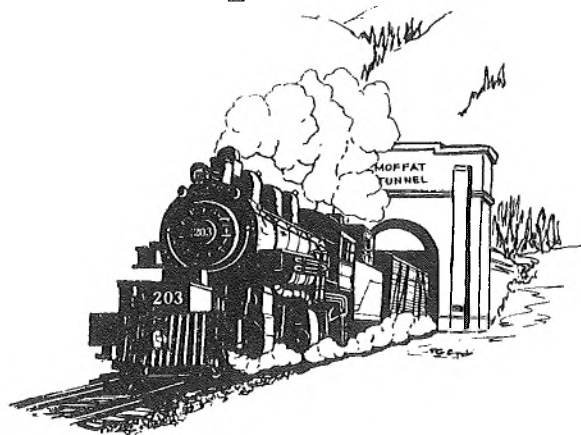


Rocky Mountain Rail Report



The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

P. O. Box 2391 Denver, Colorado 80201
April, 1977 No. 211

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

Editor - - - Darrell T. Arndt

MEETING NOTICE: Date . . . Tuesday, April 12, 1977
Time . . . 7:45 P.M.
Place . . . Southeast wing of Christ Episcopal Church, 2900 S.
University at Bates; offstreet parking at rear
(east) of meeting hall.

PROGRAM NOTES: For the April meeting, Jim Lenahan of Colorado Springs will present three motion picture films for our viewing pleasure. One is called "Modern Coal Burning Steam Locomotives," and is a professionally produced color/sound film made in 1944, by the Norfolk & Western Railroad. It shows in detail, how they built from the ground up, a modern locomotive for service on a Class I railroad of that era. Another film Jim plans to show, will be "Operation Fast Freight," also a professionally made film in color and sound. The Norfolk & Western made it in 1951, primarily for shippers, to show them how their freight is handled and expedited on the railroad. A third film is in black and white, and consists of some amateur footage showing steam locomotives on the famous Horseshoe Curve of the Pennsylvania Railroad. This program is definitely one to look forward to.

A delightful sampling of recent steam, diesel and cable powered rail operations was given at our last meeting by Jim and Bruce Ranniger. Their comprehensive movie presentation touched on many railroad attractions that are still available for perusal by the roving rail enthusiast. In addition to local attractions such as the 8444 and the Georgetown Loop, we saw Ralph McAllister's 14½" gauge in Boulder, snowplow operations on the C&TS and the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club's weekend on the Cripple Creek & Victor last year. San Francisco cable cars were observed on the steep hills of that city, some footage was included of the beautiful Royal Hudson locomotive in British Columbia and we saw the meticulously maintained equipment and grounds of the Lahaina, Kaanapali and Pacific on Hawaii. A highlight of the program was unusual views taken from the cab of the Canadian Pacific's CANADIAN as it worked its way through that famous railroad engineering feat of spiral tunnels in the scenic Canadian Rockies. A tip of the conductor's hat to Jim and Bruce for a fine showing.

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THE DRAWING for the DENVER SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC MEMORIAL EDITIONS will be held at the April meeting. Chances are available by filling out a dues notice and submitting it with your dues. \$1.00 provides a chance at both books. Whether you desire a chance or not, please remember to send \$4.00 for dues, if it is still outstanding.

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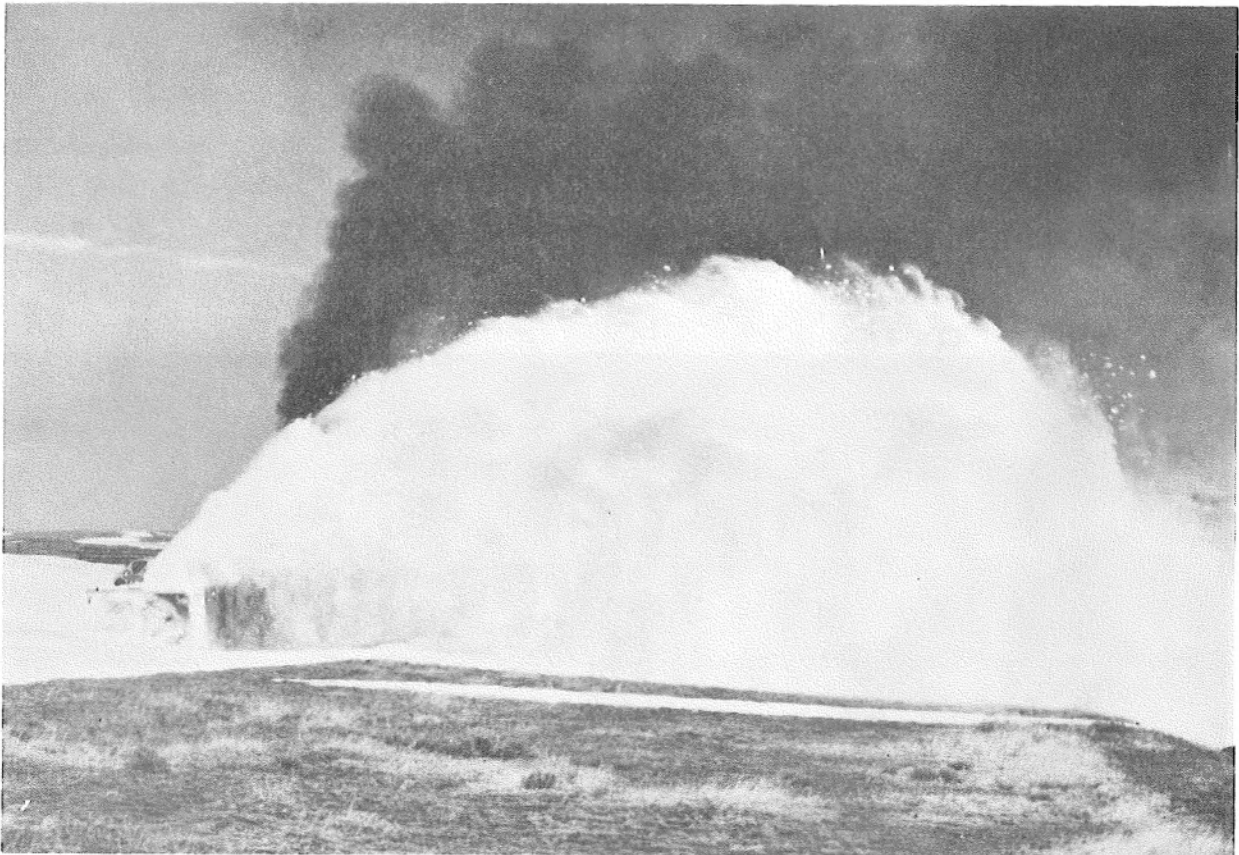
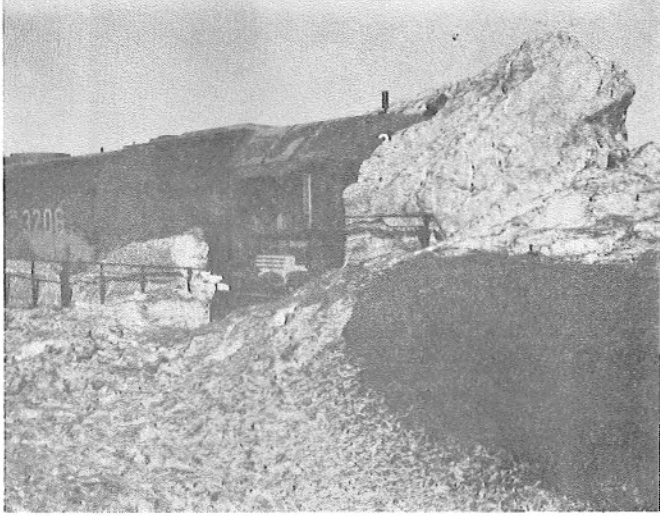
AS OF THE END OF MARCH, no word had been received from the Union Pacific as to whether the 8444 had passed its boiler inspection and would be ready for service.

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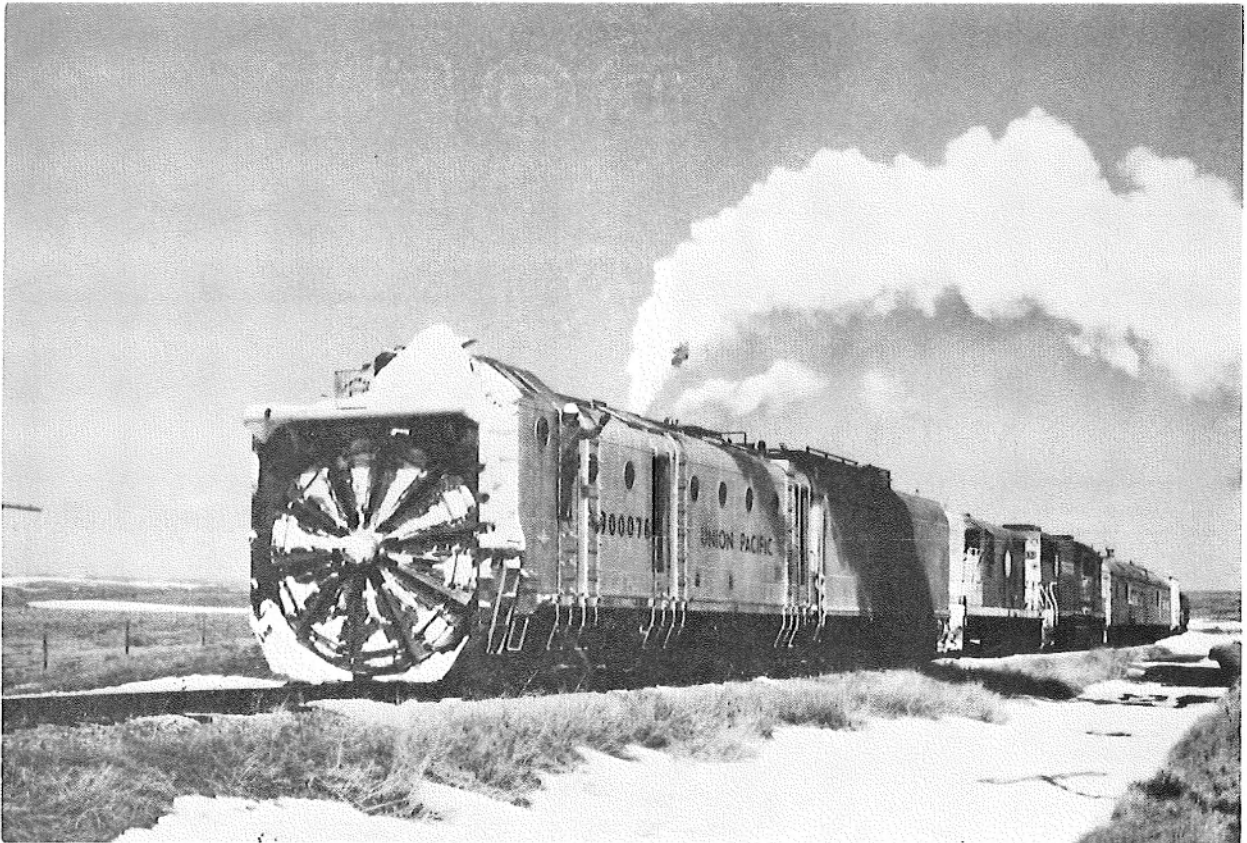
THE BLIZZARD OF '77 - Colorado, like most of the United States, has been experiencing a rather unusual winter. The critical problem in the Rocky Mountain region is the extremely dry winter, both in the mountains and on the plains. This pattern was abruptly interrupted on March 10, when a powerful winter storm descended upon the region. The moisture was welcomed, but on the plains the storm, unfortunately, turned into a full scale blizzard, causing death, destruction and discomfort. The worst in many years, the wind and drifting snows blocked highways north, east and south of Denver, some for many days, and created statistics that reflect the storm's intensity - 10,000 power poles knocked down; 500 miles of transmission line wrecked; 39,000 cattle, 13,000 hogs and 6,300 other types of livestock killed; fence, farm buildings, machinery and thousands of acres of wheat and grain destroyed; and so on. The railroads took it on the chin also, with a number of lines blocked for up to a week. Amtrak trains were delayed or annulled at Denver, McCook and Lincoln, Nebraska because of drifts on the Chicago-Denver main line and BN freight units were seen arriving Denver with snow piled high on their roofs from their encounter with Old Man Winter. The Union Pacific had to send a rotary to North Platte to clean out the big yard there, and another rotary headed south to Colorado from Cheyenne for one of the most interesting snow removal operations to be seen in the state for many years.

During the height of the storm, an eastbound freight on the UP Denver-Limon line hit a drift just west of Bennett, Colorado and became stuck tight. Farther east, another UP train became stranded near Cheyenne Wells. Out east of Limon on the Rock Island, a plow train from Goodland, Kansas entered a cut about a mile west of Genoa, Colorado and derailed, flipping RI wedge plow No. 95583 over and shortening it by about six feet - no injuries fortunately. To clean out the Denver-Limon line, the UP dispatched Rotary No. 900076 down on the morning of March 14, to begin work, eventually working as far east as Sharon Springs, Kansas, where it met the other rotary that had come down from its North Platte chores. It had no sooner returned to Cheyenne, than the Rock Island requested the use of the plow to open its Limon-Colorado Springs line. So back it went, arriving in Limon on Friday, March 18. Starting right to work, it finished up Tuesday and then returned to Cheyenne. Built about 1949, the oil burning steam powered machine that hadn't seen service since the winter of 1967, put on quite a show as it slowly chewed through drift after drift.

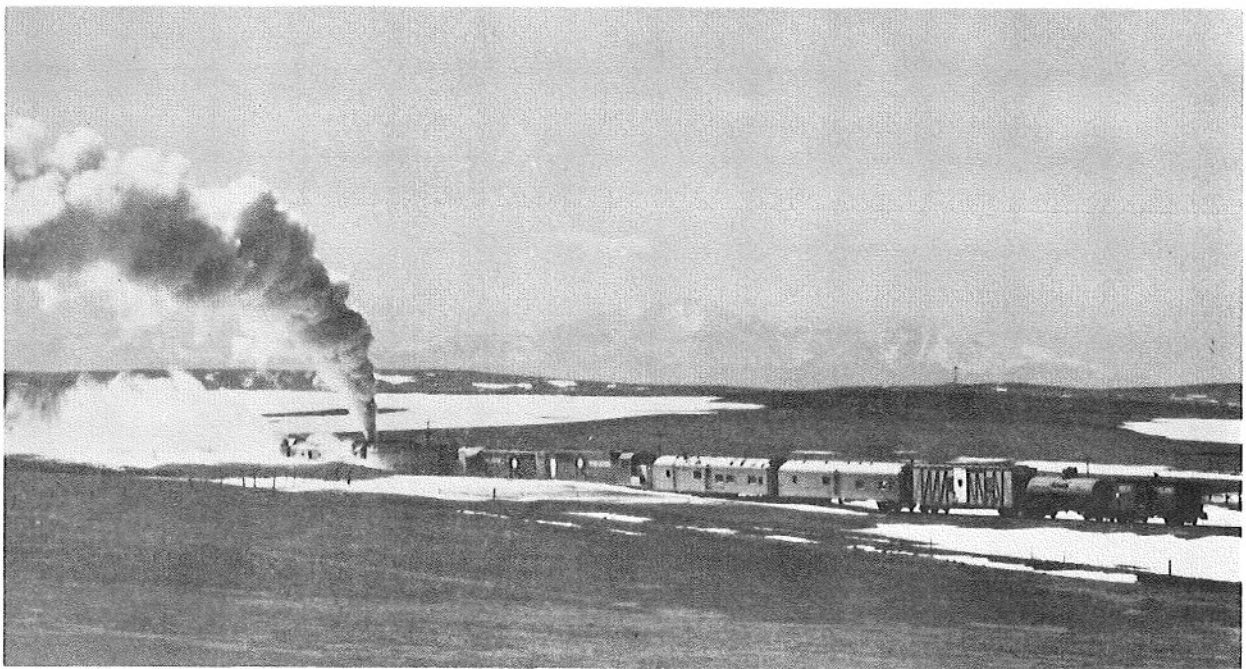
Here we have a few scenes of some of the "action" that week. The two photos at the top of the next page are through the courtesy of Chester Venter, of THE LEDGER in Bennett and show workmen digging out a UP freight just east of that community. One unit has been removed and efforts turn toward the lead engine, a Missouri Pacific locomotive in "pool" service. Topsoil blown by the wind covers part of the drift.



Union Pacific Rotary Snowplow No. 900076 digs into a drift just east of Calhan, Colorado. Unlike the "traditional" scene of a rotary working through miles of deep snow in a raging storm, this operation took place in pleasant weather with the plow sometimes traveling across hundreds of yards of bare ground before encountering the next remnant of the blizzard.



Resting between drifts!



Under beautiful skies and with Pikes Peak as a faint backdrop 45 miles away, the rotary extra works towards Colorado Springs. The train consisted of the plow and tender, two Rock Island diesels, two U.P. crew cars, equipment car, tank car and Rock Island caboose.

PIKES PEAK IN MAY - Arrangements have been completed for a reserved train to burnish the rails and rack of the Pikes Peak Cog Railway on Saturday, May 14, 1977. This special will leave Manitou Springs at 1:10 P.M. and return about 4:30 P.M. Those who wish to peek in the shops should arrive a bit earlier. Several stops will be made on the ascent for those who would like to take photos, build a snowman (quickly), look for gold, or whatever else strikes their fancy.

The same "rock bottom" fare as last year will be charged - \$8.50 for adults and \$4.25 for children (ages 5-11). Tickets should be ordered in advance, of course, using the form at the end of the newsletter, or a slip of paper with the same info. Reservations can also be made for a table at Giuseppe's Old Depot Restaurant. So set aside Saturday, May 14, for yourself and friends, and head to Colorado Springs for a real relaxing afternoon!!

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PLANS FOR THE AMTRAK TRIP to the Midwest Old Settlers and Thresher's Reunion at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa over the Labor Day weekend, are being finalized and will be detailed soon in the newsletter. It looks to be a real fun weekend AND at a very reasonable price (would we do it any other way??).

* * * * *

IN A FREAK AND TRAGIC ACCIDENT, Lyle K. Fulkerson and his 15-year-old son, Lyle E., were killed March 28 by a run-away box car on the ASSOCIATED RAILROADS line in Lakewood. The freight car rolled some 28 blocks before hitting their automobile at a street crossing. Lyle was the overseer of the reconstruction of Tiny Town and its miniature railroad near Denver.

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TO LEND A HAND at the Colorado Railroad Museum in maintaining its grounds, the club has decided to assist in weed control and grass cutting during the summer months. To do this, several lawnmowers will be needed, plus a few other miscellaneous tools and a little "elbow grease." Last summer a group of club volunteers found that a minimum of two or three mowers should be working to accomplish the necessary cutting in one day. So...we would be very receptive to the donation of a used mower(s) for use at the museum. The only request would be that the machine can use straight gas, is a rotary type, and would need, at the worst, only minimum repair work. If you would like to help, and find during "spring cleaning," a machine you could contribute to the club, contact an officer at the meeting, or please call Carl Carlson at 985-0975 or Darrell Arndt at 321-2723 in the evenings.

* * * * *

WORK AT DENVER'S UNION STATION is about completed on a new baggage check-in claim area. Remodeled from the ex-ladies restroom and lounge, the facility provides increased counter and luggage pick-up space. Two openings were cut in the east wall of the main waiting room, and a door was cut in the outside wall for baggage carts. Part of the men's room was walled off and converted for the ladies' use. A new window-washing machine for the San Francisco Zephyr was also acquired recently with the capability of raising its washing arm to the height of the windows on the new bi-level equipment to be placed in service through Denver.

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THE RIO GRANDE'S dome-lounge-observation "Silver Sky," returned to service the first week of March. The new lounge area that replaced several of the bedrooms increases the car's capacity with the addition of 13 more chairs.... the unusual nine-car consist of the Ski Train was expanded on March 12 with the addition of a dome car and dome-buffet-lounge, "Silver Shop," to accommodate the Winter Park Recreation Association's ride to Winter Park.

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(The SWAP 'N SHOP will be included next month)

JAMES R. TROWBRIDGE, President

BILL GORDON, Secretary

EDWARD F. GERLITS, Vice President

CARL E. C. CARLSON, Treasurer

ORDER BLANK

I really can't think of a better way to start off the summer, than to ride with the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club on their special Manitou & Pikes Peak Cog Railway trip up snow-capped (hopefully) Pikes Peak on May 14, 1977.

Enclosed is a check or money order in the amount of \$ _____ for _____ adult tickets and _____ kiddies tickets (ages 5-11); adult fare - \$8.50 and kids - \$4.25. My name and address is:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP _____

Also, please make reservations for _____ hungry people at Giuseppe's Old Depot Restaurant for 6:00 P.M. that day. I understand that selection and payment of dinner will be on an individual basis.

Orders should be sent to PIKES PEAK COG RAILWAY TICKET ORDER, ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB, P. O. BOX 2391, DENVER, COLORADO 80201.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN



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