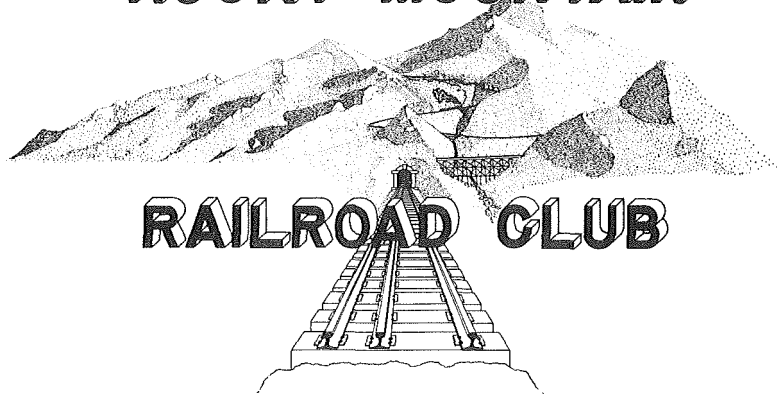


ROCKY MOUNTAIN

September, 1965

Newsletter No. 73



P. O. Box 2391
Denver, Colorado 80201

The September, 1965, meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be held on the customary second Wednesday of the month - September 8 - at 8:00 p.m. in the basement meeting room of the Western Federal Savings Association building at 718 - 17th Street in downtown Denver. The program for this meeting will be presented by Club member Dr. Albert A. Bartlett, University of Colorado Professor, who has returned from a year's teaching experience in Sweden. While overseas, "Doc" had many opportunities to ride and photograph the railroads of the countries he visited. His program for this month is entitled, "Railroads of Sweden," and promises to be something out

of the ordinary for our audience. All members and guests of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club are invited to enjoy this unusual program on September 8.

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Those in attendance at the August meeting obviously were delighted with the fine movie program given by Club member Carl E. Steele; his "two-reeler" entitled, "Block Signals," was perhaps the first full-length film to star the lovely Jean Arthur. Made about 1926, this movie had many excellent scenes on the California lines of the Santa Fe, and a true heroine-villain plot appropriate to the times. Supplementing this thriller were two additional reels from Carl's library - the first bringing back fond memories to old-timers in the audience of days on the Rio Grande Southern when engines 20, 40 and 42 were still in service, and before the Galloping Geese were fitted with the modern bus bodies. To cap the program Carl showed an interesting film of snow fighting over the Sierras on the Southern Pacific, including the dramatic blockade and rescue of the City of San Francisco several years ago. Not even the past winter in Colorado quite approached the severity of those California blizzards!

The reluctance with which the group finally dispersed after the program was a rather clear indication of their enjoyment of Carl's interesting films.

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Response to the latest announcement of another steam-powered special excursion sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, using ex-great Western 2-8-0 No. 51, owned by Singing Rails, Inc., of Boulder, was quite heartening. Timely publicity in Denver's 106-year old Rocky Mountain News, and the Denver Post, as well as Boulder, Longmont and Colorado Springs papers, helped in amassing a large crowd, for the Club's fourth excursion of the year. The trip operated from Denver to Longmont and return on Sunday, August 29, and passengers enjoyed the unique experience of train operation up the middle of the street on the east side of town, and stopping for a picnic lunch at Longmont's adjacent City Park.

Passengers had hardly alighted to find picnic spots in the park when Longmont City Manager Charlie Klarich rolled up to the train in an ancient, chain-driven fire engine, with the siren blaring and red lights flashing, to welcome our group to the city! The city fire chief was close on his heels, arriving in a more modern conveyance, but with just as much noise.

They were followed by the Longmont Boosters who, armed to the teeth and dressed in full western garb, arrived in a red and yellow four-horse stage coach, a two-horse-hitch covered wagon and a number of vintage automobiles, including a beautiful silver Pierce-Arrow.

The Boosters opened their vehicles to our young passengers and most of them spent the lunch hour careening about town in the fire engine and the two horse-drawn coaches. Following lunch, the local square dance club put on a lovely and skilled exhibition on the park tennis courts accompanied by a good deal of hand-clapping and foot-stomping from our delighted passengers. Train passengers had so much to do and watch during our hour and one-half stay in the city, and were having so much fun, that they hardly heard engineer Micky Hansen's "all aboard" whistle! A wild, last-minute scramble for the train resulted and those aboard were kept busy helping trotting, laughing excursionists jump aboard as our train rolled out

of town.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to City Manager Klarich and his Longmont Boosters for making our too-short stay in his city such a memorable and fun-filled occasion.

The trip was a resounding success from every standpoint, including the all-important financial aspect. Well over 300 fans turned out and the Club will be able to meet its obligations with little or no loss. As a result, future operations with this venerable little engine are already being planned and we should have a few excursion surprises coming up following our October Union Pacific run with the 8444. Your officers and directors thank every member who, by his support of this excursion, made future trips with engine 51 possible.

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It may be of interest to our readers to learn that this old steamer, lodged in the Denver roundhouse of the Colorado & Southern between runs, was one of the victims of the famous Platte River flood of June 16, about which we have previously written. Silt and mud infiltration into the engine's mechanism was so bad that it was necessary to tear her down completely, clean all the parts, and reassemble the engine, with the work being done by C & S forces.

The owners of engine 51 operated a special, private excursion from Denver to Golden and return on Saturday evening just before our trip to serve as a break-in run following the engine's rebuilding. A news article in Friday (August 27) editions of the Denver Post indicated that this trip was also sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club. This, of course, is not true and we would like to correct any misunderstanding that may have arisen among Club members who saw the item. The Club never has operated, and never will operate, an excursion that is not open to the entire membership and their guests.

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The high water troubles afflicting Denver and its surrounding areas since June 16 have continued to plague local railroad operations. It was not until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, August 13 - nearly two months after the first high water - that normal two-track dispatching and operation between Denver and Pueblo finally were resumed. At that time, C&S train #28 was the first to pass over two newly-rebuilt bridges at MP 84.65 and 88.53 near Fountain, Colorado, on the Rio Grande line (used as the northward track between Pueblo and Colorado Springs).

And only three days previously - on August 10 - had the Union Pacific been able to reopen its Denver-Kansas City line after an expenditure of nearly \$3 million in rebuilding bridges over East, Middle and West Bijou Creeks and repairing 23 miles of intermittently flooded track and smashed signal lines in eastern Colorado and western Kansas. At the same time, Rock Island trains, which have operating rights over this trackage between Denver and Limon, were able to resume direct operation into Denver, thus ending the long period of detours through Colorado Springs and Palmer Lake.

Occasional heavy rains have continued to hamper reconstruction of the Rio Grande's 1.2-mile Louviers Powder Spur serving the DuPont factory on the south bank of Plum Creek south of Denver. As late as Saturday, August 21, high water carried away corrugated pipe culverts and fill with which the railroad had been trying to restore service, and the company is now engaged in "re-salvaging" culverts and track material for another attempt at rebuilding this line across the water course.

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Additional information regarding the creation of the Golden Spike National Monument in Utah, mentioned in the August newsletter, has now been made available to us. U.S. Park Service plans call for the acquisition of 2,000 acres of land at the actual site of the driving of the Golden Spike and along the railroad right-of-way for seven miles on either side of Promontory Summit. This land will permit the development of several interpretative sites such as the Big Fill, the Big Trestle, and on the western slope of the Promontory Range the point which marked the completion of ten miles of track laid in one day. At the point of the junction of the rails, a museum telling the entire story of the transcontinental railroad construction and completion will be erected.

Utah's State Legislature earlier this year created the State's Golden Spike Centennial Commission with an initial appropriation of \$10,000 to plan and carry out a program for the observance of the one hundredth anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike on May 10, 1869. This Commission is already at work; offers of relics, historic documents and other memorabilia to assist in the celebration are being received, and the Commission plans to have on hand the actual Golden Spike and other significant relics of the era. Any persons having knowledge of historic articles or relics are invited to contact the Golden Spike Centennial Commission through the Utah State Historical Society at 603 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102.

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Another revival in Utah - this involving a former interurban line - also is taking place. No doubt the folks of Salt Lake City were surprised to learn early in August that the little Salt Lake, Garfield and Western, which first started hauling passengers to the remarkable old Saltair Pavilion on the southern shore of Great Salt Lake in 1893, was interested in re-establishing daily passenger service between the city and the lake.

Traffic was handled by three small 4-4-0 steamers from its opening date until 1919, according to Ira L. Swett's authoritative booklet, "Interurbans of Utah." Then the line was electrified and the company purchased six handsome new McGuire-Cummings passenger interurbans which were operated on 15-minute headway starting August 4, 1919. Popularity of the line resulted in construction in company shops in 1922 of 13 novel open-air trailers, seating about 100 each and carrying train lines permitting them to be sandwiched in between the passenger motors. For some reason, these open trailers were not equipped with lights, a fact which seemed to add considerable to their appeal on moonlit nights!

As the water level of the lake receded in the late 1930's so did the passenger business of the 16.3-mile line, although freight business from the Royal Crystal Salt Company's tremendous salt evaporating vats along the right-of-way continued to provide the wherewithal to keep the railroad running. The electric passenger equipment deteriorated beyond the point of economical use, and finally was replaced with two small 44-ton diesel locomotives in 1951. Two of the interurban motors were kept for use as trailers behind the diesels, as were several of the open trailers, while the remainder of the rolling stock was scrapped.

Now, in an effort to reintroduce local residents to one of their principal tourist attractions, the SLG&W, in cooperation with the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce, has opened a new campaign. On August 28 and 29 ten special trains were run to and from the lake, whose water level has risen 2.8 feet in recent years. If the new promotion succeeds, daily schedules, which were last operated in 1958, are expected to resume again next year.

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One of our faithful correspondents, Club member 'Mike' Blecha, whose work carries him to all parts of the state, has sent us another interesting memo: "If you are ever in Pagosa Springs and hear a steam locomotive whistle, your curiosity may be aroused since you are more than 20 miles north of the Alamosa-Durango narrow gauge main line through northern New Mexico. After a little investigation during my visit, I found that the San Juan Lumber Company, which has a large mill just to the east of Pagosa Springs, operates with steam power. They have a whistle from a Colorado & Southern locomotive. The interesting thing about it is that the man who pulls the cord (he must be a railfan at heart) has done a little practicing - for a week I was awakened at five minutes to seven each morning by this 'train' whistling for a crossing!"

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For the next-to-last offering in its seven-part "Colorful Colorado" series of programs sponsored by the Denver Public Library this past summer, Club members Ed Haley and Dick Kindig were asked to present their slide program on the days of horse-car, cable-car and electric trolley operations in Denver. Playing to a "full house" at noon on Thursday, August 5, in the Malcolm Wyer auditorium at the main library building, the program attracted many favorable comments. Arrangements have been made for our Club members to enjoy this entertaining program at one of the regular meetings later this fall.

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Sales of the new Club "Scotchligh" reflective decals have been brisk since their introduction several months ago and nearly half our supply has been exhausted. The decals carry the

Club's distinctive mountain railroading emblem in blue on silver self-adhesive material. They are available in two styles, front adhesive for application to the interior of car windows; and back adhesive for use on car bumpers, luggage, camera cases, etc.

Both styles are available for only 50¢ each, postpaid. For prompt service, send your orders to: Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, 5445 Caryl Place, Littleton, Colorado 80120. Please indicate the style you prefer (front adhesive or back adhesive), and how many you wish. Checks and money orders should be made payable to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club.

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This is the last opportunity to remind our readers of additional special excursions planned for the fall of the year. Two of these, which have become traditions on the Rio Grande's narrow gauge, are the eighth annual 3-day Kolor Karavan tour from Alamosa to Durango and Silverton and return, sponsored by the Alamosa Kiwanis Club on October 1, 2 and 3, and the third annual one-day Epsilon Sigma Alpha sorority picnic train from Alamosa to Cumbres Pass and return on October 10. Fares for the Kolor Karavan are \$23.00 for adults and \$11.50 for children 5 to 12, with additional details available from Dr. R. E. Wick, Adams State College, Alamosa, Colorado. Contact them by September 15.

The sorority train, with a capacity of 725 passengers (!) will leave Alamosa at 7:30 a.m. and return at 6:30 p.m. after spending two hours at Cumbres summit. Projects sponsored by this service sorority, and supported by proceeds from this annual operation, include tonsillectomies for needy children, donations to the San Luis Valley Mental Health Clinic, and assistance to the Adams State College Speech and Hearing Clinic. Fares are \$6.00 for adults, \$3.00 for children 5 to 12. Additional information can be obtained from the sorority at P.O. Box 237, Alamosa.

Another October excursion, this one sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, will be the operation of Union Pacific steamer #8444 over the main line of the railroad west of Cheyenne on Sunday, October 17. Tickets will include day-long access to the famed "Las Vegas Diner," with all the food you can eat for as long as you can eat available at no additional cost. Use the coupon on the enclosed trip brochure to order your tickets.

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Passengers riding the "Silverton" continue to find much of attraction in the area. Patronage through August 18 had reached 50,697, which compares with 46,843 a year ago on the same date.

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"COMO -- Park County, population 500, situated on the South Park Division, Union Pacific Railway, eighty-eight miles from Denver. It is an eating station and the junction of the Breckenridge Branch, now building, which makes the town a lively one. Extensive coal mines are located near the town; also some rich quartz mines a few miles to the westward. The coal vein is from seven to ten feet in thickness, of good coking quality, owned by the Railroad Company, who use large quantities of it, and ship much more. Como is reached by daily trains; fare \$7.35." -- Crofutt's Grip-Sack Guide of Colorado; Overland Publishing Company, Omaha, 1881.

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Instead of complaining that we don't have everything we want, we should be glad we don't have everything we deserve!

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