

# ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chapter No. 188 founded in 1987



## 2007 DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS

President	Gary McCullah
Vice President	Mitch Marmel
Secretary	Clare McCullah
Treasurer	Katherine Mindoro
Editor	Bill Merrifield
National Director	Chuck Girard
Board Director	Mike Sypult

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

This month's program on Railroads and Towns will be presented by Bob Stark

ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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# The Scrambler

Volume 21, No. 2

October 2007

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

## CHAPTER MINUTES September 20, 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 September 20, 2007 by President Gary McCullah, at the Shiloh Museum General Store in Springdale, AR. There were 16 members present.

Secretary, Clare McCullah's minutes from the August 2007 meeting were approved as stated in the *Scrambler* September 2007. Secretary, Clare McCullah, was absent from this meeting. Tom Duggan acted as Secretary.

National Director, Chuck Girard, Membership Chairman, Chuck Girard, Special Events Chairman, Al Kaeppl were all out of town. Therefore, no reports were given.

*Scrambler* Editor, Bill Merrifield, stated he is teaching physics full-time at the Rogers High School. He needs all of the articles especially in 12 point New Times Roman font, as his time is now very limited.

President, Gary McCullah read the financial report to the members. The report was approved as read.

Programs and Activities Chairman, Mitch Marmel, stated he had programs until the end of 2007 but would be in need of programs for 2008. Please note a change of plans. The October 18 meeting will be held at the General Store as usual and will **not** be a potluck as originally planned. In November, the plan is to have the meeting along with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary party on November 10, 2007 and no business meeting will be held on November 15. By canceling the November 15 meeting, it makes it easier for long distance travelers to attend the anniversary dinner. The change of meeting time of November was approved by a verbal vote. In December will be the Christmas party. A decision will have to be made at October meeting as to when and where the Christmas party will be held.

Map Committee Chairman, Travis Walls, stated he had no report.

Old Business:

President Gary McCullah stated the NRHS will have to vacate their existing building in Philadelphia in 2008. If anyone has any ideas as to where they would be able to go, please contact Gary McCullah or Greg Malloy at the National office. They don't have to stay in Philadelphia according to Mr. Malloy.

New Business:

President McCullah stated that a nominating committee would need to be formed to establish officers for next year. Five officers including President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and one director will be needed. Steve Tharp's term as director ends on December 31, 2007. A Three member committee was named as follows: Bob Hofer, Tom Duggan, and Travis Walls. Bob Hofer was appointed to the committee. Travis Walls and Tom Duggan volunteered to act as the other 2 committee members.

Barbara Gavron suggested the October meeting a Bob Oswald's home, so he could participate in the meeting. After some discussion, it was remembered that the October meeting was to have been at Bob Stark's home. Plans were later changed and the meeting being held at the General Store as usual.

The meeting was adjourned by President McCullah. President McCullah reminded the membership to donate to the coffee kitty.

The presentation for the evening was from: Bill Merrifield on the Denver and Rio Grande Locomotive #346.

Secretary's Special Note: Thank you to Tom Duggan for taking the notes of tonight's meeting in my absence. I missed you all and will see you at the October meeting.

Clare McCullah, Secretary of the Arkansas-Boston Mountain Chapter, National Railway Historical Society

### **FROM THE HEAD END**

I want to thank Bob Hofer, Tom Duggan and Travis Walls for accepting the job as nominating committee. If you have someone you would like to nominate, let one of them know.

I want to thank Tom Duggan for filling in for Clare and recording the minutes of the meeting.

In case you have not heard, CPR (aka Canadian Pacific) is buying DM&E/IC&E and heading to the Powder River basin; E.J&E is no longer independent; KCS is installing CTC on the Meridian to Shreveport "speedway" as well as buying and rebuilding an unused UP line in Texas; and "genset" locomotives are the newest generation of switchers. What does this mean to us? I think it means that we are witnessing the history the next generation will be curious about. Some of us are fortunate to have seen steam in regular operation. Others saw first generation diesels in service and the transition to second and now third generation. Everyday we see fewer ALCo and Baldwin products in use. The Lake States Railway is starting to phase out their ALCos. Recently, we have experienced the mega-mergers of UP, BNSF, etc. The bottom line is this, we need to record what we see today even though it may seem dull or commonplace. Remember, 60 years ago, steam was still king but first generation diesels like GP-7s and RS-3s were making inroads in taking over the main line. Where are the GP-7s and RS-3s today?

By the way, did anyone get pictures of the KCS units laying over in Springdale?

Gary

## **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, Secretary. 479-267-4603 (home) or 479-766-8346 (cell)**

On Wednesday, October 3, I was stopped at the Huntsville Avenue crossing in Springdale. To my delight four UP Armour yellow six-axle engines eased into the crossing headed south. The consist was three SD 60 locomotives (one of CNW heritage) and a 4,400 HP GE engine. The horsepower total was 15,800. This was the first time I had seen the complete grain train heading south. The train had 75 empty covered hoppers. Several of the hoppers were lettered CNW and there were two that still had the egg blue tint of the Rock Island that ceased operations in 1980. One of the cars even had a faded but legible ROCK logo. A car that caught my eye was a tired but legible unit that still had the Missouri Pacific. Tom Duggan

It won't be long. Our Anniversary Supper will be 10 November 2007. All of us are looking forward to it. We will be honoring the nine current members who were founding members, and thanking them for establishing the NRHS Chapter that we enjoy so much.

Don't wait too long to return the postcard making your reservation. Some fifteen replies have not been received. Among those, I would be surprised if six or seven are not planning to attend. If you wait too long, I may not be able to have the Clarion Inn make the late addition. See you there and then. Al Kaepfel

## **BRASS POUNDING DOWN THE LINE** **HISTORICAL OPERATIONS**

### **Return of a Birney to Fort Collins:**

FORT COLLINS, Colo. - One of Fort Collins' original Birney streetcars is coming back home. The Fort Collins Municipal Railway Society has contracted to purchase former Fort Collins Car 25, one of five streetcars still in existence that once operated in the city. The society plans to restore Car 25 to operate along with sister Car 21, which the organization currently operates on a restored trolley line between City Park and Howes Street on West Mountain Avenue.

The FCMRS is now planning a fundraising campaign to purchase, return, and restore the car. The current owner, Charlotte Trolleys Inc., restores vintage streetcars to operate in Charlotte, N.C. The group recently decided not to invest in streetcars not originally used in that city and offered the car to the society at a price of \$199,000.

The Fort Collins Municipal Railway operated streetcars such as 21 and 25 on a 6.2-mile system that connected

downtown to the major residential areas southward to the old Fort Collins High School and west to City Park. Cars met at the intersection of Mountain and College every 20 minutes from 6 a.m. to midnight. The system folded in June 1951, the last system to operate the single-truck "Birney" cars in municipal service in North America. It was also the last city in Colorado to operate streetcars.

Soon after operations ceased, the city tore up most of the track and sold all but one of its surviving streetcars. Car 21, the first car received in 1919, was put on display in Library Park. Most of the other cars ended up in museums, but Car 25 sat on a ranch near Woodland Park, Colo., for a year before moving to nearby Victor, where it remained for almost half a century. Following its sale in the early 1990s, Car 25 ended up in Charleston, S.C., representing that city's former streetcar system. By 1999, it moved to Charlotte. Sometime next year, Car 25 will be moved back to the Fort Collins trolley barn at Howes and Cherry streets to undergo restoration. The original three remaining Fort Collins trolley cars are housed at the Pioneer Village Museum in Minden, Neb., the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich., and in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The society is the all-volunteer non-profit organization that restored Car 21 and most of the West Mountain Avenue line in the early 1980s. For more information go to [www.fortnet.org/trolley](http://www.fortnet.org/trolley), or contact John Beckett at 970-482-0130.

Editor's Note: My great grandfather was a newspaper editor in Fort Collins when the Birneys were running after 1919. This has opened up a traction and a family research item for me.

## Texas State Railroad in trouble again

**October 12, 2007**

RUSK, Texas - The Texas State Railroad just can't seem to catch a break. After a year when the railroad was beset by floods, the state threatened to cut off funds, and a collision occurred between two trains, it seemed things were finally on the right track when the railroad was turned over to a private operator last month. But now even that seems in jeopardy. The Texas State Railroad Authority is in material breach of the operating contract with the new operator, American Heritage Railways of Texas LLC, according to a letter sent to the authority on Oct. 3. The letter, sent by American Heritage attorney Edward T. Lyons, cites the failure of the TSRA to loan \$500,000 to the railway as reason for the breach, the Rusk Cherokeean Herald reported.

"[American Heritage owner] Allen Harper has assured us that his intent is to operate the train forever, but he can't without the money that was promised," Steve Presley, president of the TSRA Board, said during a meeting on Oct. 5. Presley said the TSRA has not made the loan because the legislative budget board has not released the \$2 million that was promised by the Texas state legislature.

The letter states American Heritage regrets having to give the notice of the breach, but had no other alternative as a matter of "prudent business." The letter concluded by stating that American Heritage "reserves all other rights and remedies, including a right of rescission."

"My understanding is that the \$2 million is being held up for reasons that are unclear," Presley said. "When the legislation was passed, we were told the \$2 million would be made available as soon as the legislative budget board approved the contract. Someone [on the board] is studying every detail of the contract and is trying to change the deal." All legislative budget board members have to sign the agreement before the money can be made available.

Palestine Mayor Carolyn Salter said the delay appears to be on the part of Tom Craddick (R-Midland) who, as the Speaker of the Texas House, is a member of the legislative budget board. Salter explained that one of Craddick's legislative aides, Casey Lamb, believes that allowing the TSRA to make a loan to American Heritage would be illegal. "They are choosing to read it that way," Presley said "They are changing the deal, and it will not work."

Mayor Salter suggested the TSRA seek other sources of funding, such as loans and grants from local economic development corporations. Paul Schranck, American Heritage vice president and general manager of the Texas State Railroad, suggested pursuing the state's job retention programs for funding. The TSRA board voted to authorize Presley to seek other sources of funding and also decided to travel to Austin to meet with members of the Legislative Budget Board to distribute copies of American Heritage's letter to board members.

Schranck reported that vegetation growth on the railroad had become severe, preventing employees from being able to drive hyrail vehicles on the track. The railroad has contracted with an individual to cut the brush away from the track and has hired a company to spray the track to keep vegetation down, the Cherokeean Herald reported.

## St. Charles Avenue New Orleans streetcars may return by next month

October 4, 2007

NEW ORLEANS - New Orleans Regional Transit Authority officials are hoping to restore streetcar service by next month along the downtown half of the St. Charles Avenue line. Test runs of the Perley Thomas Car Co. streetcars that began last week continue. Barring any unforeseen problems, the RTA hopes to reopen the historic line between Canal Street and Napoleon Avenue by Nov. 1 and restore full service to its terminus on Carrollton Avenue in the first quarter of 2008. The streetcar line is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A limited section of the line, from Canal Street to Lee Circle, has been operating since December, the New Orleans Times-Picayune reported.

Adjustments are still being made to the first of three new \$1 million electrical substations that will replace the power system destroyed by Hurricane Katrina more than two years ago. Starting Sept. 26, the RTA tested a single streetcar before adding several more over the weekend. On Oct. 1, when the agency attempted to operate ten cars simultaneously, the power went out. A representative of the substation's manufacturer, Powell Industries of Ohio, is scheduled to be in New Orleans to review the problem, which is not considered serious.

The first of the new substations has been placed beneath the Crescent City Connection at Calliope Street. The second station has arrived and is being readied for installation on Upperline Street, near the midpoint of the St. Charles Avenue stretch of the line, while the third is scheduled to arrive in a few weeks and will go inside the Carrollton Barn at Dublin and Jeannette streets, the Times-Picayune reported.

For more than a year the agency has been stringing a new network of overhead wires and cables that were torn apart by high winds and falling tree limbs. Contractors are replacing most of the 560 poles along the route and once all the poles are installed heavy-duty cables from the electrical stations will be connected. New wire will also be hung along the line.

The RTA is also in the process of hiring or rehiring operators for the St. Charles line, Cook said. With rider-ship transit vehicles reduced to a fraction of the pre-storm level, the RTA was forced to lay off dozens of bus

and streetcar operators in the months after the hurricane. Before Katrina, the St. Charles line was the RTA's busiest route, with more than 3.5 million boardings a year.

The 35 streetcars used on St. Charles Avenue survived Katrina because they were stored on high ground inside a building. The cars are being used on the Canal and Riverfront lines to temporarily replace the newer, red streetcars destroyed by Katrina flooding, the Times-Picayune reported.

Our Thanks to Trains News Wire

## **TRAINS THROUGH MEMORY**

### **Rio Grand Scenic Railroad**

I missed the September 20, 2007 ABMT NRHS meeting as I was in Alamosa, Colorado to ride the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad September 21 from Alamosa to La Veta and return. Trains Unlimited, Tours chartered the entire train and made all the arrangements including a record breaking twelve photo run-bys.

We departed Alamosa at 7:35 AM- twenty minutes late- and proceeded in a fog so thick you couldn't cut it with a chain saw. In Alamosa we crossed the Rio Grande River from which the railroad derives its name. For 23 miles we steamed straight and flat. Soon the fog lifted and we could see to the north Blanca Peak, elevation 14,042 feet.

Our consist was steam locomotive SP-1744, a concession car and four heavy coaches. SP-1744 is a heavy 2-6-0 oil burner and billed as "turn of the century," however I noticed it had spool valves which dates it no earlier than about 1910.

The concession car was built by Budd Company as a Railway Post Office car for Union Pacific. I rode in Coach 2974 built by the Pullman Company as a commuter car for the Long Island Railroad. I may have ridden this same car in 1944 while I was in the Army Signal Corps attending a radio transmitter school at Press Wireless, Inc., Hicksville, Long Island, New York. Juanita and I made many trips to New York City on the LIRR to shop, dine, attend theatre, and rubber-neck in general.

As we proceeded easterly the grade steepened reaching 2.5 percent near the summit at Fir, elevation 9242 feet, mile post 207.2. Leaving Fir, the train descended an impressive 3.0 percent grade and passes through two tunnels,, one 338 feet long and another 655 feet long. Another tunnel was "daylighted" many years ago.

At the quaint town of La Veta, elevation 7013 feet, population 726, mile post 190.3, our locomotive was turned around on the wye, serviced, and coupled to the cars for the 62 mile trip back to Alamosa, elevation 7579 feet, population 7544, mile post 252.

Although SP-1744 is an oil burner, during the run-bys, I detected the unmistakable odor of coal smoke. I suspect coal was added during the run-bys to make black smoke for the photographers.

Wild life we saw along the route included squirrels, hawks, ducks, wild turkey, and one small black bear. Ray Toler. ABMT Chapter Member.



Ray took the above photos of the SP-1744 consist and the aging Alamosa Depot in Alamosa, Colorado.

**SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT RAILROADING?**

**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?

**Answer:** Texas. It was along the railroad right of ways that many of the great oil discoveries in Texas were made. The railroads received every other alternating section of land along the right of way as an incentive to open up the frontier for agricultural development and other such hallmarks of civilization.

**Question:** What is a skid lock? Ray Toler saw a pile of these while on his recent tour on the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad in southern Colorado.

**VIEW FROM THE ANGEL'S SEAT**

It has been an eventful and demanding drain on your 77 year-old editor since I returned to teaching physics after fourteen years of retirement in order to meet an emergency situation in their staffing at Rogers High School. The strain of meeting the Scrambler deadline at the same time has made its toll. I reluctantly admit that I may have to step down as editor. Any volunteers? Bill