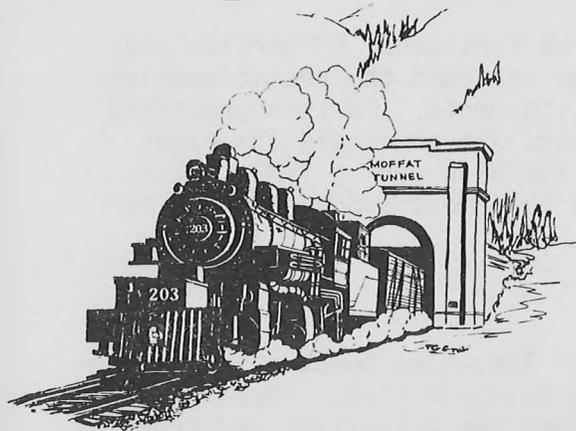


# Rocky Mountain Rail Report



## The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

P.O. Box 2391  
February, 1980

Denver, Colorado 80201  
No. 245

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

Editor ----- Neal A. Reich  
Contributing Editor - Darrell T. Arndt

MEETING NOTICE: Date . . Tuesday, February 12, 1980  
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: POTPOURRI NIGHT

Webster defines potpourri as "a miscellaneous collection: medley."  
That certainly describes this popular program which gives every member  
of the club an opportunity to show his or her slides. Program Chair-  
man, Erwin Chaim has set down a few ground rules to make this an  
enjoyable evening for all. So bring along your 2" x 2" railroad topic  
slides only, in focus sharp, and only 20 slides to a customer, please.  
To have your pictures shown in the correct order, the slides should  
be arranged as follows: FIRST SLIDE should be ON THE BOTTOM, with the  
white or BLANK SIDE UP; second on top of first, also with white or  
blank side up, continuing on through all the slides in this manner,  
ending up with the LAST SLIDE ON TOP. If you are confused when reading  
these instructions, wait until you hear Erwin recite them in person -  
that is a real treat. Don't be bashful, pick out 20 slides, bring  
them to the February meeting, and join in the fun.

\* \* \* \* \*

Those folks at the January meeting were treated to an exciting selection of  
movies from the club's Otto Perry collection. Of special interest were  
scenes of three Rocky Mountain Railroad Club excursions. One was the club's  
last three-day, Alamosa-Durango-Silverton trip on the Rio Grande narrow  
gauge, in 1966. Another was a trip on the Colorado and Southern from Denver  
to Lyons. The third was a spectacular trip made in 1948, from Salida, over  
Marshall Pass, to Gunnison, Crested Butte, and through the Black Canyon.  
Other narrow gauge views were from the Rio Grande Southern and a two-car  
passenger train in the Black Canyon. Standard gauge action included inter-  
esting shots of the Rio Grande and the Union Pacific in and around Denver,  
as well as Santa Fe operations in Kansas. Union Pacific action on Sherman  
Hill was filled with 4000 class locomotives running singly and double-headed.

THE PRESIDENT REPORTS - At the January meeting, club President, Ed Gerlits gave a short report on the "State of the Club." He reviewed the recent appointments and changes he has made in committee assignments. Ed then presented a status report on membership and club finances, and discussed the eight major excursions and activities sponsored by the club during 1979. With the fine year of 1979 to grow on, 1980 should be a most successful one for the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club.

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMBERS HONORED - Also at the January meeting, four long-time members were recognized for their service to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club. These gentlemen have contributed hundreds of hours toward making the activities and projects of this organization successful. President Ed Gerlits presented each of them a handsome "Certificate of Merit" in appreciation of his efforts.

To DICK KINDIG, a Certificate of Merit was presented in recognition of his service as a Past President, his fine work with the club's archives, and his work on the club's publications. To ED HALEY, a Certificate of Merit was presented in recognition of his service as a Past President, his many years as the club's Trip Chairman, and his efforts with the club's publications. To BRYANT MCFADDEN, a Certificate of Merit was presented in recognition of his service in handling the club's publications and his many volunteer hours spent maintaining the club's equipment at the Colorado Railroad Museum. To BILL GORDON, a Certificate of Merit was presented in recognition of his service as a Past President, for his many years of serving as the club's Secretary, and his maintenance of the club's rolling stock while serving as Equipment Chairman.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE GLENWOOD SPRINGS TRIP has been sold out, so all you procrastinators will have to wait for word on the next club excursion. With all that snow in the high country, it should be a spectacular ride on the Zephyr. In other trip news, the club has written the Union Pacific, requesting an excursion with the UP 8444 during the Memorial Day weekend. Present policies of the railroad would indicate that this ride would be from Denver to Sterling and return. At this writing, no word has been received from the railroad.

\* \* \* \* \*

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS go out to club member George Champion, who will be 96 years old on February 22. A South Park native, George was born at the Herman Litner Ranch, about a mile north of Jefferson. His father ran a store at Webster, Colorado, and as the DSP&P Railroad construction progressed, the family moved to Jefferson, and later to Como. George Champion grew up in Como, and after his school years, served his machinist apprenticeship in the Como roundhouse. Happy Birthday, George!

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMBERSHIP CARDS will be mailed with the March newsletter for those who have paid up for 1980. With the great response from members thus far, the chore of preparing and signing all the cards has been a big one. If you are one of the folks who has not yet sent in dues for 1980, why not send in your \$6.00 today? And don't forget the big book drawing to be held at the April meeting.

First prize is a copy of COLORADO MIDLAND, by Morris Cafky. Second prize will be a copy of the MEMORIAL EDITION of DENVER, SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC, by Mac Poor. All proceeds from this drawing go to the club's equipment fund. Chances on both books are only \$2.00 each.

\* \* \* \* \*

HAVE YOU BROUGHT GUESTS to a meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club? Do you have friends interested in the activities of our organization? Why not ask them to become members? We always welcome people interested in the aims and objectives of the club. With an enrollment fee of only \$4.00, and annual dues of just \$6.00, it has to be the biggest bargain going! Applications are available at every meeting, from Treasurer Ardie Schoeninger. Or simply send the name and address of prospective members with the \$10.00 fee to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, P.O. Box 2391, Denver, Colorado 80201.

\* \* \* \* \*

ABOUT \$600,000 WORTH OF CONSTRUCTION is under way in Brush, Colorado, to rebuild about one-half mile of Highway 34, so that the BN can install a wye track on their Brush-Union line. The track would allow trains coming down from the north to head directly east out of town, as well as west to Denver.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE JANUARY 3, 1980 ISSUE of The Silverton Standard and the Miner has a story on the December 11, 1979 order from the Colorado Public Utilities Commission approving the sale of the Silverton-Durango line to Charles E. Bradshaw. According to this weekly newspaper, one of the conditions of this sale is that Bradshaw complete certain work on the line before operating any trains for the 1980 season. The work specified in this order was recommended by a Denver engineering firm, and would bring the line up to standard for operation of the K-28 locomotives. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad did not make these improvements prior to the 1979 tourist season, but the PUC has specified that the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad Company do the work before the 1980 season. The 1978 estimated cost of these improvements was \$440,000. Total cost of all recommended improvements to the line, which would permit the use of the K-36 and K-37 locomotives, was \$842,000. Since December 11, there has been no word from the Interstate Commerce Commission on the proposed sale.

\* \* \* \* \*

WINTERTIME TRAIN CHASING can be lots of fun, and snow pictures, especially those of snow-plowing and drift-busting, can be spectacular. One of the mountain rail lines accessible to the Denver area in winter, is the Union Pacific's Coalmont Branch. This 94 mile branch meanders west and south from the UP main line at Laramie, to Walden, Colorado. Originally constructed as the Laramie, Hahn's Peak & Pacific Railway, the line became part of the UP system in 1951. The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club ran steam excursion on this line in 1956 and 1957.

With a steady growth in coal loadings at Walden in recent years, the number of trains being operated on the line has increased dramatically. There were 327 coal trains operated on this branch in 1979, with 8,191 cars being moved. At the present time, coal is being shipped from Walden, to customers in Missouri and Iowa. At times, two trains are operated on the line daily,

the second train leaving Laramie approximately one hour behind the first. In addition, work trains and non-coal trains are run. At Fox Park, highest point on the entire UP system, at 9,066 feet, wood chips are loaded for movement.

Deep snow and wind pose operating problems for the railroad in winter and early spring, and it is not unusual for a work train with Jordan Spreader to operate ahead of freight trains. At times, the spreader is added to the coal train consist. From Laramie, take Wyoming Highway 130 to follow trains to Centennial and Albany. From the south, Walden can be reached via Granby on Colorado 125. This road follows the line north and becomes Wyoming Highway 230 to Woods Landing. Because of deep snow, the road from Woods Landing to Albany is not open in the winter. Good shooting!



*Union Pacific double track wedge plow 900020, and four diesel units, pause at Centennial, Wyoming (left), while opening the Coalmont Branch on January 9, 1979. The next day, UP Jordan Spreader 903031 (right), on the point of an empty coal train, busts a drift just east of Centennial, in typical winter Coalmont Branch action. (Jim Ehemberger Photos)*

\* \* \* \* \*

EX-UNION PACIFIC ROTARY SNOW PLOW 900051 has arrived at the Mid-Continent Railway Museum at North Freedom, Wisconsin. Built by the American Locomotive Company for the Oregon Short Line in 1912, the rotary was donated to the museum by an individual living in Blackfoot, Idaho. The rotary was handled by the UP to Fremont, Nebraska, where the Chicago & Northwestern took over moving it the rest of the way to North Freedom. A tender from a Missouri Pacific derrick has been acquired since the original tender was discarded some time ago. Restoration of the 900051 has started, and the North Freedom people hope to have it operational by this spring.

\* \* \* \* \*

SPEAKING OF ROTARIES DEPARTMENT - Heavy snows in the Northwest in January, wreaked havoc with communications and transportation. The Union Pacific operated Steam Rotary 900076 for one day on the line between Hinkle and Hood River,

Oregon. Operation of the plow was limited to the one day, as it was found that a Jordan Spreader was just as effective in clearing the line of the heavy wet snow. Now stationed at Hinkle, Rotary 900076 was formerly at Cheyenne, and was last used in March, 1977, on the UP, and in clearing the Rock Island track east of Colorado Springs.

\* \* \* \* \*

AMTRAK is issuing another dramatic and colorful calendar for 1980. The 1980 calendar measures 24" x 30", is vertical in format, and has the entire year on display. The top half of the new calendar features a full-color painting of an AEM-7 powered Amfleet train, meeting a consist of refurbished Metroliners at the Susquehanna River bridge at Havre de Grace/Perryville, Maryland. The original water color was painted by noted rail artist, Gil Reid, who has done the Amtrak calendar the past six years. Cost of the calendar is \$4.00, tax and postage included, and can be ordered by mailing a check for that amount to Amtrak Calendar, P.O. Box 311, Addison, Illinois 60101.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE WHITE PASS & YUKON ROUTE, already offering a train ride considered America's most expensive, is apparently going for a 40% fare increase for the 1980 summer season. Its 1980 brochure lists a \$49.00 fare between Skagway and Whitehorse (111 miles). There is some confusion about the one-day excursions to be offered on days that cruise ships visit Skagway - the new folder lists both the Bennett Turn of recent years, at \$49.00 round trip, and a new \$29.00 half-day Sourdough Summit Excursion to White Pass, over the 3 ft. gauge line. It seems unlikely that both excursions would be run besides the daily through trains. (From Rail Travel News)

\* \* \* \* \*

THE D&RG HAS PLANS to remodel the East Portal of the Moffat Tunnel. The present fan house will be used for switchgear and a control room. About 150 feet back of the present fan house, a new portal gate building will be built, and in back of that (to the west) will be three, 14-foot air ducts, with large exhaust fans. Two of the fans will move air from west to east, and one fan is to move air from east to west. After more than fifty years of exhausting the smoke to the west, it will soon be moving to the east. Rio Grande Railroad expects to have this project under contract soon, at a cost of around \$5 million.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY has donated its complete historical collection to the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library. The collection of books, maps, ledgers, and other material is the second largest ever donated to the library. A Colorado agricultural railroad, the Great Western was sold last June, to a New Jersey group. With the railroad moving its offices from Denver to Loveland, plans were made to store the material in a warehouse. However, Denver Councilman Steve Grogan, a storage company operator, suggested the material would be put to better use by the library.

\* \* \* \* \*

WHY STOP THERE?? - Sen. William Armstrong (R-Colo.) started off the new year by suggesting that a massive U.S. arms buildup should be financed in part by eliminating Amtrak and Conrail. (How 'bout closing down a few Federally funded airports and interstate highways, too?)

\* \* \* \* \*

AS ANNOUNCED LAST MONTH, Darrell Arndt has accepted a new challenge as the club's Equipment Chairman. In addition to those duties, he will also work with the Rocky Mountain Rail Report as Contributing Editor. In this capacity, Darrell will continue to report on club activities, as well as rail news in general. Starting with the May, 1973 edition, Darrell Arndt has edited some 81 issues of the Rocky Mountain Rail Report. In this time, he has maintained a high standard of accuracy, wit, and integrity, of which all club members can be proud. We salute Darrell for his hard work and dedication to a job well done, and will strive to maintain the high standards he has established. Those folks having newsworthy items, may contact Darrell as in the past, or forward them to me at - 204 East 4th Street, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001. Telephone: (307) 632-7783.

\* \* \* \* \*

ED GERLITS, President

BILL GORDON, Secretary

ERWIN CHAIM, Vice-President

ARDIE SCHOENINGER, Treasurer

X1 P2 PC

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN**



**RAILROAD CLUB**

BOX 2391  
DENVER, COLORADO 80201

FIRST CLASS MAIL  
U. S. Postage  
PAID  
Denver, Colorado  
Permit No. 1873

Chuck Powell  
P. O. Box 2670  
Pasadena, CA 91105

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**