

TRAINMASTER

Official Publication of the Pacific Northwest Chapter, National Railway Historical Society.

MAY 1991

Locomotive Dream Stalled on Tracks

Gene Stoller has been dreaming about trains since he was a boy.

His father ran a bustling railroad yard in Dallas and Stoller would tag along, watching steam engines move huge loads of lumber from the local mill and hitching a ride whenever he could.

A lifetime later, Stoller is still dreaming of trains -- Woodburn's 1785 in particular. For more than 30 years, Stoller has dreamed of putting the old fashioned steam engine back on track and turning it into an excursion train of the old Oregonian Railway route between Woodburn and Silverton.

"I'd like to live to ride on that thing," he said.

Volunteers have been working hard to repair the aging locomonive and Stoller, a local historian, former owner of the Woodburn Independent and vice president of the Oregonian Railway Historical Society, said the job is almost finished.

There's only one hold up. The train has no place to go. Railroad officials have yet to give permission for the 1785 to run on their railroad tracks. Up until last year, Southern Pacific had a policy against selling

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CHAPTER TIMETABLE NO. 344

REGULAR RUNS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, May9, Thursday, 7:00pm, at the Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club on the comer of N. Vancouver Ave. and Russell Street. All Chapter members are welcome.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING, May 17, Friday, 7:30pm, at Portland General Electric auditorium on SE 17th Avenue between Powell and Holgate. The business meeting will start promptly at 7:30, with the newsreel and program following after a short break. Refreshments will be available; please bring some money to feed the "kitty" so Kitty can continue to feed you. The program is listed below.

WEEKLY NO-HOST LUNCHEON, every Saturday, 12:00 noon, at the Semaphore Restaurant at SE 17th Avenue and Holgate Blvd. Our group sits in the back. Come on down!

ROLLING STOCK WORK SESSIONS, every Tuesday and Saturday, at the Chapter's tracks in Brooklyn Yards. Working hours are 9am to 3-4pm on Tuesday, 10am to late afternoon on Saturday. There's a lot of work of all kinds to be done. Contact Richard Gray (656-0260) or Bob Hoffman (654-0914) to see what you can do.

ARCHIVES WORK SESSION, May 9 & 18, 1 to 4pm at Room 1, Union Station. Help is needed to get things organized and catalogued. Contact Bob Weaver at 654-4274 for more information---or just show up! There's lots of work to do.

CHAPTER LIBRARY OPEN HOURS, Saturday, May 18 &25, 1 to 4pm at Room 1, Union Station.

EXTRA BOARD

4449 EXCURSION FROM RAILFAIR '91, May 18-19; for ticket information contact the Northwest Rail Museum at 641-4514

RAILFAIR '91, CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM, Sacramento, May 3-12, Come see 21 steam locomotives, excursions, and more at the museums 10th anniversary call (916) 323-3153 or 445-7387 for prices and schedule.

EXCURSION TO MISSOULA - CANCELLED

ANNUAL CHAPTER PICNIC - June 28, 7 to 10pm at Lewis and Clark Railroad - LIVE MUSIC - Bring your friends

MAY MEETING PROGRAM

a UP promotional film from our archives.

by Jerry Webb

Notice: Programs are needed for future meetings. Anyone who is willing to present a program (slides, film, etc.) at a Chapter meeting, please contact Chuck Bukowsky 284-7277

Room 1, Union Station, Portland, Oregon 97209 (503) 226-6747

The TRAINMASTER

is the official newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, published monthly for the benefit of its members. Articles which appear in The Trainmaster do not express the official National Railway Historical Society position on any subject unless specifically noted as such. Material from *The Trainmaster* may be reprinted in other publications provided credit is given as to the source. Please address contributions, correspondence, and exchange copies of newsletters to:

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MEMBERSHIP in the PNWC-NRHS is available as follows:

Regular....\$25/yr. Joint....\$30/yr. For more information contact the Membership Chairman, at the above address.

DEADLINES

are terrible things, but they pop up every month without fail. The deadline for each issue of *The Trainmaster* is the 20th of the previous month. I always try to squeeze in late material, but I can't guarantee that anything received after the 20th will make it—be warned! —*MC*

from the President

Spring is here, flowers are in bloom and the volunteers are coming in out of the sun or the rain to work on equipment and the library.

The 3300 (SP coach-combine), 76 (museum car) and the Mt. Hood (sleeper-lounge) have left for Tillamook. Bob Steele and Associates are inspecting and repairing the cars for service, hopefully later this year. If you are down Tillamook way in the next month or so, you may want to drop by the southernmost blimp hanger at the old blimp station. Bob will probably let you take a squint when you tell him you have "ownership".

Down to business. Because we are having difficulty projecting our income due to the Missoula excursion cancellation, we are slowing our spending program. The Excursion Committee has started from ground zero on destinations and we should be off and running again.

Projected are two unique trips:

July - Newport on SP via Corvallis and Toledo We will bus people from Toledo to hotels in Newport

for a weekend at the beach - What a place!

Labor day - Siskiyou circle trip

Overnight in Grants Pass and Klamath Falls These will run when SP okays them.

The Astoria trip is still on in coordination with the Dixieland Jazz Festival, October 11-13. We have potential car leases in September and November. Mileage buffs attention: A possible Oregon Electric Trip - Maybe not this year but in 1992.

See? What great activities we have in store!! Don't forget the June picnic. Remember last years? Patti Barbour is working on it and she needs a little help. Are we having fun yet? Are we laughing at ourselves for a change?!!

-Chuck Bukowsky

Missoula Trip Railroaded

Amtrak recently informed us that our excursion we had planned for the weekend of the Fourth of July has to be put on hold. The reason for this seems to be the amount of lead time needed to coordinate efforts between Burlington Northern, Montana Rail Link, and Amtrak. 9 months would have been needed to put it together. We are planning the trip for next year, possibly in May.

CHAPTER BUSINESS

Committee Reports

MEMBERSHIP

Tammy Auburg, Chair

Please welcome the following new members to the chapter:

Mark Blazer Vancouver, Washington

Gregory Allen & Jennie Lynn Brown Portland, Oregon

William E. McCourt Portland, Oregon

Richard A. Meyers Burns, Oregon

William E. O'Donnell Vancouver, Washington

Robert S. Piecuch Horseheads, New York

Lee B. Rutter Tualatin, Oregon

Curt & Chaille Shipps Salem, Oregon

LIBRARY/ARCHIVES Walt Grande, Chair

There will be a workshop of oral histories on May 18 from 1:30 to 3:00pm in room 208. Clytis Belloit and Walt Grande attended an Oregon Historical Society workshop on oral histories and they will offer instructions on how to interview a retired railroader to get his favorite stories and preserve them for posterity. Practice sessions will be a part of the workshop. Call Clytis at 232-8814 to reserve a spot.

Al Haij and Walt Grande have taken over the Audio Visual sub-committee and will be working on the photographs and negatives in our collection. They will be having a work party every Monday afternoon from 1:00 to 3:30pm. If you are interested in participating, contact Al at 659-7840 or Walt at 246-3254.

Special thanks to Pete Rodabaugh and Richard Gray and the Rolling Stock Committee for giving the library some surplus sheets of plate glass. We will use them to flatten out rolled maps, plans and other paper records and manuscripts. Has anybody seen the library's copy of its Archives Inventories book? It is a loose-leaf binder with lists of items of archival materials. It should remain in the library for use by patrons. It is the library's only copy. If any one can help us locate the Archives Inventories and return it to the library, we would appreciate it.

We are looking for donations of steel files, shelves and racks for storage of plans, maps, books and manuscripts. We need steel flat files, also known as map files or cabinets, for safe storage of our large drawings and maps. A donation or purchase of good used files at a reasonable price will save the chapter a lot of money, as these are pricey items. Please leave a message for us at Room 1 if you can help us locate these items.

ROLLING STOCK

Richard Gray, Chair

The engine at Hines, Oregon is waiting for UP Approval to be moved and 2 members will be on their way to the engine in Ketchikan, Alaska to load spare parts upon our own board approval.

Our cars that were damaged; 3300, 600, 76 have gone to Bob Steele and Associates for inspection and repairs. The 6800 is being prepared for the trip to Sacramento with the 4449. We had some minor freeze problem in the B-end restroom and the holding tank is being finished on the A-end. Holding tanks are also installed on the 4461, thanks to Roger White.

We have a new workbench with vise in the 55. We are almost done loading our spare parts into the boxcar. The trailers are looking good, decks have been built and inventory has been neatly sorted. The RDC's are being cleaned up with the systems restored and we now have room at the north end of the B-unit for machine and tool storage. Windowsills are being installed in the 6200 and the air conditioning equipment for 4461 has been cleaned. An inspection on the *Plum Creek* is planned for the end of April.

Thank you to all of the tireless helpers that keep things moving at Brooklyn: Peter Rodabaugh, Richard Parks, Roger White, Bob Hoffman, Tony Reghitto, Tom Green, Brad Reese, Frank & Irene Weiler, Ralph Jack, Stan Williams and Chris Lundt.

A special thank you goes to the SP for donating 200' of air pipeline from the carshops. This will enable us to utilize the roundhouse air to operate car jacks, air tools, sandblasting and painting equipment.

Due to technical difficulties, the board of directors and the business meeting minutes will be included in next months issue.

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NEWS—HISTORY—TRAVEL

Locomotive

continued from page 1

its branch lines or letting other groups run trains on them. But new owners have softened that policy and Stoller said he's seen some promising signs.

Last year Southern Pacific sold a branch line on the coast to the Port of Tillamook. Tourists flock to ride the town's new excursion train. Stoller said he'd be pleased to use, rent or even buy railroad tracks between Woodburn and Silverton for a similar attraction here.

But Stoller said he's heard railroad officials are not going to close any of their Oregon lines during 1990. But there's always next year, he said. "It's just a matter wait and see," Stoller said.

Steam engines once dominated transportation in America. Towns like Woodburn literally sprang up around the train tracks and entire generations grew up listening for that husky steam engine whistle.

But one by one, steam engines were retired to make way for powerful new diesel electric locomotives. "I remember when the diesel took over," Stoller said. "It took over fast. Whack! And the steam engine was gone."

But the old time locomotives are far from forgotten. Americans have kept a special place in their hearts for the steam engine.

"People are just as smitten with locomotives now as they ever were," he said. "There's just something about them."

Woodburn is no exception. The town rallied together to make way for the 1785 when Stoller and a handful of volunteers swayed Southern Pacific into giving up the engine more than 30 years ago. Over the years, train buffs have coveted the train, replacing worn parts and repairing others. Today, the train is in near running condition. Only a handful of repairs remain.

"It's coming along very well,"

Stoller said. "It could be made operational just about any time we have the opportunity to run it."

The excursion train could be a blessing for Woodburn, Stoller said. Tourists from all over the valley would come to Woodburn to ride the train. And while they're here, they'd eat in local restaurants and shop in local stores. It would be a boon for the economy, Stoller said.

Other communities would reap similar benefits. The branch line runs from downtown Woodburn east through Mount Angel to Silverton and West Stayton. A spur line branches off from Silverton to Salem. The train would make stops in each town, giving tourists a chance to share their wealth in local restaurants and gift shops.

There's plenty to attract tourists to the valley, Stoller said. Woodburn has its World Berry Museum and a host of historic homes. Mount Angel has its annual Oktoberfest. Silverton's old fashioned business district is thriving, And miles of bountiful farmland and forest fill the gaps between cities.

"It will be successful and it would help to build the area," Stoller said.

> -Nikki DeBuse (Woodburn Independent, November 28, 1990)

The Norfolk Southern is celebrating its 25th anniversary of providing their steam excursion program. Special events are planned this year.

(Interchange)

The UP is studying the feasibility of constructing an 8.44 mile tunnel through the Blue Mountains in eastern Oregon, bypassing the worst 28 miles of the mountain crossing.

(Railway Age)

40 & 8 Merci Car

In 1949 the French government sent 49 of these cars to the United States in appreciation for the aid to France following World War II. Built between 1872 and 1885, these 12 ton, 29 foot, four-wheeled rail carriages are both exotic and outlandish in appearance. The numbers, 40 & 8, refer to the cargo carried: either 40 troops or eight horses. One confused sergeant was quoted, "I got my 40 artillery-men in the boxcar, Lieutenant, but if you try to put eight of our horses in, somebody's gonna be trampled to death!" The cars went one to each state and then territory of Hawaii.

Each car contained gifts including lace handkerchiefs, paintings, the first motorcycle ever built, children's drawings, Marquis de Lafayette's walking stick, dolls, statues, furniture and desk ornaments. The United States had sent food "Friend Ships" to France.

These are the locations of the Northwest area cars:

CALIFORNIA.....Reading

Park, Fresno. Condition unknown. IDAHO.....Old Idaho Penitentiary, Boise. Restoration begun February 1989.

MONTANA......Historical Society Building, Helena. Condition good.

NEVADA.....Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City. Condition good.

OREGON......The Flavel House, Astoria. Condition excellent.

WASHINGTON.....Perry Trade School, Yakima. Restoration 80% complete as of November 1988.

(NRHS News, September 1990.)

The total paid membership to National NRHS on March 31 was 14,087 Regular and 2739 Spouse.

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Foresight is 20-20

Our February monthly membership meeting program was "Trolley Valhalla", by Al Haij. This featured 8mm films of the Portland Traction interurbans on the Belrose and Oregon City lines. Many, if not all of us, present felt a keen sense of loss at the knowledge that these cars and right-of-ways are lost forever. An oft-heard remark is, "Wouldn't it be great if the city had mothballed the Portland Traction lines, so they could be rebuilt as light-rail?"

Sadly, this sentiment is far from original. While reviewing newspaper clippings, the author came across an article suggesting the very same thing.

Part of the vast collection of railroad memorabilia donated to the chapter by the late Miln D. Gillespie were many newspaper clippings of railroad related items. One of these dates from the December 5th, 1951 Oregonian and is headlined "Officials Debate Transit System, Municipal Ownership Proposals". Allow me to share some of the article with you.

"With the Portland transit system in an economic vise, what can be done to solve the problem? There are four possibilities: An end to mass transportation; public ownership; drastic reduction in service; or increased use by the public. One city official (unnamed) expressed horror at the first possibility. He said: "Mass transportation is the lifeblood of a city. It is absolutely essential." Traffic engineer Fred Fowler agreed. Said he, "Mass transportation cannot be allowed to die out."

The accompanying picture of the article shows a Portland Traction Company bus, with a headboard entitled, "Twenty-first". The caption reads: "This scene may become a thing of the past in Portland if transit companies have to throw in the sponge because of decreased patronage and increased costs. Traffic experts say that city mass transportation cannot be allowed to die out".

The article makes no distinction between interurban and bus routes, as at that time, of course, Portland Traction utilized both in its service. Quoting from the article again: "Public ownership is favored by people who believe service should be provided for all, even where it cannot pay for itself. They point to places like the edges of the Oswego district or some Portland outskirts where numerous people need bus transportation but the busses will never pay their way."

The article states that some have suggested that salesmanship would be the answer to declining revenue. To quote: "A special fare would be offered to increase patronage in off-peak hours. It would not be available during peak hours when equipment is loaded to capacity and beyond".

Portland Traction Company president, Gordon Steele, is quoted as replying: "That plan has been tried in various cities all over the county and it doesn't work. Patronage doesn't increase enough to make up for the cut in fares".

As this article is written, Portland's transit officials are planning to rebuild rail routes to Portland's suburbs, including Milwaukie, previously served. The monies required to complete these routes will be vastly larger than that required to rebuild existing right-of-ways. However, the writer of the article spoke true, as he wrote his final paragraph: "The easiest solution to the whole problem is for people who work in one place all day is to ride the busses.(sic) They will save money and nervous energy and at the same time help clear up the congestion that threatens to choke downtown Portland and business district, like that of almost every other big city. Will they take the situation seriously and help?" I'll have to scoot now--I like to listen to my favorite radio program while I drive home."

Even 20-20 foresight sometimes is just not enough. Another Oregonian newspaper clipping from the library's file is dated November 16, 1954, and is headlined: "PTC Cites Revenue Loss In Bid To Close Interurban Passenger Runs."

-Nick J. White

...and Congress Puts a Lid on It

(This article is supplemental to last month's about dumping on the BN)

National & Community Service Act passed by Congress in October contains provision which protects Amtrak against legal action due waste discharge from trains. New law requires 'Amtrak to retrofit cars with full-retention systems by October 1996 or remove from service, subject to available funding. Of 1,409 cars, 527 (mostly Amfleet I and II) are believed to already have proper equipment, and 534 (mostly Superliners) will be so equipped. Remaining 348 cars (mostly Heritage fleet) will be replaced by new equipment and retired.

(-Cinders)

As many of us are already aware, our interests are caught in the crossfire, adversely affecting the ability of the chapter to operate excursions.

Maglev is coming

A feasibility study is underway for a new international airport at Moses Lake, Washington. The former military field will be connected with Sea-Tac Airport by Maglev (magnetically levitated train), eventually to be extended to Spokane.

Also, there is renewed interest in a High Speed Rail system to unite Vancouver, Seattle and Portland.

Washington state is only one to receive federal funding for High Speed Rail in the 1990-91 federal budget (\$500,000)

(UTU News)

The BN is the largest consumer of diesel fuel in the nation after the US Navy.

(UTU News)

5

Spokane crews fix cabooses

6

Some were one step from the scrap yard.

Several couldn't even limp to Spokane on their own wheels.

But after Ed Barron and his crew are through with them, the battered old cabooses sparkle.

"It's a good feeling," he said, eyeing one of the gleaming green rehabilitation projects.

The way he sees it, he's doing right by a link to railroad history.

Barron is Superintendent of the Western Fruit Express train-car repair shop. Early this (last) year, the Burlington Northern Railroad which owns Western Fruit Express - selected Barron's outfit to renovate part of its aging fleet of cabooses.

By the end of December, 75 will have undergone

Many limp to the

shop, but leave

gleaming

an extensive mechanical make-over and sprucing up, inside and out.

A few of them rolled here from Kansas City. Others

have come from North Dakota, western Washington and points in between.

Some were 30-year-old burned out hulks. A few had been in wrecks. Those arrived on flat cars or cradled in gondolas.

Others were just neglected, tired and dirty. Really dirty.

"You wouldn't have put your pig in there," Barron said.

They all got stripped, sandblasted, and painted. They all got new wall liners, toilets, refrigerators, stoves and 97-channel radios. And they all got fitted with new or rebuilt underside parts, including an updated hydraulic shock-absorber that dramatically smooths the ride in the car that some veteran trainmen refer to as the bone-crusher.

Barron declined to discuss the cost of the work.

Many railroad observers had come to consider cabooses an en-

dangered species, another victim of technological change.

Throughout the 80's, they were gradually replaced by electronic sensors the perform some of the caboose-riders safety functions. And railroad-buff publications responded with a spate of sentimental farewell features.

But a Burlington Northern spokesman in Seattle said his railroad never intended to totally do away with them. And he said there are circumstances - short start-andstop runs in congested areas, for instance - when having a caboose on the back of the train is still advisable.

Many of Burlington Northern's 600 cabooses are in sorry shape, however. So Barron's crew got the

call. And the WFE shop, which mostly works on refrigerator cars, quickly geared up for a new challenge. "There have

been some headaches," Bar-

ron said. "A lot of the suppliers of equipment for cabooses have gone out of business because there has been no demand. So we had to scramble to find some things."

Still, he's delighted with the finished products. He likes showing them off.

"Everybody's proud," he said.

Each upgraded caboose leaves town wearing a small exterior decal that says the renovation was done in Spokane.

The WFE shop's work has earned raves from train crews and higher-ups as well.

"They've exceeded our expectations".

It is uncertain how many cabooses will be renovated in Spokane. It could be several hundred over the next few years.

Barron says keep 'em coming.

It's hard work. But for longtime railroaders such as himself, it's not just a lot of drilling, painting and welding. It's also a matter restoring dignity to same old friends.

"To me, a train looks naked without a caboose," Barron said. "And when I look out at the track and see one of the ones we worked on, well, it's nice."

> -by Paul Turner (Source - The Columbian, Vancouver, WA)

Why Red and Green?

Ever wonder why things are as they are? Example: Why are railroad signals Green, Yellow and Red? When did this start? An article in the "Christmas 1990" issue of The Coal Bucket form the Horseshoe Curve Chapter, NHRS, in Altoona, PA, reminded me that in earliest days of trains, green meant "Stop" and a clear or white light meant "Go". Why, I've never discovered. By the way, this is how the expression "Clear Block" came about.

The clear or white light was not used very long. It seems colored green lenses had a habit of getting broken, or whatever, showing a "clear" or "white" signal when actually the signal was showing a "Go" signal! So, after a few mishaps, someone suggested a change. The "clear" or "white" light should be abandoned.

Now, a new mystery. In a 180 degree turn, green was changed to mean "Go". Then, instead of brown, blue, or any other color, red was chosen for "stop".

Sometime about then, a third light was adopted...a yellow (sometimes more orange) came about indicated "slow" or "caution". So, after all this, my ole mind still asks the question...Why?

Any Ideas?

-Jerry Webb



Chapter Picnic

Full Moon in June Train Ride

June 28, 1991 7pm - 10pm

Lewis & Clark Railroad Battleground, Washington

Live Music Hot Dogs - Pop

Bring your friends and relatives Chapter membership not necessary

\$15.00 per couple - \$8.00 single Kids under 10 ride free with paying adult

NAME:	PHONE:			
ADDRESS:				
Number of adult Number of kids	s at \$15.00/couple s at \$8.00/single under 10 closed			
Mail to: ATTN: PICNIC	PNWC/NRHS Room 1, Union Station			
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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