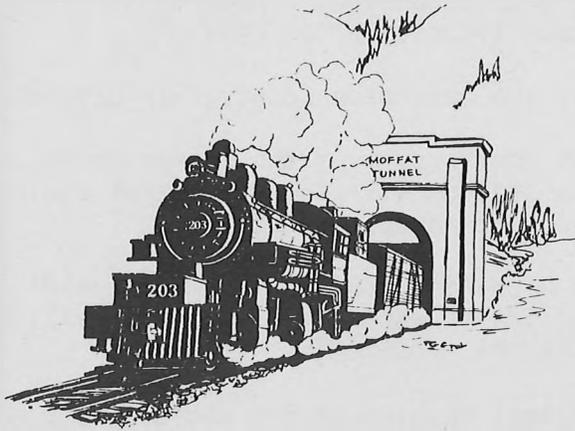


Rocky Mountain Rail Report



The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

P.O. Box 2391 Denver, Colorado 80201
July, 1981 No. 262

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, July 14, 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: DINING CARS AND SILVER SERVICE

During his 42 years of service with the Denver & Rio Grande, Rocky Mountain Railroad Club charter member, Jackson Thode, developed an insatiable curiosity about many of the historical aspects of the railroad. At the July 14 club meeting, his DINING CARS AND SILVER SERVICE program will cover the story of the fleet of dining cars and their equipment operated by the D&RGW. This presentation is prompted by the fact that ex-California Zephyr dining car, "Silver Banquet," now serving on the Rio Grande Zephyr, is the last remaining railroad-owned diner operating in regular service in the United States. Jack's story will be supplemented by a showing of slides and a display of dining car artifacts to illustrate the subjects discussed in the narrative.

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In 1971, Erwin Chaim and his wife, Barbara, toured Europe by rail, utilizing the Eurail Pass, that marvelous ticket that allows unlimited train rides during its lifetime. Part of that trip through Germany was the subject of the June club meeting, EUROPE FROM A TRAIN WINDOW. Erwin's beautiful slides, backed by his narrative and appropriate music, gave viewers a look at the cities, rivers, shops, museums, scenery and rail facilities of Germany. Of special interest were the shots of German steam locomotives and rail passenger equipment.

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THE 1981-'82 ROSTER OF MEMBERS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB is being distributed with this month's issue of the Rocky Mountain Rail Report. Furnished at no charge, this handy booklet contains not only a listing of the membership, but also an illustrated roster of the club's historic railroad equipment on permanent display at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden.

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- COMING EVENTS: July 11 - Rocky Mountain Railroad Club excursion, Denver to Sterling, behind Union Pacific steam locomotive No. 8444.
- July 18 & 19 - Mile High Railfair at the Jefferson County Fair Grounds.
- July 25 - Celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Denver Union Depot. Displays at the station will include Amtrak equipment, Union Pacific 8444, and indoor exhibits.
- August 8 - Rocky Mountain Railroad Club field trip on the abandoned grade of the Switzerland Trail west of Boulder. Details and ticket information in this newsletter.
- Sept. 4-7 - Club trip to the 32nd Annual Reunion of the Old Settlers & Threshers Association at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, via Amtrak's San Francisco Zephyr.
- Sept. 26 - Rocky Mountain Railroad Club excursion to the top of Pikes Peak on the Manitou & Pikes Peak Cog Railway.

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VISITORS, YOUNG AND OLD, had a swell time at Ralph McAllister's steamup on May 30. Both the 4-4-0 and the 4-8-8-4 provided the power to haul the trainloads of visitors that were on hand during the pleasant afternoon. Ralph's handiwork and craftsmanship was the topic of most conversation, with his new Shay locomotive catching many a glimpse. We thank Mac for sharing with us the fruits of his fascinating hobby.

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THE WORKDAY AT THE MUSEUM saw much accomplished last June 13. Under sunny skies, volunteers were able to complete numerous chores, including the painting of Caboose 0578, trim painting on the Ft. Collins Birney, and the removal of portions of the Rico in preparation for the platform and frame strengthening work. Interurban 25 received a good interior cleaning, along with some interior and exterior painting. Many thanks are due those who gave of their time to help preserve our equipment.

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THE CLUB'S HIGH COUNTRY RAILROAD OUTING at Heritage Square on June 21, provided good fun, food and relaxation for all who came out to experience two foot gauge steam railroading. The 0-4-0T Henschel No. 9 had the responsibility of pulling the regular passenger train, while the Shay and the 0-8-0T Hartmann No. 8 teamed up to provide doubleheaded power for the club's special. The No. 8 returned to the HCR this spring, after much work on her, including a new cab and a new tender. Both the 8 and the 9 were resplendent in their new paint schemes. John Robinson's 4-wheeled upright boiler engine also toiled around the track, providing his passengers with an up-front view of the railroad. Competing for attention with these various types of steam motive power, was Jim Ranniger's latest innovation to his Ranniger's Roadbed Commissary operation .. the Silver Commissary!!! It is, undoubtedly, the world's first semi-streamlined, partially fluted sided, non-articulated but nevertheless coupled triple unit, mostly air-conditioned, two-foot gauge dining car to burnish any rails, and we had the gastronomical pleasure of participating in its inaugural run on the club's special train. Describing it with words would strain this writer's limited mastery of the English language, but suffice to say that over 125 people were served complete lunches, with nary a hitch.

in the several mid-day hours of that afternoon, while rolling down the main of the HCR, and we trust that all disembarked with a satisfied feeling after participating in this unprecedented operation! A note of appreciation is due to all of the personnel of the High Country Railroad, to the Rannigers and their assistants, to the club volunteers who assisted as waiters and waitresses, and to all who supported the function by coming out to join in the fun.

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CLUB PATCH AVAILABLE - An oval cloth patch with the Club's name and emblem is now available for purchase. The 5-color, 4"x2½" patch goes great on caps and jackets, and costs only \$1.00. They can be picked up at any meeting, or if you would like to obtain one or more by mail, just send us \$1.00 for each one, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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IN THIS VIEW OF SUNSET, COLORADO, many years ago, we can see the 3' gauge Denver, Boulder & Western tracks from Boulder divide into the Ward and Eldora branches and ascend both sides of Pennsylvania Gulch. This famous, but short-lived line was built to serve the mining industry of the region, but soon became a popular road for excursion trains as well. Because of the beautiful scenery penetrated by its mountain-climbing trackage, the railroad eventually became known as "The Switzerland Trail of America." On this coming August 8, Sunset will be one of several stops on the club's field trip over the more scenic portions of this famous Colorado Narrow Gauge Railroad. Club members Ed Haley and Jack Morison, two Colorado railroad history buffs with particular interests for this long-abandoned railroad will be along to tell us about the railroad and field questions about the line. Prior to the outing, you may wish to review Forest Crossen's book, "The Switzerland Trail of America."

Forest's book not only delves into the history of the railroad, but illustrates with photos, many of the places we will see.

Our day will begin in Central Park in Boulder, near the display of Engine No. 30, at 9:00 A.M. This is an auto trip, and we encourage people to carpool, if possible. Vehicles with CB radios would be an advantage, but not a requirement. Along the way, we will make occasional stops with limited walking. Upon reaching Mont Alto Park, a popular stop in railroad days, Ranniger's Roadbed Commissary will be waiting to serve a tasty, hot lunch. Mont Alto Park is now a maintained picnic spot, with restroom facilities. After lunch, we will continue on to Ward, then down the highway to the Glacier Lake vicinity, where we will return to Sunset over the grade of the Eldora Branch, and then on to Boulder. Cost will be \$5.00 per person, which will help cover the cost of lunch and handout. Please fill out the order blank at the end of the newsletter, and order your ticket before the day of the outing. Direct questions to Darrell Arndt, Home Phone - 572-7868.

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"NEW" DINER READY TO ROLL - That ex-UP Diner that has been in the Rio Grande's Burnham Shop for so long, was about ready to make its first movement in late June. Plans were to run it in a local freight in Denver, then to Pueblo in a freight to check it out. After that, a trip on the Rio Grande Zephyr, ahead of the Silver Banquet, to see how it behaves in a passenger train consist. Then it will see regular service while the Silver Banquet enters the shop for much-needed work.

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THE U.S. TRANSPORTATION TEST CENTER, northeast of Pueblo, is yet another federal facility facing cutbacks as a result of the Reagan administration's goal of reducing the federal work force. Now in its 10th year of operation, the TTC and its contractor, Boeing Services International, will probably have to terminate about 75 people from the current staff of 580. In recent years, the Transportation Test Center has worked to solve some of the daily problems that plague the nation's railroads. Research has been conducted on the advantages of using concrete ties, and improved rails and rail fasteners have been developed. Tests have been made on the handling of hazardous materials, resulting in the adoption of new federal safety regulations. Unfortunately, one of the prime reasons for the establishment of the test center, the program to research and develop new and faster means of ground transportation, was halted in 1974. Recent progress in the field of high-speed rail travel has all come from overseas, primarily from Germany and Japan.

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A DENVER FIRM, URS COMPANY, is studying the feasibility of constructing a new railroad line in Northwestern Colorado, which would connect Rifle and Craig with the shale areas of the Piceance Basin and the coal deposits near Meeker. Various industries and governmental groups, including the Federal Railroad Administration, are funding the study, which is looking at various potential routes through the area. Construction of the estimated 100 miles of track could cost as much as \$2.5 million per mile, and take four or five years to complete, due to red tape and the rugged mountain terrain. The new rail line would be utilized to move construction material into the energy boom area, as well as haul shale oil and coal from the region. The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroads is the only carrier now operating in the area, and would be the logical user of the new trackage.

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THE RECENT VOTE OF A U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE, adding 122 million dollars to the administration's proposed budget for Amtrak, could save the passenger trains now serving the Western United States. Amtrak officials had said earlier that if President Reagan's proposed cut-backs in funding were adopted, all service outside the Boston-Washington rail corridor would have to be cancelled. While the additional money is not yet certain, a House committee has approved a similar increase, and

a final figure is expected to be worked out in a conference committee. If the \$122 million increase in funding is approved, 85% of the present 24,000 mile Amtrak system could be retained, with only routes between Chicago and the Northeast, and Chicago and Texas being eliminated. Trains to be discontinued are the Washington-Chicago Cardinal, the Washington-Cincinnati Shenandoah, a cutting back of the Chicago-Texas Inter-American to operate Chicago-San Antonio only, and a suggested discontinuance of the Seattle-Ogden Pioneer. Amtrak's President, William Boyd indicated that other major money-saving moves will have to be made, including a charge for checked baggage, a reduction in Amtrak's headquarters staff, and an end to traditional dining car service on all trains by October 1. On-board cooking will be replaced by "pre-prepared" meals. This particular change has already been made on an experimental basis on four trains, including the San Francisco Zephyr that serves Denver. Columnist, William Gallo, penned an article about this change in dining service on the SFZ, and we thought it worthy of reprinting, for those who hadn't seen it!

Off the track

Rufus Farve went to work for the railroad when men were men, locomotives ran on steam and lunch in the dining car was like six courses at the Ritz. He's been a pantry man on trains since 1929 — on the Southern Pacific, the Union Pacific and, for the last 10 years, Amtrak. He knows when the haddock is fresh, the sirloin is tender and when the eggs are perfectly poached, and he cares deeply about making everything right at the table.

At noon Thursday he was shaking his head sadly in the galley of the San Francisco Zephyr while that notable conveyance stood on Track One in Denver's Union Station. "Food ain't gonna be worth *nothin'* come Monday," he lamented. Rufus Farve's friend Jimmy Doyle, the chef, nodded agreement and continued grilling hamburgers with a pained expression on his face. Underchef Joseph Lashley looked as gloomy as the others as he brought out half a dozen beautiful filets of sole. "I been a cook all my life," he murmured. "I don't wanna be no porter."

The three men, who represent some 80 years of riding the rails, became economic casualties on Wednesday. That's when the Senate Commerce Committee voted to increase Mr. Reagan's 1982 passenger rail budget from \$613 million to \$735 million, assuring that 85 percent of Amtrak's trains will keep running in America.

THE TROUBLE IS THAT Amtrak says it needs \$853 million annually to provide full service. The first thing to go under the austerity program will be the kitchen.

On Monday, the Zephyr (which runs between Chicago and San Francisco) and trains on three other Amtrak routes will forsake such traditional, freshly prepared favorites as corned beef hash and grits at breakfast, roast leg of lamb with mint sauce, rare prime rib and apple pie a la mode for another kind of cuisine — the same microwave swiss steak and balsa wood chicken inflicted on airline passengers. By Oct. 1, kitchen facilities on all Amtrak routes will be gone.

For Rufus Farve, Jimmy Doyle and Joseph Lashley, the change is more than an economic necessity, another ravage of time. It's an affront to the art of their long careers. "They're gonna have the *porters* heatin' up the food," Farve complained. "And they're thinkin' about makin' us porters. I been a pantry man for 50 years, since I was 14."

Doyle snorted and deftly flipped a dozen fat, juicy burgers on his griddle. "It's simple," he said. "I'll lose my job. I don't know. Maybe I can transfer to the Starlighter (the Amtrak run between Los Angeles and Seattle). 'Pre-prepared food.' That's what they call the stuff they're puttin' on. Who wants to eat it?"

THINGS COULD BE WORSE, but not much. Until Wednesday's commerce committee vote, it appeared that Amtrak might lose nearly 22,000 passenger route-miles owing to a lack of federal funds, leaving only the densely populated Northeastern corridor with passenger service. Now the cutback will amount to 15 percent. Amtrak officials have not yet announced which routes will be discontinued.

This was of little consolation to Rufus Farve, who stood looking out the galley window as the train filled up with its 401 passengers. "All my life I been on the railroad," he said. "I hope I can get on the Starlighter. I know one thing. I have the years." Of course, the Starlighter, too, will no longer have an on-board kitchen come October.

Just then the train jolted and began to move. The three men said so long, then went silently to their tasks. As I stood on the platform, Rufus Farve, 50 years on the railroad, stuck his head out between cars of the red, white, blue and silver streamliner and said, proudly: "This is still a great way to travel. We don't wanna quit yet."

Then the Zephyr began to roll west. It was four minutes late. Four minutes plus half a century, some would say. But the men making lunch would give you an argument about that.

- THE 1981 MILE-HIGH RAILFAIR will be held Saturday and Sunday, July 18 and 19, at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, 15200 West 6th Avenue, in Golden. This fifth annual show will feature exhibits by railroads, hobby shops, railroadiana collectors, book publishers, model railroad clubs, and will include showings of railroad movies, plus a series of one-hour seminars on railroad topics. A special postal cachet commemorating the 10th Anniversary of Amtrak will be issued, and door prizes will be awarded. Doors open both days at 10:00 A.M., with a small donation payable upon entry. Railfair is sponsored by the Intermountain Chapter, NRHS, with proceeds going for the preservation of historic railroad equipment.

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THE CONGENIAL MAN IN THE LARGE WHITE CHEF'S HAT and tent-like apron, worked over the gas grill, deftly cooking and serving generous-sized hamburgers to the hungry people. At seemingly regular intervals he snatched a tidbit from the array of potato chips, pickles and salad items spread on the adjoining table. Nearby, his wife spooned heaping portions of steaming baked beans onto the diner's plates, while making sure that everyone in line received full rations. Ravenous from the morning's activities in the open air, the customers of Ranniger's Roadbed Commissary talked of many things, including railroad grades, equipment and locomotives as they enjoyed the delicious fare. Since 1978, folks attending various activities of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club have been treated to the culinary talents of Jim and Lil Ranniger. Their "world famous Ballastburgers" have delighted people on club hikes, while working on club equipment at the Colorado Railroad Museum, and at the annual outing at Heritage Square.

The Rannigers got started with their outdoor cookery in 1976, when their daughter was in 4-H, and attended horse shows in the Denver area. Jim and Lil decided that the 4-H'ers should enjoy a good noon meal, and the portable gas grill was moved from their patio into the family pickup truck for the ride to the scene of each event. Jim works the grill, serving up the hamburgers and visiting with each and every customer. Lil's specialty is the huge pot of baked beans. She says she has no "secret recipe" for this popular dish, but admits to having made some modifications to a standard cookbook set of instructions. They are not sure how their operation was named Ranniger's Roadbed Commissary, or how the sandwiches became Ballastburgers. Jim theorizes that the Contributing Editor of this newsletter had a strong hand in the designation of each.

A 1978 Rocky Mountain Railroad Club hike on the abandoned grade of the Argentine Central Railway marked the first appearance of Ranniger's Roadbed Commissary. Plans called for the group to meet at Silver Plume, hike the grade to Pavilion Point, and stop for a sack lunch before returning down the mountain. Bud Jim Ranniger had other ideas. "I figured a hot lunch of hamburgers and baked beans would taste a lot better than cold baloney sandwiches," says Jim. He was right, as 92 hikers took advantage of the food service at the scenic overlook. Since that time the Commissary has become more sophisticated, and now even sports its own beautifully painted sign. And at the club's Heritage Square outing on Sunday, June 21, the Commissary truly reached the roadbed, as it toured the route of the route of the High Country Railroad, while serving lunch on the area's first two-foot gauge dining car. Thanks, Jim and Lil!

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THE ICC HAS ORDERED THE D&RGW to bargain with a group of rail unions over the future of employees dismissed by the new owner of the Durango-Silverton line. The railroad had sought to work out new jobs or other compensation with the fired workers on an individual basis, without involvement of the unions. The company has been directed to provide affected employees compensation for wages and benefits lost

from the sale of the branch. Since the sale last March, about a dozen ex-D&RGW employees have been hired by the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, some took jobs elsewhere on the Grande, and some remain unemployed. The D&RGW has indicated it will appeal the decision. A ruling by the ICC in March freed Charlie Bradshaw from the union contracts that existed when he bought the line, and in a more recent ruling, the ICC refused to grant the union's request to negate the sale of the narrow gauge line until the labor questions are resolved.

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CITING A DECLINE IN CARLOADINGS, especially grain and coal shipments, two of the nation's largest railroads report less traffic in 1981 than they were moving in 1980. With fewer trains running, the Union Pacific Railroad has more than 450 diesel locomotives in storage, including all of the 6900 "Centennial" series. In addition, the UP has over 4,000 rail cars of various kinds in storage, and has had to furlough some employees. The Burlington Northern Railroad lists 375 diesel locomotives, 19,000 freight cars, and about 4,000 jumbo covered hoppers out of service. BN employees have also felt the pinch, with over 1,000 mechanical and clerical workers laid off. While officials of both railroads look to an improvement in the situation during the second half of the year, it is obvious that 1981 will not live up to the optimistic predictions made for it last winter.

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IN THIS COMPUTER AGE OF MACHINE-PRINTED SWITCH LISTS, an item is missing from most rail yards around America that was standard of the switchman's trade for many years. It is the piece of ordinary white chalk that the switch foreman used to indicate to his "pinpuller" and "field man" to which yard track each car was to go. Naturally, along with the work-related writing, amateur artists, poets and philosophers made use of the chalk to decorate the sides of freight cars. Today, there is very little of this graffiti to be found, with the most frequently seen piece of art work, the chalk drawing of a Mexican peasant, complete with sombrero, reclining under a palm tree.

For years, the epitome of box car art was a signature, and not a simple one at that. There was a saying that "You can't be a good switchman 'till you can write 'J.B. King, Esq.,' without lifting your chalk from the box car; dot the 'i' too - and all in one flourish." There were as many theories about J.B. King as there were box cars, the most popular that he was a millionaire hobo. Other stories had him as a former yardmaster, ex-con, or boomer. Whatever the story, one point was constant, J.B. King had vowed to write his name on every box - car and water tank in the country. The elaborate signature goes back into the 1880's, and was found on every railroad in the United States. The coming of World War II took J.B. King to construction sites and onto ships around the world. Whether he was a myth and just a doodle to be written on box cars, railroad men were known to proclaim that when they died and went to heaven, they expected to see, "J.B. King, Esq.," scrawled on the pearly gates.

Who is this fellow, J.B. King,
Who writes his name on everything?
"J.B. King" on every wall,
On flat cars low and box cars tall,
Whether he does it for money or fun,
He sure is a scribbling son of a gun!

20 YEARS AGO IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAIL REPORT . . .

Almost 240 people enjoyed traveling to the Annual Dinner in Boulder behind C&S 638. Mickey Hansen at the throttle provided an unforgettable "speed run" back to Denver that was particularly enjoyed by those in the Vista-Dome....C&S 641 will probably continue to operate Leadville - Climax for the remainder of 1961... Relocation of the narrow gauge trackage north of Arboles is about completed, including the Piedra River and Sandoval Canyon Bridges. Track laying remains to be done...The three-day Memorial Day narrow gauge trip was a sell out...

AND 15 YEARS AGO . . .

Some 250 fans enjoyed the club's Moffat Tunnel Special behind GW #51. At times the train was almost "lost" in all of the fog and snow ... Plans for a Denver to Lyons excursion via the C&S and CB&Q behind No. 51 are progressing well...The Western Pacific has asked for permission to discontinue its portion of the California Zephyr...An original Colorado Midland bridge that spanned Lake Creek near Leadville carrying trains and auto traffic for 80 years was destroyed by burning to make way for construction on the Sugar Loaf Dam at Turquoise Reservoir...Demolition is in progress on the Cheyenne roundhouse.

. . . 10 YEARS AGO . . .

The D&RGW has elected not to join "Railpax" and will operate its own service from Denver to Salt Lake City...Ex RGS No. 42 is back at Magic Mountain, having been brought back from its storage site at Monument, Colorado...The Heber Creeper in Utah is to begin operation by July 4th...

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

FOR SALE: NOW AVAILABLE - The Super Quality Albums you've heard about. 8444!, 4449!, 765!, 614!. Over one hour and ten minutes in each set. List price, \$29.95 each, special to club members for \$25.00. These are limited editions - no more will be manufactured. Call Joe Niklas at 455-9100 to order for immediate delivery.

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Yes, I would like to join in the fun of exploring the Switzerland Trail on August 8. Enclosed is my check or money order for _____ tickets at \$5.00 each.

NAME: _____ STREET: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

JIM RANNIGER, President

BILL GORDON, Secretary

ERWIN CHAIM, Vice President

ARDIE SCHOENINGER, Treasurer