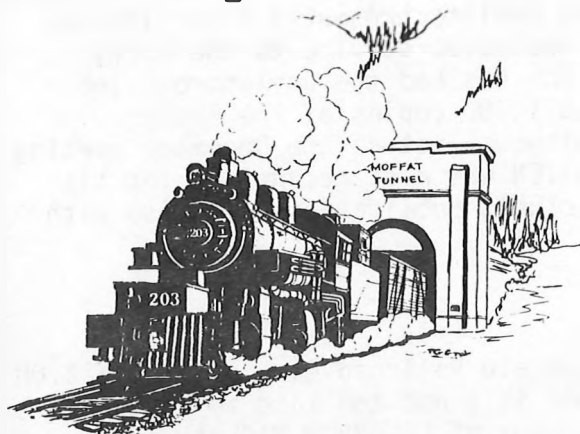


Rocky Mountain Rail Report



The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

P.O. Box 2391
January, 1981

Denver, Colorado 80201
No. 256

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, January 13, 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: COLORADO LIVE-STEAM

The program at the January meeting promises to be outstanding, with Kent Bolerjack presenting a selection of motion pictures with lots of local interest. Kent will show his color and sound movies featuring the live-steamers in action at Black Forest near Colorado Springs, as well as steam operations on Ralph McAllister's 14 1/8" gauge railroad empire in Boulder. In addition, scenes between Georgetown and Silver Plume on the Georgetown Loop Railroad will be featured. Come on out for an entertaining time with the sights and sounds of some extraordinary railroading in Colorado.

* * * * *

The December meeting featured a full evening of activities, and was so busy that there was not even time for the showing of Erwin Chaim's MYSTERY FEATURE. The mystery now is just when it will be presented. Following the election of officers, several books and other valuable items were sold, with Erwin Chaim conducting the auction. Spirited bidding highlighted this session and, as expected, the two sets of signatures from the "Pictorial Supplement to Denver South Park & Pacific," brought the evening's highest bids. In all, \$334 was raised with this auction, and the sale of individual signatures and pictures from the same publication brought in another \$75, all of which goes to the club's Publication fund. Congratulations and thanks go to all those folks who donated items for the auction, as well as to the people who purchased them. And, to Erwin, a big "Well done!" for a most entertaining and productive job as auctioneer. And we also want to express appreciation to the members who provided the delicious refreshments, which were enjoyed by all at the end of the meeting.

* * * * *

OFFICERS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB FOR 1981 are: President, Jim Ranniger; Vice-President, Erwin Chaim; Secretary, Bill Gordon; and Treasurer, Ardie Schoeninger. Jim Ranniger gave up his seat on the club's Board of Directors, to assume the presidency, and Al Dunton was elected to fill that one-year term. Carl Carlson, Bill Gould, and Keith Kirby join Al and holdover members Jim Trowbridge and Pete West, on the club's governing board.

* * * * *

MEMBERS HONORED - At the December meeting, President Ed Gerlits presented a Certificate of Merit to BOB GRISWOLD, in recognition of his dedicated service to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club. For the past 12 years, Bob has had the unglamorous job of addressing, folding, and mailing the more than 1,000 copies of the Rocky Mountain Rail Report that go out each month. Although not at the December meeting to receive his Certificate of Merit, BILL VAN PATTEN was also recognized for his long service, especially in the handling of the club's publications and also with the newsletter.

* * * * *

DUES ARE DUE!! - If you have not sent in your Rocky Mountain Railroad Club dues of \$12.00 for 1981, why not get them in the mail today? And it's not too late to participate in the book drawing, with the first prize a copy of COLORADO MIDLAND, by Morris Cafky. Chances are only \$2.00 each, with all proceeds from this event going to the club's Equipment Fund.

* * * * *

SEVERAL BIDS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED in the mail auction, of signatures from the club's 1959 publication, "Pictorial Supplement to Denver South Park & Pacific," by Kindig, Haley and Poor. This unbound set of pages from the original printing comprises virtually a complete copy of the popular book. Send your bids to: The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club; P.O. Box 2391; Denver, Colorado 80201; and to facilitate handling, please print the word AUCTION in the lower left hand corner of the envelope. But don't delay! Closing date for this auction is February 1, 1981, and bids postmarked after that date will not be considered. Results of the mail auction will be announced in the March newsletter.

* * * * *

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS for the club's two-day excursion to Glenwood Springs via the Rio Grande Zephyr. Enjoy the beauty of the Rocky Mountains in winter from the comfort of the streamlined coaches, dining car, or Vista-Dome of America's highest rated passenger train. Hotel accommodations, Saturday night dinner, and a variety of activities are included in the ticket price of this February 21 and 22 trip. But, don't delay! Reservations and information are available from Westland Travel Service, 19797 West Colfax, Lakewood, Colorado 80215, Telephone - (303) 232-6600.

* * * * *

WAY BACK IN 1971, the Union Pacific Railroad had on its roster, 83 diesel-electric passenger locomotives that had seen service on such name trains as THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, THE PORTLAND ROSE, and THE CHALLENGER. That was the year that Amtrak took over passenger service on the UP, and all but eight of those diesels were sold. Now, after nine years of duty on Union Pacific special passenger trains, the eight units are being retired and will be replaced by UP freight locomotives. These eight EMD-built locomotives are Models E-8 and E-9, have two 12-cylinder engines, and are capable of maximum speed of 98 MPH. No. 951, a Model E9, built in 1954, will be retained by the railroad and stored in the Cheyenne roundhouse.

* * * * *

COMING EVENTS - Here is an early schedule of events for the 1981 Rocky Mountain Railroad Club year. Watch for details on these activities, as well as others to be announced.

February 21 and 22 - Excursion to Glenwood Springs via the Rio Grande Zephyr.

May 16 - Work Day on the club's equipment on display at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden.

June 21 - Annual outing on the High Country Railroad at Heritage Square.

July ?? - Watch for details on a Union Pacific excursion, tentatively set for July.

August 8 - A hike on the grade of one of Colorado's abandoned railroads.

September 4 through 7 - a 4-day trip, via Amtrak, to the 32nd Annual Reunion of the Midwest Old Settlers & Threshers Association at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

October 10 - The club's annual banquet at Henrici's, in the Hilton Inn.

* * * * *

RGZ F-UNITS TO GO!?! - Depending on who one talks to, the days of the F units powering the Rio Grande Zephyr may or may not be coming to a close. The railroad reportedly is considering plans to scrap the locomotives and replace them with more fuel-efficient, less troublesome freight units. The changeover would take place sometime in 1981.

* * * * *

COLORADO-UTAH ELECTRIFIED RAILROAD PLANNED - a 35-mile rail line, to link the Deserado coal mine near Rangely, Colorado to a 400-megawatt power plant, to be built near Bonanza, Utah, is now in the planning stages. The coal will travel from the mine by conveyor for the first 3½ miles, to a 40,000 ton storage building, from which the coal will be loaded into unit trains consisting of thirty one 100-ton cars. The rail line will be built at no more than a two percent grade over what is described as "rugged terrain." Initially, the line will carry 1.35 million tons of coal a year, and ultimately, 2.7 million tons, or enough to fuel two 400-megawatt units at Bonanza. An electric railroad was decided upon for environmental advantages over diesels, and because of rising fuel costs. Construction is expected to commence in the spring of 1982.

* * * * *

OH, HEARTBURN!!! - The Rio Grande is in the process of making arrangements to lease its distinctive Glenwood Springs depot for conversion into a restaurant. Only a small portion would be retained for accommodating the many passengers that use the building at train time.

* * * * *

THE RIO GRANDE SKI TRAIN to Winter Park, will begin operating on January 10, and continue until the end of March. The stop at Rocky has been eliminated. If Colorado doesn't start getting some more of that white stuff pretty soon, there may not be much skiing up in the hills. In mid-December, we were enjoying days with the temperature hitting the mid-60's around Denver!!!

* * * * *

THE SAN JUAN

DO YOU REMEMBER where you were, and what you were doing on January 31, 1951? Probably not, unless you were among the people who rode one of the trains making the final runs of America's last regularly scheduled narrow gauge passenger trains, the San Juan. Perhaps it was ironic that during a period when freight business was booming on the D&RG Railroad's Alamosa-Durango line, passenger service should come to an end.

The railroad had sought for some time to discontinue operating the San Juan, citing "heavy losses directly attributable to the unpatronized passenger train." The Colorado PUC finally agreed, ruling that the passenger train filled no public need, and that its elimination would help ease the heavy financial drain of the line and justify retention of freight service.

Through narrow gauge passenger service from Denver to Durango and on to Silverton had been begun by the Rio Grande in September of 1887, although connections for Durango via Pueblo had been available for several years. And travelers rode between Denver & Durango in narrow gauge Pullman cars until 1900, when the third rail between the capital city and Pueblo was removed.

In 1936 and 1937, the D&RGW rebuilt 14 locomotives and 38 passenger cars for its narrow gauge trains. Open platform cars were enclosed with vestibule ends while electric lights and steam heat made their first appearance. Overstuffed reclining seats were installed in the 5 narrow gauge parlor cars, and a 4-seat dining area and galley were built into the 3 parlor cars assigned the San Juan. A ride on one of these luxury parlor cars between Alamosa and Durango was available to the rail traveler for 50¢ over the cost of the coach ticket!

After the last San Juan had been run, a 2-car passenger train did operate daily between Chama and Dulce, until the New Mexico PUC authorized its discontinuance on May 22, 1951. And the San Juan's standard gauge connection to Pueblo and Denver, the Colorado-New Mexico Express, was also eliminated on January 31, 1951. Its successor, the daylight San Luis, made the Alamosa to Pueblo run for almost 3 years, before it, too, joined the long list of discontinued passenger trains.

Table 3		<i>Rio Grande</i>			
		DENVER, COLORADO SPRINGS, PUEBLO, WALSENBURG, ALAMOSA, DURANGO, AND SILVERTON VIA LA VETA PASS			
READ DOWN		STATIONS		READ UP	
No. 15-115	Miles			Elevation	No. 116-16
* 7 30 PM	0.0	Lv DENVER	Ar	5280	* 7 15 AM
9 45 "	74.9	Lv COLORADO SPRINGS	Ar	5989	5 00 "
10 50 "	119.4	Ar PUEBLO	Lv	4668	3 50 "
* 11 25 PM	119.4	Lv PUEBLO	Ar	4668	* 2 45 AM
f 11 37 "	121.4	Ar MINNEQUA	Lv	4822	f 2 15 "
f . . .	134.0	Ar Marnel	Lv	5130	f . . .
f . . .	142.7	Ar Cedarwood	Lv	5606	f . . .
f . . .	153.8	Ar Lascar	Lv	5698	f . . .
f . . .	164.5	Ar Sandy	Lv	6007	f . . .
1 00 AM	175.0	Ar WALSENBURG	Lv	6187	12 45 AM
1 00 AM	175.0	Lv WALSENBURG	Ar	6187	12 45 AM
1 40 "	190.3	Ar LA VETA	Lv	7024	12 15 "
1 50 "	190.3	Lv LA VETA	Ar	7024	12 10 "
3 41 "	227.7	Ar Fort Garland	Lv	7936	10 23 PM
3 51 "	232.4	Ar Blanca	Lv	7751	10 13 "
4 30 "	251.7	Ar ALAMOSA	Lv	7546	9 40 "
No. 215					
The San Juan					
7 00 AM	251.7	Lv ALAMOSA	Ar	7546	8 30 PM
7 30 "	266.2	Lv La Jara	Lv	7609	7 59 "
7 45 "	273.3	Ar Romeo	Lv	7736	7 42 "
8 05 "	280.3	Ar ANTONITO	Lv	7888	7 25 "
8 05 "	280.3	Lv ANTONITO	Ar	7888	7 25 "
f 9 09 "	306.1	Ar Sublette	Lv	9276	f 6 15 "
f 9 22 "	310.5	Ar Toltec	Lv	9465	f 6 01 "
f 9 45 "	318.4	Ar Osier	Lv	9637	f 5 35 "
10 20 "	330.6	Ar Cumbres	Lv	10015	5 02 "
11 10 "	344.1	Ar CHAMA	Lv	7863	4 05 "
11 15 "	344.1	Lv CHAMA	Ar	7863	4 00 "
f 11 59 "	363.5	Ar Monero	Lv	7252	f 3 04 "
12 18 PM	369.6	Ar Lumberton	Lv	6856	2 47 "
12 27 "	373.3	Ar Dulce	Lv	6779	2 36 "
1 21 "	390.4	Ar Gato	Lv	6271	1 49 "
1 56 "	403.6	Ar Arboles	Lv	6013	1 13 "
f 2 15 "	411.0	Ar Allison	Lv	6222	12 56 "
2 53 "	425.7	Ar Ignacio	Lv	6437	12 22 "
4 05 "	451.5	Ar DURANGO	Lv	6520	11 15 AM
No. 461					
Mixed					
9 15 AM	451.5	Lv DURANGO	Ar	6520	5 00 PM
10 26 "	469.1	Ar Rockwood	Lv	7367	3 53 "
(Canon of the Rio de Las Animas)					
12 40 PM	496.7	Ar SILVERTON	Lv	9300	1 40 PM

REFERENCE NOTES TABLE 3

* Daily. f Stops on flag. □ Meal Station.
 ¶ Wednesday Only.

EQUIPMENT—TABLE 3

Train 15-115-215	Train 216-116-16
+ Standard Sleeper —Between Denver and Alamosa (14), 12 Sec. 1 DR.	
+ Chair Car —Between Denver and Alamosa.	
Coach —Between Alamosa and Durango.	
Parlor Car (Dinette Service) —Between Alamosa and Durango (Railroad-owned).	
+ Air Conditioned.	
Trains 461 and 462—The Silverton	
Coach: —Between Durango and Silverton.	



Denver & Rio Grande engine #477 with Train #116, the eastbound San Juan, wends its way up Combres Pass near Cresco, Colorado, on a beautiful July 2, 1941. (R. H. Kindig).

* * * * *

And so, with little fanfare and no public ceremony at either Alamosa or Durango, the last trips were made. Even the expected crowd of passengers for the last day of operations was less than had been anticipated. The folks boarding the two final trains had been greeted by sub-zero temperatures and later in the day, found snow to depths of five feet at the higher altitudes. Each train was longer than usual, with five coaches in the consist. Engine 484 pulled the eastbound San Juan, and was double-headed with the 488 from Chama to the summit at Combres. The 488 had handled the westbound train from Alamosa to Chama, where the 478 took over. On the westbound train, the parlor car, CHAMA, was used as a business car, carrying railroad officials and blocking the view of the paying passengers riding the parlor car, ALAMOSA. It had been planned to turn the CHAMA on the wye at Gato, for the return trip to Alamosa on the eastbound train, but that idea was dropped. The two trains did meet at Gato, a melancholy stop, where pictures were snapped and some of the passengers changed trains for the return trip.

The GREEN LIGHT, employee newspaper of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, gave extensive coverage to the last San Juan runs. A front page column of pictures was headed, "Trip to Oblivion," while the adjacent story was headlined, "'San Juan' has 16 Passengers on Final Run." The feature article and photo captions made much of the terrific cost the railroad had suffered in maintaining passenger service on the poorly patronized narrow gauge train. And the author wrote that the San Juan "... made its final trips between Alamosa and Durango, and joined the handcart, the covered wagon and the Concord Coach on the pages of history."

It was near midnight when Engine 488 brought the 8-car San Juan into a bitterly-cold Alamosa on that January 31, and 70 years of passenger service on the Rio Grande narrow gauge came to an end. It's interesting that, today the San Juan is probably more popular and well known than when it was running. It truly lives on the pages of history, but in a special section, all its own, where the mountain air is crisp and fresh, the scenery spectacular, and it's three feet between the rails.

* * * * *

AT A TIME WHEN STEAM LOCOMOTIVES are being restored for at least limited service all over the country, a midwestern company has retired the last of its operating steam power. Northwestern Steel & Wire Co., of Sterling, Illinois, has replaced its No. 73 with a diesel locomotive for switching the company's mill yard along the Rock River. No. 73 was built in 1929, and saw service on the Grand Trunk Western before being acquired by Northwestern in 1961. Now company officials are trying to find homes for No. 73 and 13 more steam locomotives owned by the company, only 5 of which are still in working condition. One of the engines will go to a local museum, and a Midwestern spokesman expressed the hope that the others can be sold and will not have to be scrapped. With the retirement of No. 73, only the Crab Orchard & Egyptian Railroad in Marion, Illinois, now operates steam power in the regular movement of freight.

* * * * *

NOW AVAILABLE AT RETAIL OUTLETS IN THE AREA, is COLORADO'S LONELIEST RAILROAD, THE SAN LUIS SOUTHERN, by P. R. "Bob" Griswold. This 190-page book tells the story of not only the 31-mile long railroad, but of the people of the San Luis Valley. Published by Pruett Publishing Company of Boulder, with 250 photographs, maps, bibliography and index, and priced at \$29.95.

* * * * *

BASED ON COMBINED 1979 STATISTICS for the Burlington Northern Railroad and the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway, the new BN will look like this now that the merger of the two carriers has taken place. A total of 64,582 employees will work with 3,371 locomotives and 114,435 freight cars, operating on 29,226 miles of track, and producing operating revenues and sales of 3.7 billion dollars, for an operating income of 292 million dollars.

* * * * *

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

Chuck Powell
P. O. Box 2670
Pasadena, CA 91105

FIRST CLASS MAIL