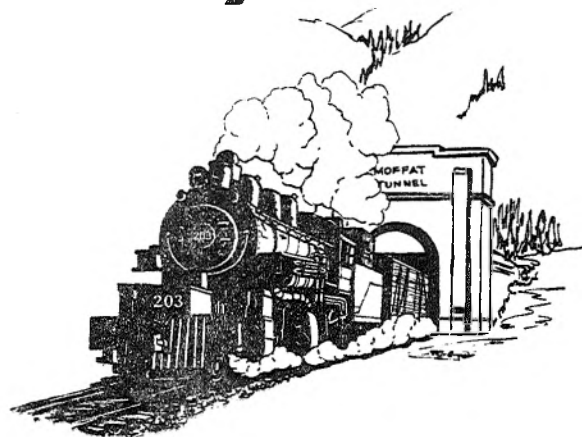


# Rocky Mountain Rail Report



## The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

P.O. Box 2391 Denver, Colorado 80201

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

Editor - - - - Darrell Arndt

PROGRAM NOTES: The Program for the April meeting will be presented by John E. Robinson, an instrument technician for Frontier Airlines and a model railroader, who will show us slides of steam locomotives, trains and yards in South Africa, Wales and New Zealand. The South African slides are mostly of the two foot gauge and were taken in 1970. Slides taken in Wales are of two foot-two and three quarter inch and two foot-six inch gauge tourist lines in 1969 and 1973. His New Zealand slides were taken in 1971 and include a railroad and trolley museum, mainline operations, diesel locomotives and equipment. Come to the meeting for an evening of far-away railroading and bring a friend. Guests are always welcome.

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CERTAINLY one of the most unfortunate occurrences that can befall a railroad and the community it serves is a train wreck, particularly when there are serious injuries or a loss of life. As with most disasters, the news media and the historians who follow, seem to limit their analysis and report to a bit of statistics; so many killed and injured, dollar loss, operations tied up so long, equipment damaged, the cause, etc. Of course it would be impossible, and perhaps pointless for an in-depth follow-up on the most important aspect of all, the effects on the people involved. But how often do we pause for even a moment and think of the almost limitless repercussions such a brief, tragic incident can have on the lives of the victims, their families and friends?

At the March meeting Dow Helmers revealed what would happen if such a detailed analysis were to be done. His resulting program was an enlightening and touching story about the people caught in the wreck at Eden, Colorado, when a southbound Denver & Rio Grande passenger train plunged through a bridge into a flooded gully. What had begun as a routine business or pleasure trip suddenly became a night of terror and suffering for many aboard. Due to Dow's thorough research and fine presentation, we were able to step back in time and relive the events with those people and observe on that evening and afterwards their struggle for survival and return to normalcy. A truly different approach in documenting such an event and a strong reminder of a few of the hardships our predecessors had to endure.

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THANKS JIM - Club members owe a vote of thanks to fellow-member James R. Trowbridge for doing the embossed printing on this years membership cards. Jim, assisted by Charlie Ryland, Dick Kindig and Ed haley did the embossing using special equipment at his TROWBRIDGE PRESS, INC. which specializes in fancy letterheads, cards, etc. Cards were previously done individually and by hand in a time consuming process.

\* \* \* \* \*

GOOD READING - If you receive the weekend edition of the Denver Post then you probably saw the cover and story about Olie Larsen written by Club member and assistant Post editor Bernard Kelly. The article was in the March 17 issue of Empire magazine. Olie's job as superintendent of maintenance of the Public Service Company of Colorado's power lines is to insure that the

electrical power we don't give a second thought about makes it over hundreds of miles of high tension lines between power plant and user. The story recounted a sampling of the many interesting and unique experiences such an occupation has. Olie is a long time member and recently completed serving a term on the board of directors.

\* \* \* \* \*

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER....

I fell asleep the other Night  
And while I had my Snooze  
I dreamed each member stepped right up  
And promptly paid their dues  
But when I found 'twas but a dream  
I nearly hit the floor  
It's up to you to make it true  
In 1974.

Here it is April and about 250 dues have yet to come in. Help the Treasurer out and send in your \$3.00. This will also insure your name and address being listed on the new roster.

\* \* \* \* \*

WHAT WAS THAT AGAIN??? - Several questions have been brought up concerning the mention in the March Rail Report about the first true transcontinental railroad being completed near Strasburg, Colorado 40 miles east of Denver, and what happened to Promontory Point, Utah and the famous event that took place there in May of 1869.

When THE spike was driven in Utah the Union Pacific had not yet built a bridge across the Missouri River at Omaha and therefore had to ferry its engines and rolling stock back and forth across the break. In the meantime the Kansas Pacific completed its line between Kansas City and Denver by August 15, 1870, the first time equipment could cross the continent on continuous rail. To do this a car would travel from the east to Kansas City, Denver, up to Cheyenne and from there continue west on the Overland Route. It was not until the Spring of 1872 that a permanent bridge was opened for traffic across the Missouri between Council Bluffs and Omaha. There had been several temporary structures built across the Missouri during the winter months incorporating river ice for their support, the first being built in Jan 1868. But as soon as the spring thaws arrived, the bridge was removed either by railroad crews or mother nature. Also to be noted is that in May 1869 the western portion of the CP terminated in Sacramento and had not yet been built down to the Pacific Ocean.

It can be said these are technicalities, but as far as a real physical connection, is concerned, Strasburg had the honors. For all practical purposes of course, the completion of the Overland Route was a great improvement over the stagecoach, and the ferry at Omaha was of minor inconvenience. Hope this doesn't cause anyone to burn their 1969 commemorative UP calendars or toss out their "We can handle it" buttons.

\* \* \* \* \*

SPEAKING OF THE UP, it won't be long before 8444 embarks on its journey from Omaha west to Spokane, Washington for display at Expo 74. The schedule is to be as follows: April 16, Omaha to North Platte; 17th, North Platte to Cheyenne; 18th, Cheyenne to Green River; 19th, Green River to Salt Lake; 20th, Salt Lake to Pocatello; 21st, Pocatello to Nampa, near Boise; April 22, Nampa to Hinkle; 23rd, Hinkle to Portland; 24th, Portland to Hinkle, April 25-26 at Hinkle, and April 27, Hinkle to Spokane. The train will not be operated through Denver due to "operating procedures". It may be advisable to check the local newspapers also, in case of any last minute schedule adjustments.

Tentative consist includes a flat car decorated with the flags of various states visited, a baggage car, one or two coaches for rail personnel and press representatives, Staff car 202 and a business car on the rear.

The flags of the thirteen states in which the UP operates to be flown from the flat car will be picked up in route. Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska will be installed before departure from Omaha; California and Nevada go on in Salt Lake City; Montana flag on at Boise; Washington State at Spokane. The rest will be added while in the state the locomotive

happens to be in at the time.

Although capable of speeds of 100 mph, the engine will operate no faster than 55 mph, presumably to conserve fuel, or save wear and tear on the carburetor and transmission or something.

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THE CUMBRES AND TOLTEC SCENIC has substantially cut back its' operating schedule for 1974. "Firm" operating dates as of now are weekends only, beginning the 3rd of August through October 6th. If the demand warrants, additional runs will be announced later.

The starting date for the Silverton is May 25th. Adult fare this year has gone up to \$9.00 for the round trip. A little too soon to tell right now, but reservations so far are running behind last year. The railroad is going to play it be ear in deciding when the second section will be added.

Fares have also gone up on the Rio Grande Zephyr. Adult round trip to Salt Lake is now \$63.00, round trip to Glenwood Springs is \$24.00, both from Denver of course.

Amtrak has announced a 20 per cent increase in fares WEST of Chicago for the summer months. First they take all the decent western equipment and send it back east, cut off slumbercoach service, deteriorate service on the Santa Fe to the point where the Santa Fe now will not let Amtrak use the name "Super Chief" anymore, and now this funny business. Could go on but won't. Draw your own conclusions!!

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THE WINTER PARK SKI TRAIN had its' last run for the season March 30. The normal nine car consist of ex-NP standard heavyweight coaches and ex-Prospector combine was lengthened that day with the addition of a coach, dome car, and "cable car" dome lounge, all ex-CZ equipment normally used on the Rio Grande Zephyr. The extra equipment was to accommodate city officials, guests and so forth of the Winter Park Recreational Association.

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THEY DON'T RUN SO WELL ON THE GROUND - The last week in March was a tough one for some BN and D&RGW locomotives and rolling stock. On March 27 about 30 cars and four mid-train helper engines in the Pueblo-Gillette, Wyoming unit coal train plunged off a trestle just east of Wiggins, Colorado and piled up in an unbelievable heap. The ensuing fire from the spilled diesel fuel didn't help either. The train was empty, no injuries reported. The SFZ as well as BN freights had to be routed over the UP.

Over on the Rio Grande a four unit westbound freight hit a rock slide on Saturday, March 30 about 11 miles east of Glenwood Springs in Glenwood Canyon. The spot is just east of the tunnel around the bend from the Hanging Lake parking area. One of the units ended up crosswise to the track, on its side. Lady Luck must have been riding along as a few more yards either way and the lead unit would have had the tunnel portal or river to contend with. Although the mishap occurred in the early morning hours, Rio Grande crews wasted no time in reopening the line in time for the Salt Lake City bound Zephyr and regular freight traffic. The Rio Grande also had the misfortune of having the roof burn off their three story high equipment repair building in Denver last month. Most of the estimated \$20,000 damage was confined to the roof of the structure, with little damage to cars inside for repair.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN'S real estate people apparently have cooking on their stove a recipe for closing down Denver Union Station, possible by next year. Not much has been said about it, and information is sketchy, but it appears to be part of their plan for removing rail facilities for the Platt River vicinity and transforming the entire area into a vast office, apartment and hotel complex. They would like to see the 15th and 16th street viaducts removed among other things, and nearby streets that terminate at Wynkoop extended north toward the river. The Denver Union Terminal Railway Company, which is owned by six railroads which operated trains into the city, operates the station and has not been contacted by the BN

regarding the matter. All the railroads would have to agree on the closing. The last thing Denver needs is a Cincinnati "Tastee-Freez" style structure out in the sticks somewhere.

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AN EFFORT is being undertaken to initiate Amtrak service over the C&NW and the UP between the midwest and Los Angeles reports Dr. Frank Raasch of Kearney, Neb. A group from Iowa is pushing for the service along with people in Las Vegas, Nevada. Towns all along the route seem to be becoming more interested in this, except the UP for some reason. They want nothing to do with it.

In Omaha Amtrak has moved out of the Burlington station and the UP station is also empty. At Grand Island the UP has torn everything down, it's only a short whistle stop now.

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WHY-SOME-RAILROADS-FROWN-ON-RAILFANS-ON-THEIR-PROPERTY DEPT. - Dr. Raasch also mentions that a UP Special Agent told him they recently caught a rail enthusiast lying down between the tracks at North Platte waiting for the 8444 to pass over it and while it was doing this he was going to film it. (Imagine the part in his hair it could have made).

\* \* \* \* \*

FIGURE THIS ONE OUT - Another example of an amazing Federal bureaucratic foulup along the lines experienced by FRA Administrator John Ingram mentioned in the March Rail Report was sent to us by E. H. Steffy of Camp Hill, Pa. It doesn't pertain to railroading in the Rocky Mountain region (fortunately) but is still worth mentioning here.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is currently examining which rail lines to keep and which to abandon in the governments program for reorganizing the Penn Central and other Northeast railroads. The DOT decided one line to go would be a portion on which the community of Warren, Pa. is located. When wind of this reached the town, its inhabitants nearly went off the deep end. After all, the railroad's presence accounts for nearly 2,500 jobs, 30 per cent of the town's tax revenue, and 4,000 carloads of freight each year. Then it was discovered several weeks later that a slight mistake was made.

The Warren station is listed on Penn Central railroad records as the Struthers station - a carryover to the days when Warren had three stations - Warren, Warren II, and Struthers. The DOT people took Warren as being at Struthers in Ohio, over 100 miles away, and completely eliminated the 45 mile line in Pennsylvania where Warren is located. The problem has been resolved, but a few people are still a little uneasy about what almost happened to their railroad.

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SWAP 'N SHOP - Personal ads are accepted from members for items to be listed for sale or trade or wanted. We cannot enter into any correspondence, nor will we appraise items.

FOR SALE - Pictorial Supplement to Denver, South Park & Pacific, Mint Condition - \$160.00 Robert F. Smith, 5240 Washburn Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55410.

FOR SALE: R & L H S RAILROAD HISTORY #127 \$3.00  
" " " " " #128 \$3.00  
RAILROADING FROM THE REAR END by S. Kip Farrington, Jr., 1946  
very good condition. \$15.00  
LOCOMOTIVE CYCLOPEDIA, 1956, 15th edition very good condition \$20.00  
AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVES 1900-1950 by Edwin P. Alexander. Very good  
cond. \$10.00 B. L. Bulgrin, 809 - 85th Ave. N. Brooklyn Park,  
Minn. 55444

A. VON BLON, Box 6422, Waco, Texas, seeking information on Mjr. W. D. Washburn, who is believed from New Jersey, was with the construction of T&P RY and Katy in the '80s. Count Joseph Telferner, connected the New York, Texas & Mexico Ry. which was built from Rosenberg to Victoria, Texas.

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Charles Max, President  
E. J. Haley, Vice-President

Bill Gordon, Secretary  
Carl E. C. Carlson, Treas.