

The Scrambler

Volume 21, No. 1

September 2007

Monthly News letter of the
Arkansas-Boston Mountains Chapter, National Railway Historical Society

CHAPTER MINUTES

August 16, 2007

The regular scheduled meeting of the Arkansas-Boston Mountain Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on August 16, 2007 by President Gary McCullah, at the Shiloh Museum General Store in Springdale, AR. There were 22 members present. The minutes from the July 2007 meeting were approved as stated in the *Scrambler* dated August 2007.

National Director, Chuck Girard, stated no news since the last meeting. Mr. Girard stated he was going to Chattanooga, TN next week to attend the National Convention.

Editor, Bill Merrifield, stated he wants to keep the *Scrambler* at 8 pages with large readable print. He stated he has been relying on 1ST class postage rather than the bulk rate. Although the latter is a less expensive, 1st class allows quicker delivery time to fit his schedule. Mr. Merrifield brought examples of other clubs newsletters and compared their quality to the *Scrambler*. Some of the chapters do not publish their minutes. He felt that it is important to our membership to do so. Mr. Merrifield also stated he tries to stay with historical railroading rather than current railroad traffic although he considers the A&M to be both and will report on both.

Treasurer, The financial report wasn't read. Mr. McCullah stated the balance hasn't changed from the previous meeting.

Membership Chairman, Chuck Girard, stated that National evidently received our information because our Chapter wasn't on a list of those Chapters who hasn't paid their dues.

Special Events Chairman, Al Kaepfel, stated Frisco Fest is a week from Saturday, August 25, 2007. He stated he could use some additional hands to assist with the booth. He sent out 46 letters for the 20th anniversary party with 23 responses and 36 to attend. He stated there may be more than 50 attending which would be great. There will not be a Frontier Fest this year because the Frisco Depot in Ft. Smith is being used for something else that weekend.

Programs and Activities Chairman, Mitch Marmel is back from heart surgery. He brought some trolley pictures to share with the membership. Mitch needs everyone's e-mail address so he can get started on a mass e-mailing list. He reminded everyone that it isn't too early to be thinking about next year's programs.

Archivist, Al Kaepfel had no new activities to report.

Map Committee Chairman, Travis Walls, stated he will be at Frisco Fest with the maps. President McCullah reminded everyone that last year at Frisco Fest we had several teachers interested in the maps of Arkansas Railroading.

Sign Committee Chairman, Chuck Girard, stated it was the wrong time of year for the sign project. The Mountainburg sign was sighted and it is fine. Good news.

Old Business: Tom Duggan and Al Kaepfel stated they have inspected and cataloged each of the LGB pieces. Tom Duggan stated Mr. Kaepfel has really worked hard to get the equipment in order and to make data sheets. The membership thanked Mr. Kaepfel for all of his hard work. Fred Lewis and Bill Merrifield provided price lists each all of the equipment. Mr. Kaepfel stated the first estimates of the value of the LGB equipment may have been too low. Mr. Duggan has taken digital pictures of every item to correspond to Mr. Kaepfel cataloging efforts.

Ray Toler gave up dates on health concerns of several Chapter members.

New Business: Mr. Girard displayed a picture of Bass Reeves, a black marshal in the 1880's. He wanted to know if anyone could give him the approximate date of the picture for the Park Service. Fred Lewis could identify the engine and some of the cars to get an approximate date.

Clare McCullah, Secretary of the Arkansas-Boston Mountain Chapter.

The business meeting was adjourned by President McCullah.

The presentation for the evening was from: Tom Duggan on a California trip from San Jose to the snowy mountains of the north.

FROM THE HEAD END

We can't put it off any longer. It is time for chapter elections. We need three volunteers for the nominating committee. Yes, the bylaws say the president is to appoint the committee, but I'd rather have volunteers. We need to get started at the September meeting so that we can have the slate of candidates for the November meeting and have the election at the December meeting.

Again, I want to express my sincere thanks to those of you who have provided pictures for the history of the chapter. Clare and I have been pleasantly surprised by what we have seen so far. We have maybe one half as much as we need for the special anniversary dinner.

I want to congratulate Bill Merrifield on the Scrambler. He has done a wonderful job. I also appreciate his honesty about how he is producing the Scrambler. I, for one, support his decision to use Kinko's due to the photo problem. I can easily support the higher cost in light of better quality photo reproduction. Gary

IN THE YARDS

Tom Duggan has visited with Bob Oswald. Bob has been told that he continues to make progress. He had a painful cellulite infection that cannot be treated until the doctor determines the proper antibiotic. Bob has moved back to his home in Fayetteville effective September 10 as he has exhausted his benefits. Once he spends a certain time at home he will be eligible to transfer back to the facility.

Bob is looking forward with great anticipation to attending the November 10, 2007 Banquet marking the Chapter's 20th Anniversary.

At the last meeting Tom Duggan spoke with Chapter member Ken Eddy of Summit, AR. Ken said that he has finally retired from teaching and will be based in Summit, AR.

LOCALLY ON THE BEAM

Wanted by October 31
Pictures, Photographs, Slides, Prints,
of members participating in NHRS activities
during the past 20 years.

Place them in an envelope with your name, and identify who is in the picture, what the activity was, and the approximate date. All of these will be scanned and returned to you unharmed. Clare McCullah, ABMC Secretary. 479-267-4603 (home) or 479-766-8346 (cell)

LGB Train Collection

A member has donated a large LGB train collection to the Chapter. It includes diesel engines (3), a steam engine, 5 passenger cars, 12 freight cars 3 cabooses, 5 buildings, coaling tower, water tower, switches, turntable and a large supply of track. The collection is available as a single lot only and is in excellent condition. For information, please send SASE to Arkansas-Boston Mountains Chapter –NRHS, P.O. Box 1303 Springdale, AR 72765-1303

More about the photograph of the Frisco depot in Fayetteville

Dr. Louis A. Marre contacted Tom Duggan about the Frisco depot image that he forwarded from the July *Scrambler*. Tom had speculated that the photo was taken by the late Charles Winters. Dr. Marre believes the image was not by Winters as he would have been about four years old when the photo was taken. Marre believes the photo was taken by one of the Westbay brothers who lived in Monett, MO. Their father was the travelling freight agent at Monett and accordingly the boys had Frisco system passes. Marre has seen Westbay photos from about 1905 to the mid 1930 including St. Louis & Iron Mountain power at Fort Smith.

Urgent Message from the NRHS Headquarters

"On August 25, the NRHS Board of Directors approved the following national dues rates for 2008:

- . \$33 per year for Chapter Primary Members
- . \$34 per year for At-Large Primary Members
- . \$16 per year for Student Members (either Chapter or At-Large)
- . \$5 per year for Family Members (either Chapter or At-Large)

All chapter treasurers should collect the new dues rates for all new members joining after September 1, 2007, at which time new members will be counted as joining in and paid through 2008. The new national dues rates will be reflected in the 2008 dues bills that are to be distributed in early October. Any chapter that wants to change its chapter dues rates at the same time as the national change must notify the NRHS national office no later than September 15, 2007. On that date, the database will be locked for production of the 2008 membership dues bills. Gregory P. Molloy, President

BRASS POUNDING DOWN THE LINE
HISTORICAL OPERATIONS

Texas State Railroad

PALESTINE, Texas - On Sept. 1, American Heritage Railways Inc. took over operation of the Texas State Railroad. On that date an operating contract went into effect between American Heritage and the Texas State Railroad Operating Authority, a local entity created by state legislation to oversee the operation of the train. The Texas State Railroad runs steam-powered tourist trains between Rusk and Palestine. It was operated by a state agency, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, but due to budget cuts in the last year, the railroad had to be transferred to another entity to operate or be turned into a static museum. American Heritage Railways has experience in such operations, since it already operates the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in Colorado and the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad in North Carolina. An invitation-only breakfast meeting took place Sept. 1 with American Heritage officials, employees and others to mark the occasion. A more formal ceremony will take place once repairs to sections of the railroad that have been washed out by floods are repaired.

Legislation that went into effect in June created the Texas State Railroad Operating Authority and paved the way for the railroad to be transferred out of the Parks and Wildlife Department. The operating authority finalized its contract with American Heritage to operate the train late Aug. 31. The Authority is made up of citizens appointed by the city councils of Palestine and Rusk. Parks and Wildlife employees at the railroad were given the chance to remain state employees if they chose not to work for American Heritage. About 38 of the 48 Parks and Wildlife employees at the railroad elected to stay. [When it gets in the blood it stays there! Editor]

The top priority for American Heritage is to repair the washed-out sections of the railroad damaged during July flooding. The damage was so extensive that the railroad has been shut down. Parks and Wildlife has given the operating authority about \$650,000 to pay for repairs. The American Heritage will be marketing the railroad heavily. It will roll out educational programs for local schools, introduce first-class services for passengers, and offer "appreciation days" for local residents to ride at discounted prices."



**Soo Line 4-6-2 No. 2719
Steams for the First Time in Four
Years**

Soo 2719 Soo No. 2719 makes a test run on the North Shore Scenic Railroad east of Duluth, Minn., along Lake Superior's North Shore. (photo by Steve Glischinski)

DULUTH, Minn. - Soo Line 4-6-2 No. 2719 was steamed up for the first time since 2003 on Friday, Aug. 24, at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum, its new home. This is in anticipation of a photographer's special early next month and additional trips in September and October.

On Aug. 24, Steve Sandberg and Ed Selinsky of the Minneapolis-based Friends of the 261 and Bill Stetler of Canadian Pacific Railway's steam program assisted in firing up the engine and troubleshooting various problems that popped up after years of inactivity. The engine was moved around the trackage outside the museum then the fire was banked for the night.

On Saturday, Aug. 25, No. 2719 led the regular Duluth to Two Harbors train of the North Shore Scenic Railroad. The NSSR, owned by the Museum, operates 26 miles of former Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railway track between the two cities along the shore of Lake Superior. No major problems were encountered during the trip. It was the first time a steam locomotive had traveled the line in ten years.

The Museum also plans to use No. 2719 on a series of fall color specials during September and October between Duluth and Two Harbors. The 4-6-2 will run on Sept. 14-15, 21-22, 28-29 and Oct. 5-6.

No. 2719 was built by Alco in May 1923, one of six H-23 class Pacifics built for the Soo Line. The locomotive was restored to operating condition in 1998 by the Locomotive and Tower Preservation Fund, Ltd. of Eau Claire, Wis. Excursions took place on Wisconsin Central, but ended after Canadian National bought the railroad in 2001. The engine went to the Wisconsin Great Northern tourist line in Spooner, Wis., and the engine was later stored under a tarp at UP's Altoona, Wis., yard, after the railroad demolished the roundhouse there in 2004.

In 2005 the L&TPF entered into negotiations with the Lake Superior Railroad Museum to move the engine north for inside storage, further restoration, and eventual operation on the North Shore Scenic Railroad. On Dec. 17, 2006 the engine arrived in Duluth after an extended move from Altoona over Union Pacific and Canadian National. The locomotive is still owned by the L&TPF and leased to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum.

This spring work began in earnest to get the locomotive back into operating condition. One big obstacle was fabricating a new piston rod, since one rod had to be cut when the engine was moved from Altoona to Duluth.

Georgetown Loop Railroad Troubles

SILVER PLUME, Colo. - The Georgetown Loop Railroad was shut down for two weeks beginning on Aug. 9, when a hairline crack was discovered Aug. 8 on its only operational steam locomotive, 2-6-2 No. 12. Earlier this year, the Loop failed to open for the Memorial Day weekend because of engine-maintenance issues. Last year, the Loop shut down seven times for a total of 12 days.

Then on Aug. 28, the railroad closed again because of maintenance issues, at least its tenth shutdown in the past two seasons. On top of that, promotional efforts for the railroad have recently been stymied by www.georgetowncolorado.com, www.georgetownloop.com, and www.gtownloop.com - Web sites owned by former Loop co-operator Mark Greksa. The sites, which are usually the first to pop up in a Google search on the railroad or the town of Georgetown, list the many troubles plaguing the railroad since Greksa lost the con-

tract in 2004, and encourage potential riders to consider an alternative: the Royal Gorge Route Railroad, where Greska serves as co-owner and CEO.

The Colorado Historical Society contracts with Railstar to operate the railroad. On Aug. 15 more than 20 local merchants attended a meeting with Historical Society's president, Edward Nichols. Nichols answered questions about the search for additional locomotives and said he was not aware of any sources beyond those already identified. He said that the society would check back with possible sources such as the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad to see if one of its diesel engines would be available. Nichols pointed out that because the railroad is narrow gauge, the type of equipment is very difficult to obtain and could be very expensive. "If we had the other trains we were promised, this would not have been a problem."

Local business owners complained that business in Georgetown was down 30 percent on average because of the train's absence. August is a critical time, as tourists make last-minute trips before students head back to school. The railroad is a big attraction. All the merchants rely on it to bring people in and increase the town's revenue and affects the city's budget. Normally 650 to 720 passengers ride the Loop railroad daily during tourist season, but the railroad has had to cancel hundreds of reservations.

There is no backup steam locomotive at the Loop since Colorado & Southern 2-6-0 No. 9 is also down for repairs. The engine made its debut just last summer, but it will need major repairs before returning to operation. Cooke Locomotive & Machine Works of Paterson, N.J., built the engine in 1884 as Denver, South Park & Pacific No. 72. It became Denver, Leadville & Gunnison No. 114 in 1889 and Colorado & Southern No. 9 in 1899. After the 2006 operating season, Railstar did an assessment of No. 9's condition. Under the demanding operating conditions on the Loop, problems began to develop with the 123-year-old machine. It won't be repaired until 2008 at the earliest.

There is some good news to report at the Loop. The first of the three passenger cars the CHS purchased was shipped to Silver Plume on Aug. 21, and the other two cars will be shipped 10 days apart. The coaches, originally built for the White Pass & Yukon, were refurbished by Hamilton Construction and are fully enclosed.

Our Thanks to Trains News Wire

TRAINS THROUGH MEMORY

The following is the last of our series on historical railroading in my hometown high in the Colorado Rocky Mountains near the turn of the last century. I found this interview of Bob Wither in my mother's affects after her death. It was done twenty-three years ago by a young student, Rod Herman. [Editor] Bob Wither was born in Steamboat Springs in 1915. He got an early start working for the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad. He became a full time employee of the D&SL in 1937.

"When I was in the eighth grade I delivered telegrams. I got ten cents a telegram and on a good day I would make as much as a dollar. I started in 1937 making \$100.00 a month, which was pretty good in those days. There were no clerk unions on the railroad in those days. I worked as a clerk. They finally got a union in 1941.

Bob Wither talked about working with Station Agent, Erret Albritton. "...he was in charge of this depot in Steamboat Springs. I worked under him. He handled everything and he had operations working near the Yampa River when I worked under him as a clerk [for] almost ten years. As a boss, Albritton was very good; he taught me telegraphy and all about station work, so when the time came and a job would open up I could bid on it. In fact, I moved to Denver after I worked here a little while because he taught me so well that I could take over and handle the job.

"In the station we handled all the train orders so the trains could meet each other and that sort of thing. We also handled all the freight and sold tickets to the passengers. I think the one-way tickets cost, from Denver to Steamboat [175 miles] probably around \$6.00 or \$7.00. Round trips were a little less than double. So there again things have gone up considerably.

"I think the worst thing that ever happened was along about 1943 in tunnel ten. It is on the eastern slope. It caught fire and caved in so that stopped all traffic. This was in the fall. This was a big area for livestock then and it is now. That was the only way to move cattle then so they would ship them on the train from here to Rollinsville, which is on the other side of the Moffat Tunnel. They unloaded them, put them in trucks, and shipped them down to the stockyards. [For passengers] they had buses run from Denver up to the tunnel, then the people would have to walk around [the very steep canyon wall] to get to the passenger train and then it would bring them on over this way. There were some people who were killed [Denver Firefighters] in that fire. It was closed for about six weeks. It was a major tunnel and a major disaster as far as the railroad was concerned. I really enjoyed working for the railroad and I still enjoy watching the trains go by. Of course, in those days there were all steam engines. They made a lot of noise and they smoked a bunch. [but] it was a pretty site!

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT RAILROADING?

Question: We all know of towns that were created by railroads, but do you know the name of the state in the Union that was created almost solely by railroad activity?

Answer: Wyoming. Unlike other states that owe much of their existence to fur trade, agricultural settlements, mining, or foreign boundaries, Wyoming almost exclusively owes its existence to Union Pacific Railroad. No wonder that there is a broad avenue that leads from the historic UP depot in Cheyenne directly to the steps of the Capitol.

Question: Which state had (or still has) a state Railroad Commission to regulate railroads that virtually controlled all oil production in the state and was more powerful (or still may be) than its governor?

VIEW FROM THE ANGEL'S SEAT

Your editor has returned to the job of teaching physics at a local high school possibly for the for the duration of the school year. This severely limits my time to prepare the *Scrambler*! If you send me material by e-mail please, if possible, please use Times New Roman font with 12 point only format as it takes time to undo yours to mine. **More than ever, I need your articles!**

ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chapter No. 188 founded in 1987



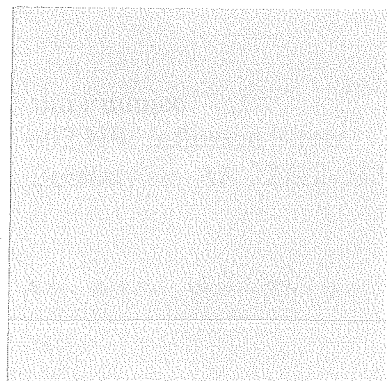
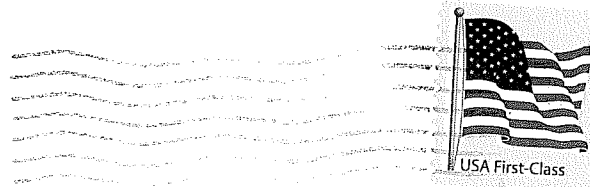
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NRHS Chapter Meets 7:00 PM Thursday, September 20, 2007 at the Shiloh Museum's General Store.

This month's program on historic railroading will be presented by Bill Merrifield

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