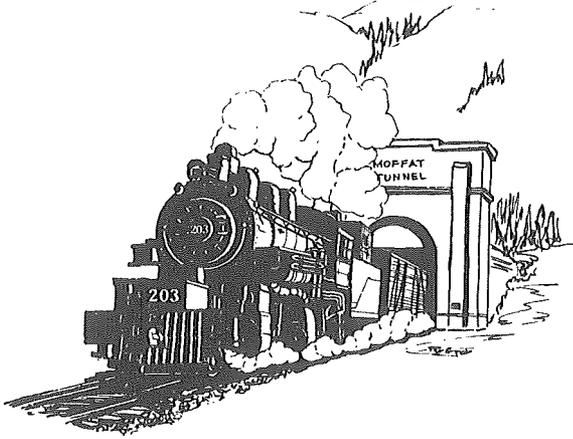


# Rocky Mountain Rail Report



## The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

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Denver, Colorado  
No. 242

**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, November 13, 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:

#### "Rebirth of Urban Rail Transit in the Denver Region"

Mr. Richard C. Thomas, Chairman of the Regional Transportation District's Corridor Development Task Force will present a talk and slide show that will depict a little of Denver's history in rail transit and RTD's plans for rapid transit applications in the Denver area. We will also have a look at light rail state of the art on this continent and in Europe, and where and how it can be applied here. The RTD has been promoting the use of a light rail system for Denver, and recently traveled to Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta, to see the systems being developed by those communities. Light Rail Transit, or LRT, is a glorified, space age, more sophisticated way of referring to a trolley car system. This should be a very interesting and informative presentation.

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THE ANNUAL BANQUET on October 6, provided an opportunity for members and friends to join together in a relaxing atmosphere to dine and enjoy each other's company. Following dinner, a drawing for door prizes was held, and there were certainly some mighty fine gifts presented. We then watched the full-length motion picture, EMPEROR OF THE NORTH, with Ernest Borgnine and Lee Marvin, a movie shot in the Pacific Northwest, that showed a lot of real steam railroading.

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A DUES NOTICE is included with this newsletter. Dues are \$6.00 per year. A book drawing will also be held with the first prize being a real, honest-to-goodness COLORADO MIDLAND by Morris Cafky. A second prize will be a copy of the MEMORIAL EDITION of DENVER SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC, by Mac Poor. Chances are \$2.00 each, and a drawing slip is attached to the dues notice. If more than one chance is desired, just indicate so on the slip, and additional slips will

be filled out for you. Please return slip with the dues payment, if you wish to participate. Proceeds from the drawing go to one place, the equipment fund, and your support is really appreciated. If you could drop a check or money order for the dues-drawing in the mail right away, it would make the treasurer's job a lot easier, as he can get a head start on the book work involved!

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SANTA CLAUS WILL ARRIVE AT THE COLORADO RAILROAD MUSEUM on Saturday, December 1 and 2 - by train! Engine 346 will be steamed up and operating on both days, and all are invited to come out and visit. Maybe there will even be snow, like there was last year. The Galloping Goose will operate, if all goes well. It's also a great time to take care of some Christmas shopping for quality gifts at the Museum's store.

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THE DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY is sponsoring a series of railroad-oriented programs at some of its branches. The remaining programs include one to have been presented by Bob Richardson at the Hadley Library, South Grace & West Jewell, on Tuesday, November 6, from 10:00 - 11:00 A.M., entitled Narrow Gauge in the Rockies. On Tuesday, November 27, 7:00 - 8:00 P.M., at the Eugene Field Library, at E. Ohio and S. University, Forrest Crossen will talk about the "Switzerland Trail of America" from Boulder to Ward. Then on Friday, November 30, from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M., Edward Bollinger will be at the Ross-Barnum Library at West 1st and Lowell Blvd. for a talk about "interesting characters of the Rio Grande that I have known." These programs are free, and open to the public.

\* \* \* \* \*

OUT SHOPPING - The D&RGW is looking for another dining car to supplement the Silver Banquet on the Rio Grande Zephyr. Heavy business is giving the SB a real workout, and makes it difficult to take it out of service for maintenance, even during the week. The RGZ is presently sold out during the week for about a month in advance, and as of the end of October, was sold out on the weekends well into December.

Down on the Silverton, the final run under the D&RGW was probably made on October 7. If the railroad's planned sale is approved by the appropriate regulatory agencies, Charles Bradshaw will take possession of the line, presumably at the end of the year. Ridership this year was 107,560, down about 13,000 from last year.

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THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN'S new Gillette to Orin coal line is set to open in November. The new route is about 118 miles long!

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THE 8444 gave a good performance for the Intermountain Chapter's excursion of October 13. The skies turned blue just east of LaSalle, and remained that way till evening. Accompanying the train most of the day, was a helicopter that was shooting film for the Union Pacific. The previous Thursday, the engine went west of Cheyenne on the Harriman line, for some more filming.

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THE LATEST "GUESS DATE" on Amtrak Superliner cars being assigned to the San Francisco Zephyr, is next March.

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THE UNION PACIFIC DEPOT, at Cheyenne, Wyoming, saw its last regularly scheduled passenger train on Friday, October 26, as Amtrak began using its new facilities at Borie. As explained by Amtrak, the Cheyenne depot will continue in operation, even though a new station at Borie is open. (Borie is about 10 miles west of Cheyenne.) Passengers who choose to use it will be taken to the new facility by chartered bus, which will also serve incoming passengers from Borie to Cheyenne. The new station allows Amtrak to simplify its now more complicated operation between Denver and Cheyenne, and reduce the operating time of the San Francisco Zephyr. The station building will cost \$70,000, new track, signal and communications equipment about \$281,000, and new train servicing facilities at Rawlins, \$105,390. Other items in the project, including platforms, lighting, parking lot, drains, electrical service, septic tank, signs, crosswalk and furniture are expected to total \$182,800. Use of the new station is expected to save Amtrak \$205,000 annually in operating costs; thus, Amtrak expects to recover the station cost in less than four years.

Under present operations, because of track layout, the San Francisco Zephyr must operate backwards in both directions for the 100 miles between Denver and Cheyenne. The trains locomotives have to be switched to the forward end of the train at both stops. Using the Borie by-pass, the SFZ will be able to proceed straight through in both directions with the consist facing the correct way. This will improve reliability as well, since switching engines from one end to the other frequently resulted in difficulty and delays, especially during severe Wyoming winter weather. Passengers also wondered what the heck was going on as they roared down the main facing the wrong way. The train will be wye'd in Denver only. Full ticketing and baggage service will continue to be provided at downtown Cheyenne and Amtrak personnel will accompany passengers from there to Borie to handle any last minute arrangements. (The SFZ boarded passengers at Speer on Oct. 27, due to a freight derailment in the Cheyenne yard.)

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*THERE SHE GOES!!! - Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985 (4-6-6-4) is pulled off its display track near the Cheyenne depot by Diesel No. 327, and pushed onto a track near the roundhouse, on September 24. It was later moved into a stall of the roundhouse. Several dozen UP employees have volunteered to work on the engine to restore it to service. They are estimating about a year to accomplish the task. Our thanks to Jim Ehernberger for these photos.*

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NOW THERE'S A SWITCH - The end of October was to see the Manitou and Pikes Peak Railway steam cog locomotive No. 4 leave the Colorado Railroad Museum for

Manitou Springs, where work will begin to return the engine to operating condition for special service. Engine No. 1 will be brought to the museum for display, from Manitou Springs. There is no truth to the rumor that the President of the Rio Grande was hoping that the No. 4 would be powered up and run under its own power, to Colorado Springs with the D&RGW's private car, "Wilson McCarthy" hooked on behind. (Besides, that would have been kind of tough on the crown sheet, and at three miles per hour!! . . .) The move will be accomplished by truck.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT - After an Amtrak passenger, enraged (Amraged??) from her experiences during a round trip from Denver to Iowa, expressed her displeasure to the Denver newspapers. The tabloids followed up by printing a surprising number rebuttal letters from readers defending Amtrak. Although her dissatisfaction was clearly justified to a certain extent, (no seats available, burnt-out light in restroom, hot lounge, broken seats, a discourteous crewman), the follow-up letters brought out quite a number of good points to consider. George Pool penned a rather memorable letter to the paper, and is worth repeating here:

WERE YOU HIJACKED? Editor: I should like to ask some questions of the lady train detractor who told of the vicissitudes of her trip from Denver to Osceola, Iowa, of the burned-out restroom light bulb, and other not-so-weighty troubles, and who now recommends another form of public transportation: On your railroad trip, was the terminal miles away from downtown Denver? Once getting to the terminal, did you encounter one of Colorado's most dreadful traffic jams and parking dilemmas? Were you greeted at the door by professional religious pan-handlers? Did vending machines suggest to you that additional life insurance might be appropriate at this risky time? Did officers search you for suspected contraband carry-ons? Did you then have to walk what seemed like a mile or so to the boarding area? After boarding, were you strapped to your seat? Did you wait breathlessly for a time, before the breathing air was turned on? Was your breathing wholly dependent on a cold draft spewing down through a little pipe over the top of your head? Were you lectured on the intricacies of a face mask apparatus which would save your life in the event that unpredictable little pipe stopped squirting air? Was your inner ear damaged or your hearing impaired by quickly changing, abnormal air pressures? Upon departure, was the noise so thunderous and terrifying as to block out all thoughts save the highlights of your past life? While on the way, were you restrained at times from leaving your seat, no matter how urgent your personal needs? Did an electric "no smoking" sign flash before your eyes? Was there turbulence? Did you notice that other passengers were nervous? As a diversion, were you offered a thawed TV dinner to eat? Then did your elbows tangle with the passengers on each side of you? Did you catch yourself staring at a packet of "throw up" bags tucked in a pocket just inches in front of your nose? Was your luggage missent or mashed? Were you hijacked? Did your engine fall off? Had she chosen another form of public transportation, she could have ended up with her gizzard decorating a tall cottonwood tree in Nebraska.

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ED GERLITS, President

BILL GORDON, Secretary

ERWIN CHAIM, Vice-President

ARDIE SCHOENINGER, Treasurer