eastbound and westbound passenger trains between these two points until after the first of the year.

A vista-dome ride from Denver to Glenwood Springs through the spectacular Royal Gorge is more than worth your time. Train schedules allow an easy trip, with an overnight stay in Glenwood Springs, and time for a dip in the famous natural hot swimming pool, before the return trip to Denver.

There's still time -- even though only a little -- to enjoy a train ride through this famous gash in Colorado's landscape, to sweep along the Arkansas River, through upper South Park and Leadville and plunge over Tennessee Pass, following shining rails that helped build the west.

When trains 1 and 2 are gone, there will be no passenger service west of Salida on the famous Royal Gorge Route. And so departs another friend!

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Seventy-five years ago a popular item in use by the railroads was paper wheels! Today, of course, steel wheels are used on all railroad cars. Pullman is believed to have inaugurated use of the Allen paper wheel in those days, to deaden the wheel noise on their Pullman Palace Sleeping Cars. These wheels had a paper core, made by first placing together 16 sheets of common strawboard paper, which were dampened, pressed and baked. Then three such sections were joined and dried for from 30 to 90 days in a kiln.

The final step was to join four of these sections and dry for six months. This block was then turned on a lathe to proper size and shape. The wheel consisted of a cast iron hub, bored to fit the axle, the paper block which fitted over it, and a cast iron tire. On either side of the wheel were placed two wrought iron plates, and the disk, plates, tire and hub were bolted together. Thus the paper core bore the weight of the car. The 38-inch wheel weighed 1,070 pounds.

Such paper wheels, denoted by a circle of bolt heads around the web of the wheel, are evident in many old photos of passenger cars, and even on the pony truck wheels of locomotives!

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Texas Gulf Sulphur Company's giant potash mine and mill at Cane Creek near Moab, Utah, will begin operations early in December, according to company officials. The signal for production at the \$25 million complex will end more than three years of preparations, including construction of a 38-mile railroad spur and sinking a 2,797-foot shaft, 22 feet in diameter, to potash beds beneath the Colorado River.

Work on the site began in 1961, with production originally scheduled for early 1963. A series of delays that included a tragic underground explosion in the summer of 1963, pushed the production date further and further back. The mine taps huge beds of nitrate of potash, which will be processed into commercial potash at the mill, then shipped by rail to nationwide markets. The mine and mill were to begin production at a rate of half-a-million tons of potash a year.

The rail spur that links the mill with the Rio Grande main line at Crescent Junction was built by Morrison-Knudsen Construction Company at a reported cost of \$5.5 million. Included in the railroad link is a 7,000-foot tunnel cut by Stearns-Rogers Company. Contractor for drilling the 2,797-foot mine shaft was Harrison International Inc. The completed shaft was turned over to Texas Gulf Sulphur this fall.

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Despite frantic efforts of waterway operators to give the St. Lawrence Seaway the look of success, the project is in deep trouble. Fact is, it cost the U.S. and Canadian governments \$450,000,000 to build and was hailed as a self-liquidating project. Actually, by the end of last year traffic handled was so far below estimates which were the basis for original authorization that the waterway not only could not pay interest, but also was far behind schedule in re-payment of the loan. The U.S. Agency is \$10,000,000 behind in payments, the Canadian \$65,000,000.

Now comes the Chicago port director with a simple solution: simply abolish tolls entirely! The U.S. has spent billions in federal funds to improve harbors and rivers throughout the country, without toll requirements, he points out. The attitude seems to be -- what's another half-billion in our tax money??

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In accordance with the Club's by-laws, this newsletter -- announcing the annual meeting and election -- is being mailed ten days prior to the meeting. If you haven't been receiving the Newsletters regularly, please let us know.

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As a reminder -- 1965 is approaching -- and dues for the year may be sent in at any time. \$3.00 per year for Colorado residents; \$2.00 for those residing outside the state.

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Life doesn't begin at 40 for those who went like 60 when they were 20! Best wishes to you all for a happy Holiday Season.

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Ted S. McKee, President
Herbert O'Hanlon, Vice President

Fay L. McKee, Secretary
Ane O. Clint, Treasurer

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

On November 27, 1964, the Rocky Mountain News reported that Denver & Rio Grande Western trains #1 and #2, the "Royal Gorge," would be discontinued west of Salida on Sunday, December 6th. Anyone desiring to make a last trip on a regular train over Tennessee Pass should arrange to complete the trip on December 5th. This information was a reversal of former information from the RR.