
ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAIL REPORT

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB

MARCH PROGRAM

GEORGETOWN LOOP

Walter Borneman will present a program on the current status of the rebuilding of the Georgetown Loop. Mr. Borneman is currently project director of the Colorado Historical Society.

The program will include original bridge construction, early history of the route, and the changes, which present safety standards dictate, from the original bridge to the reconstruction.

After the Loop portion of the program, Mr. Borneman will present a short highlights of Marshall Pass with a number of then and now slides as well as other views of the pass.

This will be a delightful program and should be placed on your must see list.

3985 EXCURSION

Response to the club's upcoming UP excursion "over the hill" with Challenger type Engine 3985, has been so great that, as of this writing, the last few remaining tickets are going out in the mail. Secretary Bill Gordon, reports that, once announcements hit the various publications, ticket requests began pouring in at the rate of twenty to thirty per day. It certainly appears that a sell-out is assured, and that many ticket requests will have to be returned unfilled.

GLENWOOD WEEKEND UPDATE

In light of recent developments, as reported elsewhere, the club's April 23 and 24 excursion to Glenwood Springs is selling fast! As far as is now known, the good ol' Rio Grande

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

Les Grenz Editor
Steve McCormic Associate Editor
Darrell Arndt President
Erwin Chaim Vice President
Bill Gordon Secretary
Ardie Schoeninger Treasurer

MEETING SCHEDULE: March 8, 1983; 7:45 p.m. Southeast wing of Christ Episcopal Church, 2900 South University at Bates. Off-street parking at rear (east) of meeting hall. Please use the building's south entrance.

Send all items for publication to: ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAIL REPORT; Les Grenz, Editor; 6288 Vance Street, Arvada, Colorado 80003.

COPY DEADLINE--All copy for publication is due no later than the 18th of the month prior to month of publication.

Vista-Dome equipment will still be in operation for this trip. Dick Lawrence has managed to secure three cars (two Vista-Domes and one flat-top coach) for use of club members, thus increasing the number of members and their guests that can be accommodated. That old excuse -- "We'll pass on this one; We can always go next year" -- probably is no longer valid. Don't miss out on what may prove to be an historic event. Send in your reservation requests now.

AMTRAK THRU THE ROCKIES?

Confirming many a rumor, Amtrak, in cooperation with the Rio Grande ran a test train on the schedule of, and replacing the Rio Grande Zephyr between Denver and Salt Lake City, Monday and Tuesday, February 7 and 8, 1983. The consist of 2 F-40's, 2 low level mail cars, 1 ex-Santa Fe Hi-Level, and 11 Superliner cars (including lounge and diner) was designed to duplicate the normal summer consist of the San Francisco Zephyr.

If you haven't figured it out by now, Amtrak and the Rio Grande are talking - talking about getting rid of the Rio Grande Zephyr and allowing Amtrak to use the "scenic route thru the rockies" for the routing of their Trains 5 and 6. Why is this break from the Grande's traditional independence? Some suggest that there's more than a little concern about continued profitability down at the "black box." (Rio Grande has steadily been losing 'friendly' connections, starting in 1980 with the demise of the Rock Island. Now that MoPac and Western Pacific are in the 'enemy camp', their best hope for maintaining bridge traffic comes from the Southern Pacific, together with several new, untried connections in Kansas City, new eastern terminus.) A passenger train that costs money doesn't, apparently, fit into the new scheme of things.

Will the Rio Grande come to terms with Amtrak? If so, when? What will happen to the old RGZ equipment; the Ski Train? Lots of questions are being asked, and right now, neither the Rio Grande nor Amtrak is talking.

In the meantime, we can report on first impressions of Superliners in the Rockies. Our Rail Report correspondent was on board the test train, and filed the following report:

In addition to various Amtrak officials, over 70 passengers were able to observe the performance of the special Amtrak run, thanks to the train being scheduled to also fill in for the Rio Grande Zephyr on February 7 and 8. Interestingly, on the

evening before the trip, an inquiry directed to the rather disinterested young Amtrak agent at the depot about space availability on the special brought a response that "only 8-10 tickets" were left. Apparently, the feeling was that there was no need to cram more than 70 people into the 14 car train!!?! The entire consist was not open to the public, but there was ample room to roam in the several Superliner coaches, dining car, and sightseer lounge car open to passengers.

The train was staffed by regular Rio Grande Crews, who had to educate themselves "crash course" style, with the equipment, especially in the dining car. There, menus and food were all Amtrak, but the Rio Grande crew seemed to do a fine job in the unfamiliar surroundings. The food was good, but couldn't quite match the Rio Grande's regular bill of fare. The cars seemed to ride quite well over the Rio Grande's well-maintained track, some thought noticeably better than the equipment of the RGZ. There was much speculation among 'trackside superintendents' as to how well the two diesels on the head end would do, or not do, upon encountering the stiff grades and many curves in the mountains, but they seemed to have no problem and actually put on a rather impressive demonstration leaving the front range.

The event was, apparently, well documented by numerous people seen along the route with cameras in hand, especially between Denver and the Moffat Tunnel. The mouth of Coal Creek Canyon looked like a photographer's convention. Comments were heard, both on and off the train, that went something like - "I hope I have a job when I get back to work," etc. Camera buffs found overcast skies east of the Divide with snow from the Moffat Tunnel, west. A number of folks rode from Denver as far as Glenwood Springs on the westbound run and then subjected themselves to a bus ride back to Denver that evening. Without question, a rather grueling experience after riding the rails all morning!

NARROW GAUGE ROLLS YEAR 'ROUND

The following excerpts are reprinted from a newspaper article submitted to the "Report" by John Dillavou.

"This is the only town in the USA where you can hear a steam-train whistle blow every day of the year except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day," says Jim Mayer, vice president and superintendent of operations for the railroad. The railroad mentioned is the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.

The railroad carried 135,000 passengers from this southern Colorado ranching town last year. This year, operating through the winter, the total is expected to reach a record number of 165,000 passengers.

"They call it God's country and they aren't kidding--it's out of this world," said Dorothea McCarter of Cole City, Ill., who rode in an open car during the 90-mile trip between Silverton and Durango.

Florence Allai of Joliet, Ill., said she did not even mind the coal dust on her clothes in the open car. She said she rejected an offer to go in a closed car, warmed by a coal furnace, in order to experience the trip more fully.

"It was worth it--every bit of it," she said. "We even had snow coming into the car. We enjoyed everything--the waterfall, the mountains, the canyons. Everything was great."

"It was wonderful," said Russell McCarter as he helped his wife from the open car, once used to transport livestock. "Awsome is the best way to describe this country."

The narrow gauge railroad--with some of its refurbished cars more than a century old--carries passengers through part of the 2 million acre San Juan National Forest as it runs along the Animas River. The train also carries food and other goods to guest ranches, and makes stops for backpackers, fishermen and hikers.

Some railroad workers are descendants of railroad men who were on the line in July 1882 when it opened. Through the years, the line has carried more than \$300 million in gold and silver from the San Juan Mountains.

Because narrow gauge railroads in general quit operating a long time ago, the Durango and Silverton has its own maintenance and construction shop. Its yard is filled with pieces of scrapped metal and

NG LINE VANISHES

Another remnant of an early Colorado narrow gauge line vanished from the scene recently with the completion of the Strontia Springs Diversion Dam in the Platte Canyon southwest of Denver. When the waters of the South Platte River backed up behind the 243 foot high concrete dam late last year, the old steel railroad bridge that still stands (R.R. MP 27.52) about 3/4 of a mile west of Strontia Springs gradually disappeared under some 40 feet of water. (See the very last page in the Memorial Edition of Denver South Park & Pacific for a photo of the structure.) Also submerged was the site of Strontia Springs and many hundreds of feet of interesting grading and stone work done by the D&RG in 1879-1882 for their proposed line to Salt Lake City. The dam, located about 1/2 mile east of Strontia Springs, is part of the intake system built to provide Denver's new Foothills Water Treatment Plant with raw water. Since the railroad was abandoned the bridge continued to carry service vehicles, hikers, bikers and fishermen over the river. The Club's Platte Canyon Bunion Pounder Field Trip in August of 1977 provided a memorable opportunity to see this canyon area that is now inaccessible.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"One Railroad President said to me, "How about putting a couple more passenger trains on my railroad? I haven't got much other business and I can make a little money off of you.""

---Amtrak President W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

ancient cars.

"They look like junk when we first get them, but we turn them into something beautiful," Mayer said. "It's important to keep them authentic. We want them to look the same as when they originally rolled down the track."

The oldest car still in use was made in 1878. A car where snacks are sold once carried mail. A taste of life in the days of the rich silver kings is available in the president's car--a sleeper which reportedly once carried President James A. Garfield.

CONSTRUCTION RESHAPES JOINT LINE

In preparation for the eventual widening of the Santa Fe Drive "corridor," between downtown Denver and suburban Englewood and Littleton, various relocations and improvements of the "joint line" (Santa Fe and Rio Grande tracks) have taken place or are in process. Next time you're driving south on Santa Fe Drive, take note of the following:

.. To make room for an intersection, approximately 7,000 feet of the Rio Grande (westerly) track has been moved about 100 feet east, closer to the Santa Fe (easterly) track at Evans Avenue. The old main line, and a spur which once served a ready mix concrete concern, have all been removed, and a pile of ballast is all that now remains of the old alignment.

.. South of Ridge Road, about a mile, two new trestles have been installed, which will carry both tracks over an eventual extension of Mineral Avenue.

.. South of County Line Road, where Santa Fe Drive (or is it Highway 85 out that far?) goes under the tracks, two new, longer spans are under construction. These bridges will allow room for a four-lane highway, and will eliminate the traffic hazard that the original narrow underpasses posed.

NEW MEMBERS

The following is a list of new members for January and February. WELCOME!!

Jack McLennan, Sr., Philip Hawes, Denver; William Keene, William Springer, Aurora; Bradford Petch, Lakewood; Mark Schmitt, Covington, KY; Earl Craghead, North Platte, NB; Craig Cobine, Naperville, IL; Gladys Bradbury, Wheat Ridge; David Roll, W. Roy Munro, Arvada; Richard Cline, Robert Pidcock, Englewood; Ralph Schaad, Salem, OR; Lloyd Crews, Littleton; Ruth Youder, Ft. Collins.

RAILFAIR—1983

The ever popular Mile High Railfair will be held this year on July 16 and 17 at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds on West 6th Avenue. More than 100 exhibitors are expected to participate this year. In addition, special activities will include

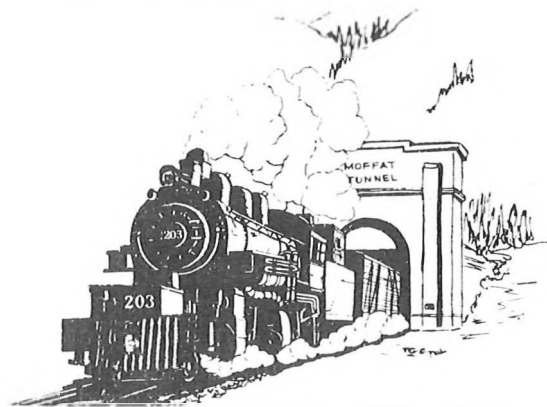
RAILS POOL INSULATED BOX CARS

The December 13th Railway Age reports, nine railroads are seeking permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission to pool their RBL (insulated boxcar) fleet. Under the proposal, Fleet Management, Inc., a subsidiary of Fruit Growers Express, would manage this equipment pool for the Burlington Northern; Conrail; Denver & Rio Grande Western; Detroit, Toledo & Ironton; Grand Trunk Western; Illinois Central Gulf; Missouri Pacific; Southern Pacific; and Western Pacific systems.

The RBL pool, managed by Fleet Management, Inc., will maximize the use of the current national fleet and reduce the high ratio of empty car miles. Empty cars will be directed to loads closer to the original point of unloading rather than returning the RBL to its owner roads or to its assigned loading point. Fleet Management, Inc. will obtain loading forecasts and require that the destination carrier route the empty rbl car to the nearest shipping location for loading.

In recent years, the insulated boxcar fleet has dropped 21.5% in numbers to 52,479 cars. By adopting the pool concept, Fruit Growers Express projects that the average empty-to-loaded car-miles ratio for RBL equipment could be nearly halved, a situation that would likely more than offset the effects of the smaller car fleet.

In the Rocky Mountain region, one of the best known concentrations of RBL equipment is found along the Burlington Northern in Colorado near Golden.



railroad movie showings, mini-seminars and an auction. Railfair is sponsored by the Intermountain Chapter of the NRHS. Questions regarding the event can be directed to the Chapter at P.O. Box 5181, Denver, Colorado 80217.

BRYANT L. McFADDEN

Bryant L. McFadden, 77, a long time member of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, who joined the club shortly after its inception in 1938, died on February 16th, 1983. Memorial services were held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church the following Saturday. He is survived by his wife Shirley and his sons Robert and Ellis. Bryant was one of the club's most diligent workers and will be a most difficult man to replace. For over 30 years he handled the sale of almost all of the club's major books, received the orders, made the labels and handled the mailing. Most of the books were packaged, stored and mailed at Bryant and Shirley's home. Bryant also worked countless hours at the Colorado Railroad Museum, restoring, painting and maintaining the club's equipment on display there. He was a recent recipient of an award from the club for his outstanding efforts in the club's behalf for so many years. He will be sadly missed by his many friends and fellow workers in this organization and we offer our condolences to his wife Shirley and the family. Contributions may be sent to St. Mark's Episcopal Church Memorial Fund, 1160 Lincoln St., Denver, CO or the American Cancer Society, 1824 Williams St., Denver, CO.

OUT OF ACTION

One of the last vestiges of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad's once active public relations philosophy disappeared from the scene recently with the removal of their "The Action Road" advertising from a lighted billboard adjacent to the Sixth Avenue expressway, near the company's Burnham Shops. In earlier years, the sign promoted passenger service, but in recent times, depicted a Rio Grande freight train to thousands of Denver area motorists.

ERROR, ERROR, ERROR

In the February Rocky Mountain Rail Report it was inadvertently stated that dues should be sent to Treasurer Ardie Schoeninger. Dues should be mailed to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, P.O. Box 2391, Denver, Colorado 80201.

RAIL REPORT IMPLEMENTS NEW MAILING PROCEDURES

With the February issue of the ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAIL REPORT, several new procedures were implemented in the handling and addressing of the newsletter. The venerable addressing machines that Bob Griswold had managed to keep functioning over the years have been put on the side track and a new labeling system is now being tried out. The labels have proved to be more legible and appear to have simplified the addressing routine.

A note of thanks is due Ed Gerlits for the creation and smooth transition to this new format and to Steve McCormick for additional assistance. Special recognition is reserved for Mary Carlson, Carl Carlson and Ruth Avis for the typing and the many subsequent hours spent on proof reading all 1,000 names and addresses.

The labeling, stuffing and mailing of the letter is being coordinated by Jack Morrison, who along with his wife, Irma, and Carl Carlson, Rich Dais and John Dillavou, saw to the mailing of the March newsletter. A tip of the conductor's hat to these fine members for volunteering their time and effort. After several months we will be looking forward to other members assisting with the mailing so that this important responsibility is not resting on the shoulders of just a few.

ON REVIEW

The Club was invited to the Westland Mall Shopping Center for the weekend of January 29 and 30, to join model railroad clubs and other rail oriented groups in offering the public a sample of the pleasure that can be had with the different aspects of the railfan hobby. Our display supplied visitors with information about the club and its various activities and provided a means by which questions about our organization could be answered. On hand during that weekend to represent the club, were Irwin Chaim, Bill Gordon, Bob Griswold, Jean Hahn, and Bob Neher. A note of thanks to these folks for giving of their time at the booth!!

A CONVERSATION WITH LLOYD

In an attempt to separate fact from fiction concerning Amtrak's possible routing of the San Francisco Zephyr over Rio Grande rails (see above), your Rail Report correspondent contacted Mr. Arthur Lloyd, Amtrak's Regional Director of Corporate Communications (read P.R.) in San Francisco. A summary of the information made available by Lloyd, is as follows:

Item - While Lloyd indicated that it was "too early for definitive information to be available," he was extremely confident that Amtrak and the Rio Grande would be able to come to an agreement. Before any changes could be implemented, though, he indicated that the complete formal proposal would have to be placed before the Amtrak Board of Directors, who would have to act on it. Additionally, the Rio Grande would have to petition the ICC for discontinuance of the RGZ (probably a formality since Amtrak would offer daily service over the same line - thus improving overall service (!??) - Ed.). Either of these steps, under certain circumstances, could turn into a long, drawn out process, delaying the takeover.

Item - Concerning whether a contract with the Rio Grande might have substantially different terms than contracts with other member railroads (i.e. an attempt by the Rio Grande to limit Amtrak to certain line segments, routes, or to retain authority for scheduling), Lloyd speculated that Rio Grande's contract would probably not be substantially different than other roads, as wide variances in service contracts would not be justifiable to other railroads. (Note that this could make most portions, if not all of the Rio Grande available for charter excursion service under an existing Amtrak tariff. - Ed.)

Item - When the question of continuing service through southern Wyoming (along the UP main line) came

up, Mr. Lloyd was extremely cautious. He cited statistics indicating that a comparison of actual boardings in Wyoming vs. projected boardings in the Rockies would indicate that, given a choice, the Rio Grande route should be selected. Mr. Lloyd's caution on this subject is understandable since this issue could become a political hot potato in a state that traditionally has supported Amtrak in Congress. (If a little editorial reading-between-the-lines is permitted, we would suggest that no service through Wyoming is to be considered unless there is some economic reason for Amtrak to do so - i.e. 403(b) service or an increase in Amtrak's congressionally mandated budget. - Ed)

Item - Regarding actual train operation, Lloyd suggested that the train would run on something resembling the old California Zephyr schedule (which is to say, the Rio Grande's portion would be run on a timetable similar to today's RGZ schedule). This would require some juggling of the current Pioneer and Desert Wind schedules, and would also dictate a later Chicago arrival (say 3:30 p.m. or so). Lloyd was very familiar with the regional traffic moving between Denver and Glenwood Springs, and indicated that Amtrak would handle these passengers in a manner similar to the way the regional traffic between San Francisco and Reno is now being handled. (We've ruled out a 'Glenwood Fun Train', so assume Lloyd is suggesting that extra cars would be cut in and out of the train at some now undetermined points to accommodate Glenwood passengers. - Ed.)

Item - Would Amtrak take over the Ski Train? "Too early to tell," says Lloyd, indicating that securing sufficient equipment could be the big problem.

So much for the official Amtrak posture as of mid-February. Exactly what is going to happen, and when is still a matter of some conjecture. Stay tuned for further developments!