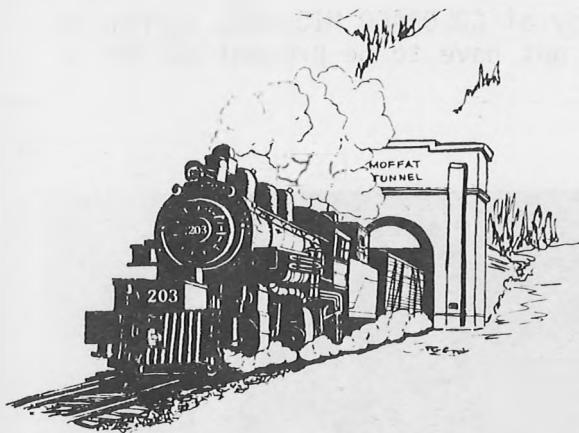


Rocky Mountain Rail Report



1981 FEB 06

The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

P.O. Box 2391
February, 1981

Denver, Colorado 80201
Number 257

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 PLACE: Date -- Tuesday, February 10, 1981
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:

RTD REVISITED

At the November, 1979 Rocky Mountain Railroad Club meeting, a representative of the Regional Transportation District gave a very informative presentation on the proposals for light rail transit in the Denver area. Since that time, there has been much discussion in the media on the proposal, and a bond issue for funding such a project was defeated by the voters. At the February club meeting, Stephen Millard of RTD will bring us up to date on plans the District has for future public transportation in and around Denver, and how it will be financed.

* * * * *

At the January club meeting, Kent Bolerjack entertained the capacity crowd with a fine selection of color and sound moving pictures featuring local railroad operations. The first reel of movies took a look at the Georgetown Loop Railroad from almost every conceivable angle, including some front-end shots taken from a pop car running ahead of the train. The second section of the program took us on a tour of Ralph McAllister's magnificent 14-1/8" gauge railroad in Boulder. The star of this segment was Ralph's beautiful 2-8-8-4 articulated steam locomotive, as it moved around the layout. As you can see, the gauge of the railroads shown got smaller as the evening progressed, and concluded with a visit to the Colorado Live Steamers Club at Black Forest, near Colorado Springs. Of special interest to the audience were scenes showing the operation of the fine little steam engines that were built by Rocky Mountain Railroad Club members, Milt Fick, Wally Porter and Jerry Cutshall.

* * * * *

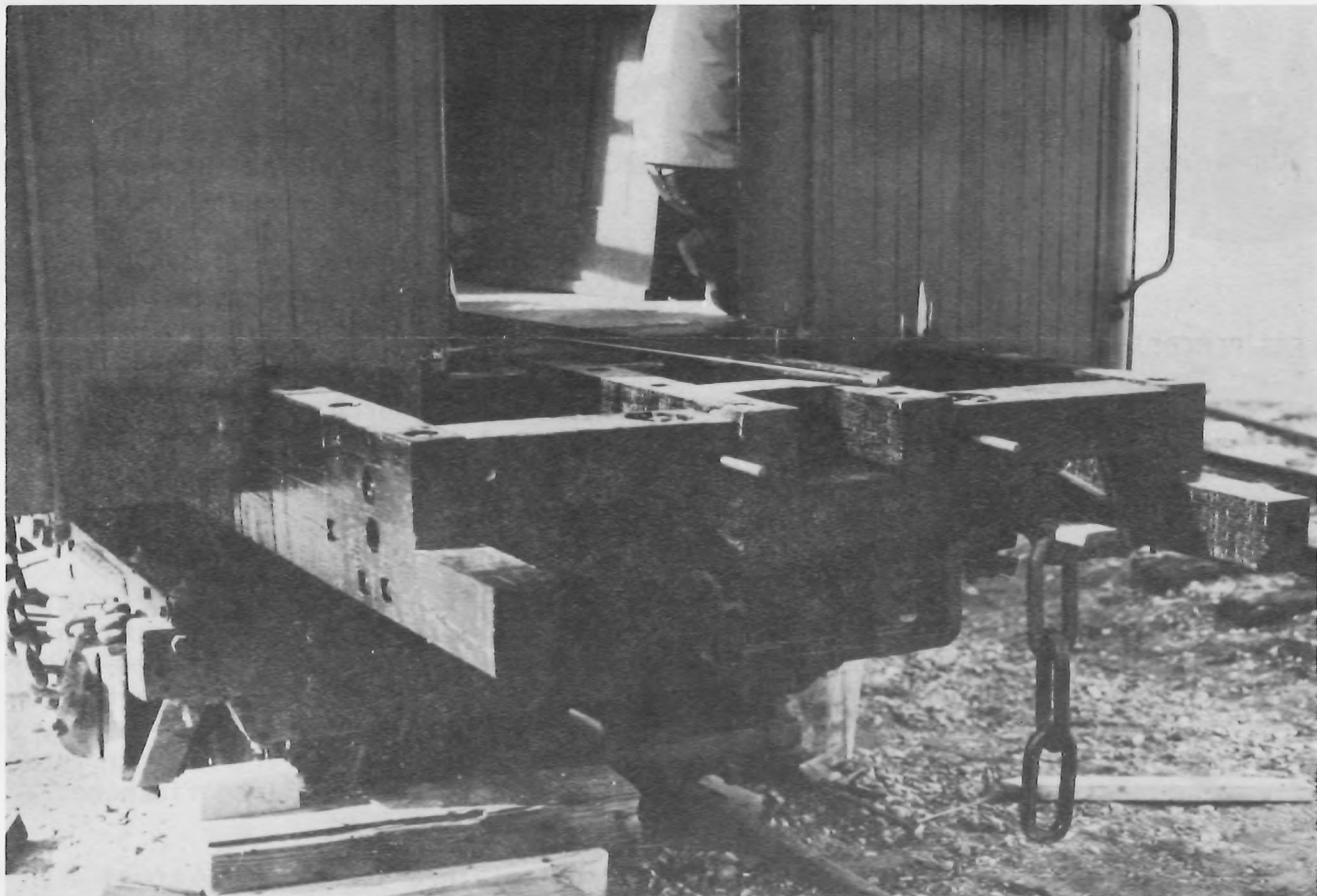
THE FOLKS ATTENDING the monthly meetings of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club have been much too modest concerning their photographic talents. The beautiful display board available for the showing of railroad photographs has been wanting at recent club meetings. Don't be bashful, bring out a couple of your favorite 5" x 7", or 8" x 10" railroad pictures for all of us to enjoy. They don't even have to be photos you have taken, shots from your collection are welcome.

* * * * *

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB 1981 membership cards are scheduled to be sent out in March, so if you have not done so, get those dues in the mail today! Delinquent members will be dropped from the membership rolls in April. And it's not too late to get in

on the big book drawing, with first prize, a copy of COLORADO MIDLAND, by Morris Cafky. Chances are just \$2.00 each, and you do not have to be present at the drawing to be a winner.

* * * * *



This photo could be titled "Your Money at Work", as it shows the exterior results of the many hours of our effort this summer to rebuild the end platform on the RICO. This is how it looked in November, with the all-new oak framework in place and some tie rods and the coupler support in position.

* * * * *

COMIN' ALONG FINE - We're happy to report that George Champion is doing well after undergoing major surgery early last month. Although George's recuperation will probably not allow him to join us on the RGZ trip to Glenwood Springs, as he had intended, we wish him a speedy recovery in anticipation of this coming summer's activities. George is a long-time member of the club, a lifelong citizen of Colorado, and an aficionado of the state's colorful railroad history. His narrow gauge experiences include employment on the C&S out of Como, and a memorable trip through the Alpine Tunnel on a rotary snowplow in the early 1900's. Incidentally, George will observe his ninety-seventh birthday on February 22. If you would like to drop a card his way, just mail it to 2636 W. 35th Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80211.

* * * * *

HANGING IN THERE - The Rio Grande has decided to shelve plans for the time being, to retire the F-9 units that power the Rio Grande Zephyr.

* * * * *

GOOD NEWS FOR THE SFZ - Cafe-lounge cars (Sightseer cars) began showing up in the consist

of the San Francisco Zephyr in January. The two-level Superliner cars have a full lounge area in the second floor, with impressively large windows and subdued lighting for night time viewing. The first floor has additional seating, a piano, and refreshment bar.

* * * * *

A FEW MORE GONE - The Wyoming Public Service Commission has granted Burlington Northern permission to close the Torrington station. The BN is also seeking to close its stations in Mitchell and Morrill, Nebraska, and replace all three stations with a mobile headquarters originating in Scottsbluff. Minimal public resistance was the reason for the approval of the Torrington closure, with only three protests being received.

* * * * *

COAL SMOKE, CINDERS, AND THE BLASTS OF A STEAM LOCOMOTIVE WHISTLE filled the clean, crisp air over Cheyenne on January 17 and 18, as Union Pacific 3985 was put under steam for the first time in over 20 years. The big Challenger was fired up for testing of several of its systems, and found to be in excellent condition. On Friday, January 15, the engine had been checked out extensively while on house steam. Then shortly after 10:00 A.M. the next day, a switch engine gently moved the 3985 outside the roundhouse for its first steam-up since restoration began. Although much work remains before the 4-6-6-4 is ready for service, the members of the "3985 Committee" can be very proud of their accomplishments to date. Systems still needing attention include brakes, stokers, and piping, while the new lagging and new boiler jacket will be put on prior to painting. It would seem that it will be at least a month before the engine will be steamed up again, and then actually run. A good turnout of spectators photographed, inspected, and discussed the UP3985 during the two days it was under steam. Several times the engine's blower was turned on, and the rich, black smoke billowed skyward, showering everything and everyone in the area with cinders. It was wonderful!!

While repair work continues on the 3985, speculation mounts concerning just when and where the locomotive will run. Word reaching this corner indicates that the Challenger might be double-headed with UP8444 from Cheyenne to Sacramento, California in late April. The two UP engines would join other steam locomotives from around the country for the grand opening of the California State Railroad Museum, from May 1 through May 10. At this time, the rumor mill has not ground out any other stories of planned operations with the 3985 for this year. Details are sketchy concerning the grand opening of the California State Railroad Museum, which is being sponsored by the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society. Reports indicate that several steam locomotives, in addition to the two Union Pacific engines, will be in Sacramento during the first 10 days of May, including the Southern Pacific 4449.

* * * * *

100 YEAR AGO - The Kokomo extension of the Denver and Rio Grande was finished to Robinson's camp last Monday, and the populace of that thriving camp are rejoicing over the entrance of the iron horse. The road will now push on to Kokomo, and regular trains will be running inside of that town within a week or 10 days. Regular freight trains are now running from Robinson's camp, and in a few days passenger trains will be put on and regular rates established.

(Reprinted from the December 30, 1880 issue of the Fairplay Flume.)

* * * * *

MAKE IT A DOUBLE - Rail derailments cause fear and evacuations. Right? Wrong - at least not in Louisville, Kentucky recently. When a L&N tank car was found to be leaking, rail officials couldn't keep the crowds away. You see, the liquid escaping was

Scotch whiskey. Some 200 gallons spilled before crews could transfer the rest to another car.

(Railway Clerk Interchange)

* * * * *

CONGRESS RECENTLY PASSED A BILL appropriating \$11 million to patch the roof and repair other structural damage to a badly deteriorating Union Station in Washington, D.C. The 73-year-old building has been so badly neglected over the last five years, that the Washington Post newspaper ran a series of articles describing its decay from a great station into what now "smells of rot." This neglect can be directly traced back 12 years, when Congress proclaimed that the Union Station should be transformed into a National Visitor Center that would "inspire the visitor with an appreciation of his Government ... and bring about a clearer understanding of (its) organization and operation." Now, water drips from the building's cracked ceiling onto soggy maple floors, while roaches and rats scurry among piles of peeled paint and puddles of mud. Passengers trudge across a water and grease-stained carpet on their one-third mile walk to trains, and at the station's front door, one of three Roman archways has been barricaded off, just in case it collapses.

Washington's Union Station was constructed in awsome dimensions, and with luxurious appointments, not even known in the grand train stations of St. Louis and New York. Its facade was constructed of white Bethel granite from Vermont, and all doors, woodwork, and waiting room benches were made of mahogany. The east wing contained a presidential suite, and the station was a city within itself, with its own electrical generating plant, steam generating plant, and water towers. In addition, it contained a mortuary, bakery, butchery, ice house, nursery, bowling alley, Turkish baths, swimming pool, basketball court, YMCA Hotel, resident doctor, police station, liquor store, pharmacy, soda fountain, dry cleaners, public showers, and a shop for re-silvering the monogrammed dishes used in the restaurant.

The 1960's brought the decline of passenger train service to the United States, and the owners of Union Station, the Baltimore & Ohio and Pennsylvania railroads, devised a plan to level the station, and use the site for an office building. But the federal government, in the form of the National Park Service, had been looking for a fancy building in downtown Washington to be used as a visitor's center that would orient tourists to the scenic and educational wonders of the city. After all the politicking was over, Congress, in 1968, passed the National Visitor's Act, giving the Park Service the building it had wanted. Then the fun began. In the last 12 years, Congress has committed over \$117 million for conversion of Union Station into the National Visitor's Center. But the project has been simply a profound embarrassment to Congress, three presidential administrations, the National Park Service, Amtrak, the Department of Transportation, and local businessmen.

The prime example of the waste and mismanagement that has plagued the project from the start is what is called the replacement train station. Located behind the original Union Station and built beneath a parking garage, the replacement train station has a low ceiling, waiting areas with plastic chairs, and bright fluorescent lighting. Passengers reach their trains from this room, via a long dreary passageway with scarred concrete floors, grime-smeared walls and filthy windows. The replacement train station has been described as looking like a bad small-town bus terminal, and resembling a big city hospital where the accident cases are brought in. Standing less than a half-mile from the Capitol of our nation, Washington's Union Station is a symbol of big government gone mad. To paraphrase a popular bumper sticker of a few years back, "If you think the Post Office Department is bad, you'll just love nationalized railroads."

* * * * *

THE PROPOSED MERGER OF THE UNION PACIFIC, Missouri Pacific, and Western Pacific railroads would create a new rail system stretching from the Pacific Northwest to the Gulf of Mexico; from the Great Lakes to Southern California; and from the Mississippi River to the major seaports of the West Coast. Manned by 54,100 employees, working with 3,038 locomotives and 130,569 rail cars, the system would link 21 states of the western two-thirds of America with 22,800 miles of track. Present plans call for more than \$90,000,000 to be spent in a five-year program to upgrade routes of the Western Pacific Railroad.

* * * * *

WHILE MANY COUNTRIES depend heavily on expensive oil from eastern countries for heat and to power motor vehicles, Brazil has taken the lead in the use of alternative fuels. At this time, approximately 90% of all the automobiles in Brazil run on alcohol refined from sugar cane. Now indications are that the Brazilian Rede Ferroviaria Federal (Federal Railroad System) is giving serious consideration to the construction of new coal-burning steam locomotives. The government-owned railroad recently bought six operable steam locomotives from Argentina for use in the coal region of the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina. These engines have proved to be so successful that the Rede Ferroviaria Federal now proposes to construct new locomotives, patterned on the same Skoda-Henschel European design.

* * * * *

AMTRAK PRESIDENT, ALAN BOYD, has said that if and when high-speed passenger trains come to the United States, Amtrak will not be running any of them. Boyd cited a variety of reasons Amtrak is shunning the fast train service, including old road beds, rails designed for heavier freight trains, and slow-moving freight trains themselves, and Amtrak's financial situation. Groups in the midwest and California have recently announced plans to start high-speed rail systems.

* * * * *

NARROW GAUGE NEWS - It looks like the CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD will again operate two trains daily during the 1981 season, originating them at Antonito and Chama, and meeting at Osier. The overhaul of Engine 489 has been completed, and construction of a drop pit in the Chama engine house is well under way. Meanwhile, D&RGW employees at Durango have been busy with regular winter maintenance, and Engine 473 has been re-fueled. The sale of the SILVERTON line to Mr. Charles E. Bradshaw still has not been consummated. Mr. Bradshaw has purchased the large parcel of land in Durango immediately adjacent to the Rio Grande property and just west of the beautiful downtown McDonalds, for the stated use for parking or other railroad purposes.

* * * * *

THE RECENT SPRING-LIKE WEATHER IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN AREA has enabled workmen to complete the removal of the umbrella train sheds at the Union Pacific's Cheyenne passenger depot. Built in 1937, when some 20 passenger trains visited Cheyenne each day, the sheds and pedestrian subway afforded a safe and dry passage to and from trains. In 1971, when the UP discontinued passenger service, the sheds were cut back to permit freight trains handling auto racks and other high cars to use the passenger yard. Now, only one section of the umbrella sheds remains, abutting the depot itself, and supporting steam and electrical lines.

* * * * *

WITH THE MERGER OF THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN AND FRISCO LINES, BN's new PBF (Portland to Birmingham Freight) train is now the longest continuous through-rail run in

North America. The 3,076 mile route runs east from Portland to Spokane, Washington. Havre, Montana, and on to Minot and Fargo, North Dakota. Heading south, the PBF then passes through Willmar, Minnesota, Sioux City, Iowa, and Omaha, Nebraska, before reaching Kansas City, Missouri. Then it's on to Springfield, Illinois, Memphis, Tennessee, and finally Birmingham, where five days after leaving the Northwest, some of the freight cars will terminate, while others will be routed to other railroads.

* * * * *

ONE OF THE EVIDENCES OF PROGRESS in Colorado, is the fact that many of the old mountain roads where two cars could barely pass without colliding, have now been replaced with splendid, wide highways where five or six cars can collide, all at one time!!!

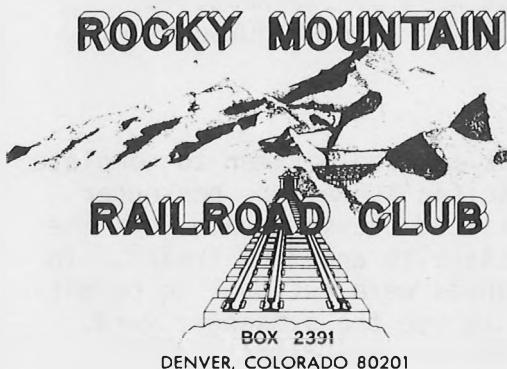
* * * * *

JIM RANNIGER, President

BILL GORDON, Secretary

ERWIN CHAIM, Vice-President

ARDIE SCHOENINGER, Treasurer



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

FIRST CLASS MAIL