

# **ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER**

**NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Chapter No. 188 founded in 1987



## **2007 DIRECTORY OF OFFICERS**

<b>President</b>	<b>Gary McCullah</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Mitch Marmel</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Clare McCullah</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Tom Duggan</b>
<b>Editor</b>	<b>Bill Merrifield</b>
<b>National Director</b>	<b>Chuck Girard</b>
<b>Board Director</b>	<b>Mike Sypult</b>

**NRHS Chapter Meets 7:00 PM Thursday, September 18, 2008 at the Shiloh Museum's General Store.**

**Board Director, Mike Sypult, is this evenings' program presenter.**

**ARKANSAS-BOSTON MOUNTAINS CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 1303  
SPRINGDALE, AR 72765-1303  
Address Service Requested**

# The Scrambler

Volume 22, No. 1

September 2008

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

## CHAPTER MINUTES August 21, 2008

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 21, 2008 by President Gary McCullah, at the Shiloh Museum General Store in Springdale, AR. There were 21 members present and 4 guests (Sharon Smith – City of Chester Mayor; Donald and Tina Shores who own the Chester Hotel, and LaVerne Hughes, from Chester, AR).

Secretary, Clare McCullah's minutes from the July 2008 meeting were approved as stated in the *Scrambler* dated August 2008.

National Director, Chuck Girard, turned the discussion over to Tom Duggan to give report since Mr. Duggan just returned from the National Director's meeting. Mr. Duggan stated he would compile the minutes from the National Director's meeting. The minutes are to be sent to the *Scrambler* editor, Bill Merrifield, for publication for the Chapter membership. He stated the reports come from every committee. Mr. Duggan stated so much of the operations at the National level are still pen and paper instead of the use of computers. Many things handled by National are bulky and need to be streamlined with the local chapter levels.

*Scrambler* Editor, Bill Merrifield, stated sent out 65 editions of the *Scrambler* in March and April of 2008, 62 in May of 2008, nothing was sent out in June of 2008, 65 were sent in July 2008, and 70 editions in August 2008. Mr. Merrifield stated he hadn't submitted a bill for all of his expenses in several months and would submit a bill to Mr. Duggan tonight. Mr. Merrifield stated he hadn't received any articles this month and he is in need of additional materials for the *Scrambler*. He is requesting any information from the Chapter membership in regards to our activities.

Acting Treasurer, Tom Duggan, read the financial report to the members. The report was approved as read.

Membership Chairman, Chuck Girard, stated there is a rumor floating around that all of the membership information maybe going to Furnly and Furnly for them to process. Mr. Girard stated he hopes the total control of membership going to Furnley and Furley would eliminate a great deal of the miscommunication within the organization. He stated the new membership drive will start soon for 2009 membership year. Mr. Girard stated he doesn't have a standardize membership application for the local Chapter because National hasn't provided on. Mr. Girard stated he will make one on his computer for the local Chapter to use. Mr. Girard reminded President McCullah that Katherine Mindoro is still list as the Chapter's Treasurer and her name needs to be removed from National's paperwork. A motion was made to make the Shiloh Museum an honorary member of the Chapter. The Chapter will then pay the membership dues for the museum. The motion was voted on and carried 100%. It was mentioned that the Arkansas Railroad club is disassociating themselves from National due to the problems with the services offered by National.

Mr. Girard reminded everyone that if they have a change of address please notify him as quickly as possible so the new membership information will be sent to you correctly.

Special Events Chairman, Al Kaepfel, stated Frisco Fest will be this Saturday, August 23, 2008 from 8:00 to 4:00. Bill Merrifield stood up and gave out the information about the festival and announced which shift of work each volunteer will be working. He stated set up will be at 8:00 a.m. He stated he will need help on Friday evening loading the G layout and the equipment located at 5:30 at Springdale Depot. Al Kaepfel stated the new brass track on G layout was very nice. President

McCullah thanked Bill Merrifield for the donation of the track. Mr. Merrifield reminded everyone the Chapter will be stationed in front of the old caboose in Rogers on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Walnut come rain or shine. President McCullah stated this would be the last event for Al Kaepfel. He would be taking some time off. They would need someone to take over for the Christmas train in December. President McCullah is looking for a new volunteer as special events chairman.

Programs and Activities Chairman, David McDonald, didn't attend the meeting. From the secretary's notes we have the following programs: September 2008 is Mike Sypult, October 2008 – Bill Merrifield; November 2008 is Show n' Tell night and each one is to bring something to tell about for a 5 minute or less presentation; December 2008 is the Christmas party with the location to be announced. If you have a program for next year, please see David McDonald.

Archivist, Al Kaepfel, stated no new information.

Map Committee Chairman, Travis Walls: Tom Duggan stated he had a Frisco map to show. He had made reproductions of the development of the entire Frisco. He stated he would put them on a CD Rom and offer them for sale at Frisco Fest. He had some of the maps printed off on good quality paper and they would be offered for \$20.00 each at Frisco Fest.

Sign Committee Chairman, Chuck Girard, stated Mountainburg sign is still there. He stated the Chapter was going to replace the one in Greenland that was damaged. Back of the signs at Chester, West Fork, and Rudy as weather permits.

#### Old Business:

President McCullah stated he is looking for nominations for officers for next year. The nominating committee is Ray Tolar, Bob Stark, and Bill Merrifield. President McCullah stated the election of officers would be at the December meeting and Christmas party.

Al Kaepfel brought up the sales tax issue. President McCullah stated as he understands it, the Chapter will pay sales taxes on those items we purchase. The Chapter don't pay sales taxes on those items sold by the Chapter. He suggested keeping the taxable items separate from the non-taxable items during a show. Chuck Girard stated he would ask a legal consultant for advice on the matter and report back to the Chapter.

#### New Business:

Jack Brown asked about the offer by the Arkansas and Missouri until the end of August to pay full price for one ticket and get second ticket ½ off. President McCullah stated the advertisement was in the local newspapers.

Fred Lewis announced that the "Little Porter" is ready for the rails. He brought the the idea of forming a non-profit organization to take care of the engine and to prevent a lawsuit against the Lewis family. Mr. Lewis stated the track and trains will have to be moved in the event of Mr. Lewis's death. He stated he has the materials in storage to complete 4 cars to be pulled by the engine. Mr. Lewis stated this is a great opportunity for someone.

Ray Tolar stated the City of Siloam Springs will be voting to annex a large area of outlying land around the city. If annexation is approved, the newly acquired land will come up against Tired Iron's property forcing them to be enclosed by the city. They are afraid if they are put into the city limits, it will raise their property taxes. Mr. Tolar reminded everyone that the Fall Crank Up is September 5, 6, and 7, 2008 at their location north of Siloam Springs, AR. They would like to see everyone there.

Chuck Girard stated he contacted the Boone Co Museum. On the second Saturday in October they have their Railroad day and a tribute to the old MN&A. Mr. Girard stated he had a really good day that last time he was there. The program starts around 11:00 or so. Keep your calendars open. More information will be coming as it is available. He also stated the Harrison Rusty Wheel show is the same day and will be very good.

Bill Merrifield stated the widow of long time member Vernon Lewis really enjoys the *Scrambler*. Mr. Merrifield requested the Chapter's permission to send her a *Scrambler* each month. Permission was given by the Chapter membership.

Tom Duggan stated he has been trying to get in touch with Trudy Scott. She had contacted President McCullah offering to sell the train collection belonging to her late husband and long time Chapter member, Tom Scott.

The presentation for the evening was from: Chuck Girard on the train at Creekmore Park in Fort Smith, AR.

## **FROM THE HEAD END**

First off, a big “Thank You” to the following folks for helping at Frisco Fest: Bob and Roseanne Hofer, Larry Cain, Jack Brown, Cleo Matter, Fred Lewis, David and Shirley McDonald, Tom Duggan, Bill Longsdon, Bill Merrifield, Mitch Marmel, Clare McCullah. If I missed anyone, I apologize. For those who could not make it, we had a great time. According to Tom Duggan, our man of numbers, we gave out 253 young engineer certificates. While I think of it, we only had a couple of brief rain showers that barely wet the pavement. David said that he and Shirley drove through a downpour coming up from Fort Smith and had to pullover and stop at Fayetteville it was raining so hard. We truly were blessed at Frisco Fest. An extra special thanks to Bill Merrifield for the use of his truck.

We didn't have any nominees for the office of Treasurer or for Special Events Coordinator at the August meeting, but we may have a volunteer for Treasurer. I will let you know if this pans out. Remember, Ray Toler, Bill Merrifield, and Bob Stark are the nominating committee for the upcoming election. If you have a suggestion, contact one of them.

Bill Merrifield expressed concern as to the lack of material for the Scrambler. Come on folks, dig out those photos and write up those stories. I have a couple of ideas for photo articles that I need to work up. I have a few more “mystery photo” candidates to send him as well.

Please support David McDonald who has worked hard to coordinate the monthly programs. If you have a program for next year, let him know so that he can get it on the schedule. Clare and I are guilty as anyone else about not having a program ready.

I would love for someone to drop in and check on Bob Oswald and to let him know we are thinking about him. Bob, if you are listening, send us an update on your progress. We hope to see you back with us before too long.

It has been suggested by a few members that we have an annual Christmas dinner at the Clarion in Fayetteville where we had the anniversary dinner. Are there any other suggestions? I had asked Tom Stark to look into a location for the dinner so we may end up with several possible choices.

One item I saw tonight on one of the lists I belong to stated that US Dept of Transportation was asking input on proposed new rules for applications for RRIF loans. The concern was that these new rules would make it difficult if not impossible for many shortlines to apply for, let alone receive, RRIF loans. This could hamper many start-ups and marginal performers who need the loans to upgrade infrastructure. A lot of money has been spent to get ready for 286,000 GRL cars. I expect that we will soon see cars with GRL over 300,000.

Mystery question, “What is GRL the acronym for and what is it?” Gary

## **LOCALLY ON THE BEAM**

### **Your ABM\_NRHS Yahoo! Group**

ABM\_NRHS group at [Yahoo! Groups](#) is a free, easy-to-use service. [Yahoo! Groups](#) makes it easy to send and receive group messages, coordinate events, share photos and files, and more.

Description of the group: We are dedicated to the preservation and appreciation of railroad activities and history in the NW Arkansas area. Monthly meetings are held at the Shiloh Museum in Springdale, Arkansas.

Complete your Yahoo! Groups account: Your email address has been added to the email list of a Yahoo! Group. To gain access to all of your group's web features (previous messages, photos, files, calendar, etc.) and easier control of your message delivery options, we highly recommend that you complete your account

by connecting your email address to a Yahoo account. It is easy and free. Please visit:  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/convacct?email=your name@email site&list=ABM\\_NRHS](http://groups.yahoo.com/convacct?email=your name@email site&list=ABM_NRHS)

To send a message to the members of this group, send an email to: [ABM\\_NRHS@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ABM_NRHS@yahoogroups.com)

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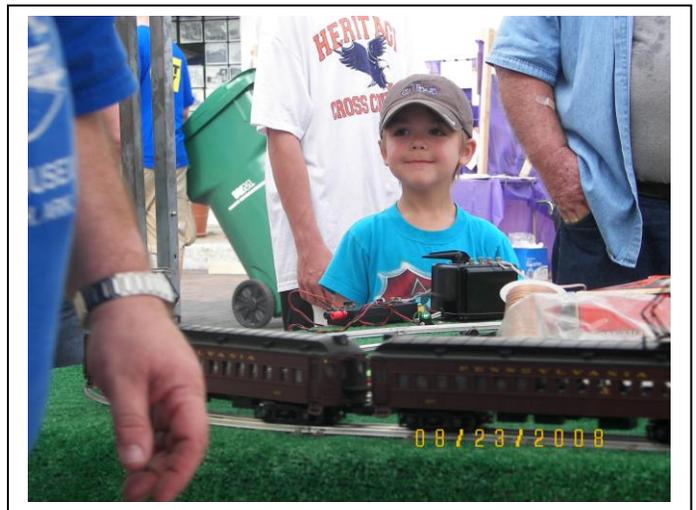
Mitch has set up the mailing list to send out a meeting notice reminder a couple of days beforehand as well as a reminder on the third day of each month. Again, thank you Mitch!

### **Special Event: Frisco Fest**

What a wonderfully good time we had at the Frisco Fest! Despite a brief shower, the weather was the most moderate we have ever experienced at this fair. And talk about busy! Adults and children kept us going all day long. Our many thanks to the participating chapter members! Our chapter members unable to attend are proud of your efforts in behalf of railroad history preservation!



Mitch gets support from Chapter members in adjustments to his interurban setup.



With a smile as wide as his face, an interurban fan puts the cars through their paces.



With all the intensity of engineers, the youngsters put the train through its run on our new track.



It was a fun day for our Chapter, full of fellowship and interesting railroad conversation.

### HISTORICAL OPERATIONS

## Rio Grande Creede Branch to be abandoned in namesake city

September 5, 2008

CREEDE, Colo. - The Denver & Rio Grande Historical Foundation's efforts to bring rail service back to the town of Creede have ended. Donald Shank of the foundation announced he would no longer pursue the legal battle he has fought for more than eight years, the *Mineral County Miner* reported.

The foundation fought the town of Creede's request to abandon the tracks within the city limits in order to prevent the possibility of tourist trains operating in town. The Surface Transportation Board ultimately approved Creede's adverse abandonment application earlier this year. Rio Grande trains continued hauling ore out of the Creede area until the last mine closed in 1985 but no revenue train entered Creede after 1969.

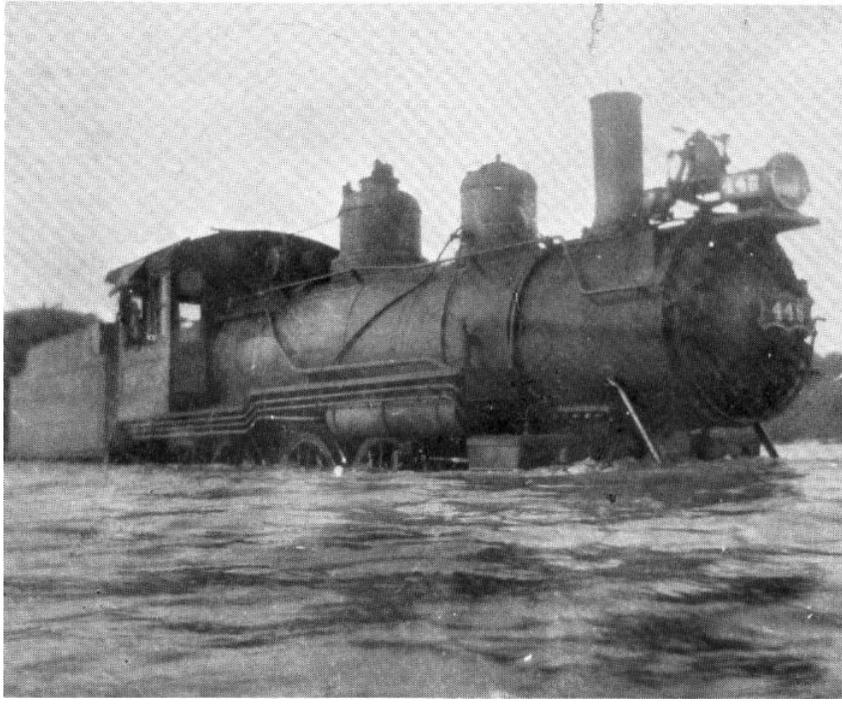
The city argued, "restoring regular passenger service to Creede was completely impractical and that was why passenger service ceased in 1939." Numerous residents and business owners from Creede and the surrounding area in Mineral County opposed returning trains to the town. City spokesmen said the city was not "anti-train but needed to get control of the land within the city limits."

Shank said he would begin salvaging the rails within the city limits of Creede. "Our historical foundation, whose mission it is to preserve Colorado's rich railroad history, is charged with the dismal task of removing what was so difficult to bring to Creede ... the rails that built the town," Shank stated.

"And so it will be with a profound sense of loss that I will pull the first spike, unbolt the first track bolt and lift the first rail ... The biggest loss will be to history." Shank added in a note to his opponents, "I hope some day that you come to realize what you were so anxious to throw away." Source: *Trains News Wire*.

## TRAINS THROUGH MEMORY

### Swimming Trains:



The side article was written by Fred Schmickle and appeared in the May, 1973 edition of *The Ozarks Mountaineer*. Our thanks to Ray Toler who called it to our attention.

This is a Frisco engine wading the backwaters of the Osage River, pulling a passenger train, with water lapping at the floor of the coaches, at Osceola, Mo., April 17, 1927. This condition lasted two weeks (at many different times). This is backwater, or as the natives would say “slack water” and since there is no current, the track ballast did not wash away.

A supply of cordwood was provided at each side of the river. Before entering the water the fireman would fill the firebox, to its top, let it ignite, then proceed. On reaching the other side, they would stop. He would shake the wet cinders and ashes out of the firebox, throw in a slug of coal on the wood fire and take off as if nothing happened. This was so unusual that I had to get a boat and snap this picture.

The Frisco later raised this stretch of track above high water, which, no doubt, pleased the trainmen who had to cope with this one mile of blind trackage.

**Covered Wagons:** The photograph on the last page is the restored Kansas City Southern EMD F7A located at Decatur, Arkansas. What follows are the work descriptions by the restorers of the locomotive for static display:

It is one of 10 F7A models built for the KCSRR Electro Motive Corporation EDM Division between 1949 and 1951. They were 1500 HP diesel/electric freight locomotives. Their slave units were also 1500 HP. Grouping an engine with four slaves, a 7500 HP unit could pull heavy freight loads over the Ozark Mountains. They proved to be workhorses for the KCS over the years of the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s and some into the 80’s.

Eventually, some were scrapped while others were converted to “slugs”. The Decatur engine’s first road number was 73D as it began service in 1950. Later it was changed to road number 90 and finally converted to a “slug” with the road number 1048.

On September 17, 1991 we received notice from KCS that the engine was being delivered to Decatur. When it arrived it was a rusty hulk with many rusted out holes in the nose, side panels, doorwells, and doors. Inside we found a huge steel encased chunk of concrete along with a lot of old locomotive wheels instead of an engine. All of this gave its weight as a slug of 234,300 pounds.

The top was pulled off and using a 65-ton crane 100,260 lbs of concrete were removed leaving the engine at its present weight of 134,050 lbs. After all the rusted panels were removed, the wheel assemblies were sandblasted and repairs were made to the bodyframe works, new panels were made, doorwells were repaired, and doors were rehung. A complete rear door had to be made. WQE power washed the whole engine several times to clean for a priming, After major body work on the nose section and installing new windshields, the unit was finally primed and painted.

The biggest part of all this work was done by Peterson Employees using time that could be spared from their assigned work. As you examine the engine, you can see the many skills Peterson Employees possessed. Body work (epoxy filling) was done by J & A Body Service in Siloam Springs. Glass fitting was done by Harding Glass in Fayetteville. The sandblasting and painting were done by Rick and Carol Lowe Painting in Decatur. Dixon Iron & Metal Inc. in Siloam Springs supplied the crane services with additional labor supplied by Bentonville Fence Company in Bentonville. The KCSR worked closely with the project providing switching services, technical information, accessories, and decals.

May 23, 1993 a 65-ton crane and a 90-ton crane lifted the engine from the main line and placed it on the display section of track. It sits there adorned in the freight version of the Southern Belle scheme of colors.



At right, is a photo of the KCS hood unit displayed at Decatur. Inside the depot, which is rarely open, Mike Sy-pult and Tom Duggan saw the above document describing the renovation of the unit. For clarity, the document was edited.

On July 1, 2008, the day of their visit, Simmons Foods of Siloam Springs acquired Peterson Industries.

The depot and the display were largely the work of the now deceased Lloyd Peterson who died in October 2007 at the age of 94.

One wonders what will happen to the beautifully restored depot with the new ownership of Peterson.

The paint on the engine is also beginning to fade.

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

Question: In railroading history, what was unusual about the original term “jerkwater” town?