

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB

P. O. Box 2391
Denver 1, Colorado

Newsletter No. 30

The February meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be held on Wednesday, February 14, 1962, at the Farmers Union Auditorium, East 16th Avenue and Sherman Street, Denver, at 8:00 p.m. Two movies will be shown: "The San Juan Rides Again" and "A Day in the Life of 641". These films, with background music, were produced by Ronnie Ruhoff, who is noted for the professional quality of his endeavors. Representatives of the Jr. Achievement Company sponsored by the Rio Grande will be available for contact about their Montezuma engine plaque, and the meeting also will mark the beginning of a series of sketches featuring two different members each month.

The D&RGW reports that well over \$118 million has been expended for road and equipment improvements in the 1947-61 period. Of this amount, \$88 million, or an average of \$5.9 million per year, is represented by locomotives and cars. New equipment to be added in 1962 at a cost of \$7.1 million will include 13 Model GP30 2250 h.p. diesel-electric locomotives (EMD), 200 70-ton triple open hopper cars with roller bearings, 27 50-ton 53'-6" reinforced bulkhead flat cars with roller bearings, and 100 53'-6" 70-ton insulated damage-free box cars equipped with loaders and roller bearings. This is all part of an improvement program amounting to \$9.8 for 1962.

Contractors are now preparing bids for laying twelve miles of narrow-gauge track for the re-located D&RGW line near Arboles, Colorado, between Chama and Durango. Bids are to be in by February 15, 1962. The job is to be completed before July, 1962.

Many, many members perform services for our club--services which are necessary to every smooth-running organization but which often go unrecognized. The task of folding, stuffing, and sorting 900 newsletters for mailing every month, for example, has been capably and graciously performed for the past 3 years by a retired D&SL engineer--Bert Fullman. One of Dave Moffat's men, Bert can tell some pretty exciting tales of his runs up "The Hill" to Corona. Nonetheless, he has attended to the chore of handling these newsletters every month, fair weather and foul, and we wish we could thank him enough.

We are always eager to receive communications from the membership. We will pass along this anecdote sent in by Kenneth Lampert of Missoula, Montana:

About 2 miles east of Bonner, Montana, a beaver chewed his way through a tree adjacent to the CMSTP&P main line, felling the tree across the trolley lines. An eastbound time freight came along shortly, taking the tree and about 1/2 mile of trolley lines with it before stopping, all the time producing a brilliant electrical display that was visible 12 miles away. Along with the flashes was considerable noise resembling thunder. The train was able to continue on its way several minutes after the accident, however. The beaver? He was nowhere to be found.

The sub-zero weather recently enveloping Colorado resulted in a few minor derailments and temporary freeze-ups on the railroads. A rock slide near Rollinsville, Colorado, derailed about 10 cars of a west-bound D&RGW freight in weather reportedly 40 degrees below zero. The derailment closed the line from Denver to the Moffat tunnel, thus forcing the rerouting of one westbound California Zephyr and an eastbound Prospector. The line was reopened later that same day. On the D&RGW narrow-gauge it was necessary to run Rotary OY with two engines over Cumbres pass. January 24th and 25th were required for the job from Alamosa to Chama, with return on January 26th.

The C&S rotary plow was called out January 11 to open the line from Leadville to Climax. 2-8-0 #641 ably provided the motive power, and little difficulty was had despite two slides of 250' and 500' in length. Snow in these slides was 8' to 10' in depth. The trip up was made in less than 3 hours, despite derailments by a balky caboose. Since #641 will be on this run at least until May of this year, the chances are good that she will be called out again this winter to couple up to the rotary. This is the first time this year that the rotary has been called, #641 being able to handle the snow so far on its regular run to Climax despite a reported total snowfall of 150" up there.

Colorado's Public Utilities Commission recently ruled that the D&RGW must continue operation of passenger trains Nos. 9 & 10 from Denver to Craig through Steamboat Springs. This line is part of the original Denver, Northwestern & Pacific (D&SL) which was merged into the D&RGW in 1947. The railroad had sought to terminate the service as uneconomical. The Commission ruled that passenger service to northwestern Colorado should continue since "the people of that area have contributed to the wealth and success of the D&RGW by helping to finance the Moffat tunnel." The Commission concluded that there is a substantial usage of the train service considering the sparsely settled population of the region, and the ski resorts and coal, oil, and gas resources under development.

The Krauss-Maffei diesel-hydraulic German locomotives being tested by the D&RGW and SP were featured in a front page story in the WALL STREET JOURNAL January 5. The paper said other American railroads and locomotive producers are impressed by the diesel-hydraulic units.

According to the story by William M. Carley, "The diesel-hydraulic is said to improve traction over diesel-electric because the engine is some 30% heavier for its size and because all wheels operate from the same power source."

"Rio Grande tests showed that the German engine's wheels could apply a pulling force equal in tons to 24.5% of its own weight of 165 tons without slipping. That's some 50% more pull than a 130-ton diesel-electric," the report continued.

The 4,000 h.p. K-M diesels are featured in a special story in the February issue of TRAINS Magazine. The story, by TRAINS editor David P. Morgan, describes performance of the German units handling a train west from Pueblo.

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At the present time, numerous books about railroading in the Rocky Mountain area are in various stages of completion. Among the volumes now being prepared, wholly or in part by members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, are:

"The Moffat Road", by E. T. Bollinger and Fred Bauer. Now in page proofs, it is to be published in February by Alan Swallow's Sage Books. The book will include about 400 illustrations and will be 8-1/2" x 11" in size.

"Switzerland Trail of America", by Forest Crossen. With 400 pages, 8-1/2" x 11", this story of the remarkable little narrow-gauge system into the mountains west of Boulder, Colorado, will be published this spring by Pruett Press of Boulder.

"Rio Grande, Mainline of the Rockies", by Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg. This sequel to "Narrow Gauge in the Rockies" will cover the Rio Grande's standard-gauge operation during the age of steam from 1890 to about 1940. As announced in the February "TRAINS", the book is to be published by Howell-North. Mr. Beebe states the book "is now well on in manufacturing".

"Colorado Midland", by Morris Cafky. Morris says the first draft of his manuscript is complete and that he is now working on photo captions. The publication date is as yet indefinite.

"Steam, Steel & Limiteds", by William Kratville. This is a saga of the great varnish era in the 20's, 30's, and 40's. Press work is now underway, with publication promised before the end of winter.

"The Giant's Ladder", by Harold Boner. This is the next publication by members of the staff of TRAINS magazine, and is announced in the February TRAINS as THE book on David Moffat. Several members of the Club have contributed to this work by a professor at the University of Buffalo.

"Denver and Rio Grande", by Robert G. Athearn. This will be the official history of the railroad, by a Professor of History at the University of Colorado and author of a number of outstanding books about Western history. With publication by the Yale University Press expected this year, the book will be well illustrated with rare photos from the files of the D&RGW and the large collections in the history department at the University.

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While we're on the topic of books: At the annual meeting of the State Historical Society of Colorado recently, Dr. James Grafton Rogers, Chairman of the Board of Directors, gave exceedingly high praise to Mac Poor's original work, "Denver, South Park and Pacific," saying that it was one of the most outstanding scholarly contributions to the history of the Rocky Mountain Region of which he had knowledge.

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The following is a UPI release from Wilmette, Illinois: When his truck stalled on a grade crossing Tuesday, Dale C. Widenhoft told police he ran up the track and waved at an oncoming train in an effort to stop it. Widenhoft said the engineer genially waved back, and the C&NW freight train demolished the truck.

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