



## The Passing Track

April 2004

Newsletter of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club

PO Box 1362—Medford, OR 97501

Home page is <http://rvmrc.railfan.net/>

### Thank You From Klamath

A Thank You from...Judith, Lynn, Nancy, Susan, Elida, Anne, Chris (the soup lady), and all the rest of the Museum train gang!

The staff and volunteers of the Klamath County Museum welcomes you to our ranks since your model railroad displays at the Museum last weekend certainly exemplified volunteerism at its best. Doing something you love and in doing so, bringing benefit to others, is the basis for successful volunteering, and your activities here at the Klamath County Museum can definitely be described as successful. Our Museum set new attendance records, sales records, and even attendance income records. People have been coming in all week and saying how much they liked the model trains. Thank you very much, everyone of you, for your generosity with your time, your trains, your travel and other resources that were necessary to make the train weekend so successful. We hope you will come back next year. We have plans for Trolley train tours, map displays, even model depots. We welcome suggestions for ways to make our environment more hospitable to you and your displays. Please send announcements of all your activities to the

Museum so we can share them with Klamath County train buffs. As you saw last weekend, this county has a

lot of people who really like your model trains. And remember to count the staff and volunteers of the Klamath County Museum as some of your biggest fans!

### May Calendar of Events

*All events in the Clubhouse at the Railroad Park unless otherwise noted.*

#### **New Layout Construction**

**Saturdays— May 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29**  
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

#### **Construction/Cleanup Sessions:**

**Thursdays—May 6, 13, 20, and 27**  
7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

#### **Public Run Session**

**Sundays—May 9 and 23** 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM

#### **Board Meeting:**

**Wednesday, May 12** 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

**General Membership Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 26 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM**  
**April Board Meeting Summary**

The RVMRC Board met on April 14. Bruce reported a very successful swap meet (see story, next page). We have received many compliments on our t-shirts and jackets, both at the public run session and at the swap meet. There will be a second order on jackets as soon as we get another half dozen orders. We must order in batches of 12, and the board is not comfortable tying up club money on 7 extra jackets (based on current additional orders). Signups for the public run sessions are sufficient at this point for the next several shows. Remember, the sign up sheets are on the bulletin board here at the clubhouse. Our DCC test was successful, but there is a problem. First, we encountered a faulty booster, which caused us to detect shorts in the system. When it was replaced by another member's power unit, the shorts went away, and the system was operational. We successfully ran a 56 car 4-unit train without a hitch. However, steamers stall on every switch, and diesels hang up on a couple of switches. The DCC committee will look into the problem which may be the result of electronics routing within the switches themselves. At worst, we may have to place a relay at each switch to provide proper electrical routing. That also means cutting additional gaps. A ceiling was installed in the shed, as well as lights. Our club building (and the shed) need to be painted, and the board authorized the expenditure for paint. The shed will have battens installed prior painting. We will need to sand/brush some of the fascia where the sun has been particularly direct. Joe Brick's membership application was accepted. Joe is a tremendous supporter of the Club and a good contact for us in Klamath Falls. Chris Fawcett (Brad Fawcett's wife) is having back surgery again. The board asks everyone to keep Chris and Brad in your thoughts and prayers. Sadly, Art McKee's wife passed away last month (see story, next page). Grace Christian School will be visiting the Club on May 27. The Lane Society of Model Railroaders has invited club members to their annual picnic, August 15 in Junction City. Stan McCollough brought in a Keystone bandsaw mill kit, originally donated by Duncan Campbell, available for a volunteer to put together for our layout. E. Don had Club hats made when he fell into a deal he could not pass up, nor had time to contact the Board for approval. The Board agreed to reimburse E. Don for the hats (they go quite nicely with our green apparel, and will sell for \$10.00 each).

## **The Medford-Butte Falls Railway**

It's gone now. One of the last reminders of the railroad-logging era in Medford is no more. Though the unremarkable concrete overpass over Biddle Road was part of our urban landscape, its demise went unnoticed by the vast majority of passersby. Others probably didn't know it had been there until it was gone. Aside from old-timers [and likely most Club members], only adventuresome city cyclists looking for a less-pedaled Medford route knew of its existence. Even then, most cyclists probably had no idea that the trail that crossed over Interstate 5 and Biddle Road and meandered along the airport toward Costco was once a privately owned route that played an important role in the economy of this area. This circa-1960 concrete bridge and the massive hills of fill dirt that made the approaches less steep were not built with bicyclists in mind. Their original purpose was to carry steam-powered locomotives pulling cars loaded with logs. The logs were from Butte Falls timber stands and were bound for the Medco mills on the Pacific Highway just north of the new big "X" intersection by the Rogue Valley Mall. Much of what remained of the Medco complex was taken down to make way for this intersection.

Long before the bridges on this route were built, long before there was an Interstate 5, this railroad line was owned by the Medford and Crater Lake Railroad. Investors organized this line with ambitions of hauling sightseers from Medford all the way to Crater Lake. Ground was broken with much pomp and circumstances in 1904. but by the time the tracks reached Eagle Point, the investors ran out of money. Railroad baron James J. Hill then purchased the line and put down more tracks extending it to Butte Falls. Hill put down heavy-duty tracks suitable for a logging railroad. Under Hill's ownership, the line continued to haul passengers back and forth. When the outbreak of World War I turned the nation's economy on end, this line went under yet again.

In 1920, the timber holdings in the Butte Falls area and the railroad line were purchased by Mississippi timberman James Brownlee and Millard Olds of Wisconsin. The partners built the large modern sawmill that evolved into Medco. Before becoming Medco, it was sold to John S. Owen, who with his backers formed the Owen-Oregon Lumber Co. At this time, the railroad line to Butte Falls carried more logs than any other rail line in Southern Oregon. Twenty miles of track were added and five men went to work full time maintaining the line. Owen-Oregon had 40 railroad cars and two locomotives running between Medford and Butte Falls.

By 1932, the nation's economy was in a tailspin and Owen-Oregon was in foreclosure. It was purchased by a Chicago-based bondholder's committee who renamed the acquisition the Medford Corporation (Medco). Medco's

heyday was probably during World War II, when the government assumed the right to use the line since it ran right through its huge new military training base, Camp White. After the war, Medco extended its tracks but soon it became apparent that post-war improvements to logging trucks made them much more economical to operate than the railroad. In 1959, Medco began pulling up its tracks that went deep into the woods. Finally in 1962, the last train from Butte Falls made the trip into Medford and the remaining tracks were pulled up.

The Medford section of this line was then paved and used by Medco logging trucks to haul logs between its mill and its log yard near the airport. A 1999 Medford road map identifies it as "Medco Haul Road", a privately owned thoroughfare. Soon thereafter it found use as a bike trail. It may have been an unremarkable concrete overpass, but the bridge over Biddle Road, when considered in our urban landscape, tells a story. It is the story of the one constant—change.

*[From the Medford Mail Tribune March 28, 2004 by Steve Wyatt, curator of collections for the Southern Oregon Historical Society].*

## Correction

The April Passing Track incorrectly reported that Judy McGarvey provided pizza, juice and sodas to the Club upon their departure from the Klamath County Historical Museum train show. While Judy M. was present in K-falls, our pizza donor was really Judith Hanssen, the museum curator.

## Our Condolences

Eileen McKee, the wife of one of our club members, Art McKee, passed away on March 20. Born in 1919 in Spokane, WA, Eileen moved to California as a young child. She eventually worked at the 1939 San Francisco World Fair, served in the Marine Corps, taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade (and honored with "Miss Los Angeles Teacher of the Year"). She moved to Union Creek in 1962, and worked for the U.S. Forest Service. In 1979 she married Art. Let's keep Art in our thoughts and prayers.

## WCMRR Club Swap Meet and Railroad Show

March 27 and 28 was the weekend for swapping out a number of year's accumulation of surplus "stuff" from the

Club's nooks and crannies. Three tables were reserved for the RVMRR club's sales. All the "stuff" that we thought we could have used or was donated to the club was brought together. After collecting, sorting and pricing the "stuff", McGarvey's pickup was loaded to the ceiling, Wilson's car took what wouldn't fit in the pickup, and Dougall packed all the railroad magazines he could load. Friday was setup day at the Fairgrounds in Eugene with the public sales on Saturday and Sunday. With the addition of a roundhouse and turntable, two ponds, a water fountain, eight or ten boxes of covers, and all the magazines, we were thinking we should have had four tables. However, the big stuff went early and the three tables were just right.



*John Wilson ponders at some of the Club's merchandise.*

Good public attendance on Saturday and Sunday with money many sales made for a very successful trip. Best of all, it's gone and we do not have to store it. Overall, after expenses and consignment fees, we netted about \$1,400. A special thanks to club members who donated some items (\$300+) to be sold: Jay, Stan, John W., Bruce, and (who did I miss?). The three dynamic sales persons were Jim Dougall, John Wilson and Bruce McGarvey. There are still a few items to be sold. We'll try and place these in our display case with pricing for sales to the public on our run days. So check the case and let's see if we can sell a few more items that are surplus to the club.

## PNR Mini-Meet at CSME clubhouse April 17<sup>th</sup>.

A good turnout of model railroaders attended clinics and layout tour at the spring mini-meet. Clinics included information on car repairs to bolsters from stripped screws, coupler attachments, DCC info on Decoder Pro

programming, and various new products in the laser cut model kits. A bar-b-q lunch was prepared and a PNR board meeting was held on site. A number of modelers visited the layout of Stan Schmidt in the afternoon. This writer stayed at the clubhouse, checked out their DCC operation and visited with members running trains.

Note: a Fall Mini-meet is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 25th in Roseburg with an opportunity for folks to come on south and visit the Medford Railroad Park on Sunday. *(Bruce McGarvey)*

## RAILROAD TIME CARDS 2004

**Apr 30** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade elementary school class to Railroad Park, 10:30-2. Info: Jim Dougall 541-779-8725.

**May 27** - Grace Christen Church School youth at Railroad Park. Run trains and .....More info later.

**Jul 4-11** – PSX 2004, Puget Sound eXpress, NMRA National Convention, Seattle, Wash. [www.nmra2004.org](http://www.nmra2004.org)

**Aug 15** – Lane Society Model Railroaders 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Picnic, 2 PM at club house. RVMRR Club members invited. RSVP Dan Dexter [horaileug@juno.com](mailto:horaileug@juno.com). Also Info: thru Bruce at [iwccr@charter.net](mailto:iwccr@charter.net)

**Sept 1-4** – 24<sup>th</sup> Natl. Narrow Gauge Convention, Westin Santa Clara Hotel, Santa Clara, Calif. Info: [www.narrowgauge2004.com](http://www.narrowgauge2004.com)

**Sept 25** – Tentative date for PNR Mini-Meet, Roseburg. More info later.

**Nov 27-28** – Rogue Valley Railroad Show & Swap Meet, Medford Armory, Medford, Ore. Sat 10-5, Sun 11-4. Info: Brad Fawcett 541-535-1952, [bfawcett@mind.net](mailto:bfawcett@mind.net) or <http://rvmrc.railfan.net/>

Listings include events within a day's drive from the Rogue Valley. If you know of shows not listed here, or sometime in the future, please let me know so we can share that with our readers. Contact Bruce at [iwccr@charter.net](mailto:iwccr@charter.net) or 541-779-8145. 04/20/2004bhm.

**25 years ago** this month - **The Passing Track**

**April 1979:** *“Milo reported \$490 in the bank with all bills paid. The program was Jerry Drake’s presentation of John Allen’s G&D RR. The club is now incorporated. Our Spring Show is shaping well, May 19 at Red Cross Building. A number of clinics are in the offering. Bill Garriott received confirmation of his achieving his Civil Engineering award in the NMRA Master Model Railroader program.”*

**The April 1987 Passing Track** states that *“Those present voted at the March General Meeting to accept the square emblem, found on the masthead, as the “official” emblem for the*

*club. The emblem will appear on all club correspondence and on the new membership cards.”*

As part of your 2004 membership renewal and being our 25<sup>th</sup> year incorporated as a railroad club, members are receiving a membership card with the round logo as used for many years until the official change in 1987.

Rogue Valley Model RR Club  
PO Box 1362  
Medford, OR 97501