

The Passing Track

September 2004

Newsletter of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club

PO Box 1362—Medford, OR 97501

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

October Calendar of Events

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

September General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, September 22 7:30 PM

Marvin Curtis's video on construction of the HO-scale narrow gauge, and his library diorama.

New Layout Construction

Each Saturday 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Construction/Cleanup Sessions:

Each Thursday 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Public Run Session

Sundays—October 10 and 24 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM

(Sign up in Clubhouse to reserve operator slots)

Board Meeting:

Wednesday, October 13 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 27

7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Coast Layout Tour

Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 2. The Club is planning a tour of the coast members' layouts in Crescent City. For those who went last year, this tour was quite a highlight. Additionally, there will be new things to see this year. As always, we will carpool. Meet at the Clubhouse at 7:45 if you wish to carpool with others. We'll reach Crescent City in time to catch the "gang" at the Captain's Table. The Crescent City bunch meets there each week with regional fellow railroaders and enthusiasts for breakfast or coffee, and lots of conversation. Last year, one of the members brought some nifty SP passenger equipment on which to gawk and comment.

This, That, and the Other

If you would like your Passing Track sent via e-mail, please contact John Gerritsma: jcgerritsma@charter.net Mark Babbitt (Medford visitor, Flagstaff Model Railroad Club member, Gerritsma family friend, and DCC expert) sends his greetings from the University of Arizona. Mark is majoring in architecture. He sent along the Flagstaff

club's website for those who are interested:
<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~twp/railclub/>

August Board Meeting Minutes

The RVMRC Board met on September 8. Three board officers, 3 members and a guest were present. *(It should be noted that items of interest voted on by the board always includes votes by both the board officers and members present. Therefore, your attendance is always encouraged should you want a voice in the administrative and policy issues of the Club).* The fund raiser to allow members to “buy” their way out of painting work on the Club building has netted \$935, or almost half the anticipated cost of the contract. Painting has been completed. Bruce McGarvey presented a draft example of a sign to be installed near the entrance to the Clubhouse. The sign is about 2 feet by 2.5 feet. The sign will be printed by Snuffy and will give general information on Club meeting days and times. Tom Smith donated a large number of books to the Club. Nearly all of these books are railroad related and are hardbound copies. Jim and Bruce are working on cataloging these books and adding them to the library. Thinking ahead to the Railroad Show, we need to do some maintenance on some of the modules. A reminder that the narrow gauge modules, now at the Curtis household, will have to be moved soon. E. Don will contact Micro-Trains, who is interested in acquiring the layout. Dave Spakousky recommended that the Club install a 6-light test strip to evaluate different types of light fixtures and light intensities. It might be useful to take photos of the test installation to evaluate the effects (i.e. shadows, bright spots, etc.). Brad Fawcett will stop by Lowe’s this Saturday to check on what lights are available and prices. Bruce will bring lights he has on hand.

Ron Steffani brought a box of miscellaneous scenery items to the Club for use on the new layout. A person visiting the Railroad Park had expressed interest in doing some landscape work around the Park. Bruce invited him back to talk about landscaping possibilities around the Clubhouse. If the Club wants to have a Christmas buffet, someone will need to head this up. Up coming events include the First Division NMRA meet at the Douglas County Library September 16.

To Colorado Via Amtrak

Submitted by John Gerritsma

Note: This is the second part of a two-part story about my rail trip via Amtrak. What I experienced on this trip is perhaps a harbinger of both the passenger and freight rail situation in the future.

I have such a terrible time sleeping in a sitting or semi-prone position, which is one BIG reason I booked a sleeper. Now came the bedtime adventure. Each of us had a bed, Cathy on the lower one formed by collapsing the two opposing seats, and I in the pull-down bunk. Trouble is, when the upper berth is pulled down, there is no place to stand in the cabin. I felt I was back in grade school playing the Twister game, as we literally placed our bodies and limbs in various strange configurations. With all my body parts intact, I managed to crawl into the upper berth, securing the safety net to the ceiling, so I would not fall out rolling over in the night, or being rolled over unwittingly by the sway of the train. I would not recommend these economy cabins for someone over 6 feet tall. Needless to say, I was challenged finding a comfortable sleeping position. Nonetheless, as light as I slept, I felt rested in the morning. We pulled into Salt Lake City nearly 4 hours late. By the time we reached Denver, we were still nearly 4 hours late. On our return trip we were 4 hours late into Sacramento. I would learn via conversations with the conductor later the reason for Amtrak’s perpetual time challenges.

Between Denver and Sacramento, the California Zephyr rides Union Pacific’s tracks. While there is a courtesy to passenger trains, it only occurs if they are reasonably within their running schedule. Once behind, the problem only gets worse, because Amtrak is considered just like a freight. Union Pacific’s rail traffic has gone through the roof. On our return trip across the old transcontinental route, I counted what would be well over 150 trains per day between Salt Lake City and Laramie, Wyoming. As a consequence, there is literally no open rail along these routes. To make matters worse, UP has been routing an increasing portion of its freight traffic through single main line in Nevada and Utah that utilize routes less frequented not so long ago. So when Amtrak is squeezed between a bunch of freights, there is no place to go, but with the flow, the slower flow of freight. To show its stockholders that all this increased traffic is actually good for business, UP has been deferring a lot of its track maintenance. So, even when Amtrak has clear rail ahead, the condition of once high speed rail has deteriorated. For the most part, freight traffic has not been impacted, because rail speeds are still sufficient for moving most freight along at economical speeds. Compound this situation with Congress’s perpetual lack of funding for Amtrak, and you get the feeling that passenger rail service is on its way out in this country. Rail facilities and track are holding their own in some of the country’s busiest corridors, but not here along the route of the Zephyr. Compare the photos of the train stations at Salt Lake City with the one at Denver. The only way stations are being improved and/or even maintained is if cities/states have an interest in doing so, AND fund the improvements.

The beauty of being late, however, is that one traverses track that is normally traveled in the dark of night. Such was the case leaving Salt Lake City and up the Spanish Fork canyon. Even a porter was marveled by the new found scenery normally not seen. During one of our winding climbs up the canyon, I was able to look forward ahead of the engine and watched a moose scramble up a steep bank just as the lead engine arrived. I had no idea moose were even in Utah! As I found out later, many Utah moose have been transplanted to Rocky Mountain National Park, where moose sightings are becoming very common and enjoyable, to say the least. Besides the moose, I started seeing an abundance of pronghorn antelope.



Compare and contrast...Amtrak's Salt Lake City station and its counterpart in downtown Denver.



Suffice it to say, the scenery is simply spectacular along the route of the Zephyr, especially as we entered the Colorado River valley outside of Grand Junction, CO. For over 100 miles, the train travels along the river through spectacular canyons and Rocky Mountain scenery. Between Glenwood Springs and Denver the

train goes through 43 tunnels, some short, but some, like the Moffat Tunnel, take 20 minutes to pass through. The downside of being late, however, is that by the time we entered the Moffat Tunnel, it was dark. Perhaps some day, I can take the Denver to Winter Park ski train, and revisit the scenery now enveloped in the dark.

Because of track restrictions due to grinding and track maintenance work in the Moffat Tunnel, our return trip took us over the transcontinental route through Wyoming. The scenery is no less breathtaking, and the numbers of antelope almost outnumber the guests on the train. A must stop on any trip through Evanston, Wyoming is to take in one of the last remaining roundhouses still left pretty much intact. This beautiful and huge brick structure, built in 1871, is dominating on the south side of the Evanston. Because Amtrak was on the outside track, and a number of freights and freight strings were to the inside, I could only catch short glimpses of the roundhouse. Evanston also boasts a restored UP depot, but it was not visible from the tracks, either.

Another impressive rail structure was in Roseville, just outside Sacramento, CA. It is UP's Roseville Yard, where the number of engines in one place will knock your socks off. What a sight that was! The facility is some 4 miles long and was recently renovated with some 30 million dollars. If you are a UP fan, this is one place to do some rail fanning.

I thoroughly enjoyed my trip, though I am saddened by the state of Amtrak, its facilities, and its stature. Rights-of-way in general are in pretty shoddy shape, except where larger communities have stepped up and are footing the improvement costs. Beautiful historic rail structures are dying all along the tracks. UP and BNSF are playing games with maintenance and infrastructure maintenance, and rail in America simply does not get the funding and attention as automobiles and our highways. As Amtrak absorbs more and more cuts, I am feeling fortunate that I was able to ride on the most glorious route in the country. The trip simply reinforces what I have always believed--rail is an important piece in the transportation puzzle, and passenger rail travel is as soothing and romantic as a winter's snuggle in front of the fireplace on a snowy night!

Union Pacific Defends Trademarks

Union Pacific Railroad Company has filed a complaint in U.S. District Court for the District of Nebraska naming as defendants Lionel, L.L.C. and Athearn, Inc. The defendants are model railroad manufacturers who have refused to enter into licensing agreements for their

commercial use of Union Pacific trademarks. The complaint alleges claims of infringement of federally registered trademarks, trademark dilution under § 43(c) of the Lanham Act, Unfair Competition under § 43(a) of the Lanham Act, common law trademark infringement, unfair competition, and violation of the Nebraska Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act.

Union Pacific believes it is imperative that it defends its trademarks against unauthorized use by Lionel and Athearn. Both companies repeatedly have rejected Union Pacific's lawful licensing requests. Not only have Lionel and Athearn failed to license use of Union Pacific's historic trademarks, they have violated trademark protection laws by producing new models featuring Union Pacific's latest "Building America" branding and advertising campaign.

Union Pacific notes that Lionel has a very active licensing program that protects its own trademark. It is difficult to understand why Lionel and Athearn believe they are above the law, while more than 60 other manufacturers, including many model railroad manufacturers, have licensed their Union Pacific products in accordance with the law.

Sky, Paint, Planning, and Lights

Bruce, John Wilson, Wil Cleveland and others experimented with some blue sky and clouds on the upper stretch of the line over the Cascades. Brown cardboard mockups of scenery contour lines add to the visualization of the mountain scenery and blue, cloudy sky. Saturday's (September 11) planning session was postponed, but the group present did spend several hours experimenting with various sets of lights for mounting underneath the upper level to light up Crater Yard and Agate. The group settled on a 16 inch fluorescent type light that emits beautiful natural looking light without casting shadows. The group further agreed upon an installation scheme. Brad and Jay then proceeded to install several of the "rejected" bulbs above the hidden staging yard on the east end of the layout.



Ben Vander Veld completed painting on the Clubhouse August 20. The Club raised nearly \$1,000 to help offset the approximate \$2,000 bill for painting the building.



A glossy UP yellow now adorns the building. The glossy more accurately resembles the lead-based paint that historically covered UP buildings.



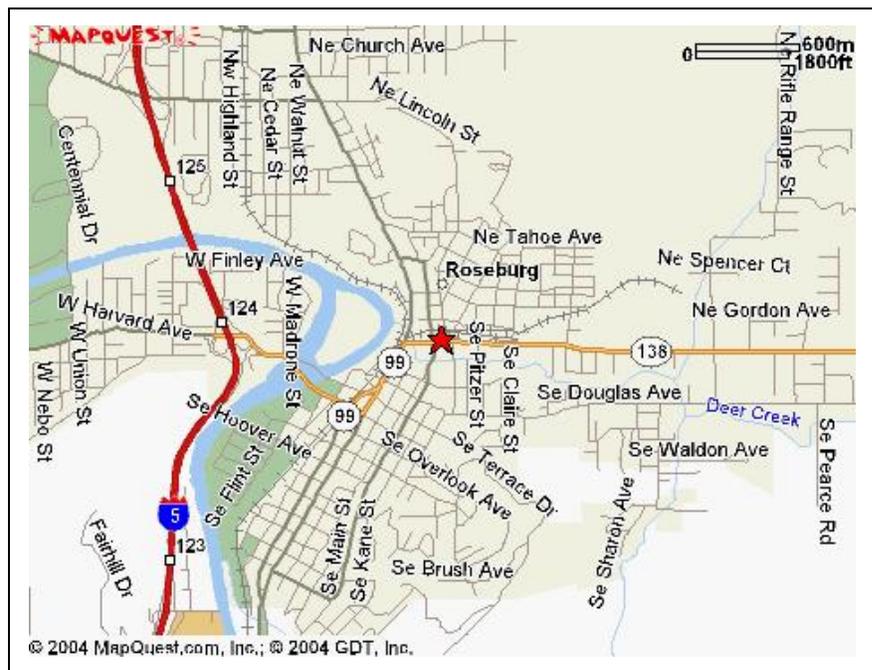
1st Division, PNR-NMRA Annual Fall Mini-Meet

Douglas County Library
1409 NE Diamond Lake Blvd.
Roseburg, Oregon

Saturday, October 16, 2004
9:00 AM until 3:00 PM

(Coffee pot will be on at 8:00 AM)

Clinics, Layout Tours, Favorite Model Contest



RAILROAD TIME CARDS 2004 - 2005

Oct 2-3 – TTOS Sacramento Valley Div. River City Toy Train Meet, Scottish Rite Center, 10 AM to 3 PM, Sacramento, Calif. Info: Jeff 916-481-4694 or afjeff_56@yahoo.com

Oct 9-10 – Eastern Cascades Model Railroad Club and Central Oregon Area Live Steamers Open House, 10 AM to 4 PM, at clubhouse - 21520 Modoc Lane, Bend, Ore. Info 541-317-1545.

Oct 11 – 81st Anniversary of “Oregon’s Great Trail Holdup” - *Bandits murdered 4 – Didn’t get a dime!* At about 12:40 PM as SP Train no. 13 emerged from Tunnel 13 in the Siskiyou Mountains. Info: Contact the DeAutremont brothers, deceased – left no forwarding address.

Oct 16 – 1st Division PNR-NMRA Fall Mini-Meet, Douglas County Public Library, 1409 Diamond Lake Blvd, Roseburg, Ore. Sat. 9 AM until 3 PM, clinics and layout tours. Open to all railroad modelers and PNR membership is not required to attend. Info: Mike Adams 541-461-0156 or mdadams006@aol.com, Bruce 541-779-8145 or iwcr@charter.net.

Nov 13-14 – GATS, Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Ore. Info: www.gats.com

Nov 27-28 – **Rogue Valley Railroad Show & Swap Meet**, Medford Armory, Medford, Ore. Sat 10-5, Sun 11-4. Info: Brad Fawcett 541-535-7952, bfawcett@mind.net or <http://rvmrc.railfan.net/>

2005

Apr 8-10 – WCMRR Club 17th Annual Railroad Show & Swap Meet, Lane County Fairgrounds, Eugene, Ore. Info: Lee Temple, tandt@ram-mail.com

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 iwcr@charter.net or 541-779-8145. 09/08/2004bhm.

25 years ago this month - The Passing Track September 1979:

“Club was meeting at Far West Savings and Loan. Monthly field trip – this month to Dick Cochran’s residence and his large HO scale layout. A report on the Siskiyou fan trip visiting Chinese work camps, fantastic scenery, etc. September’s meeting to include, besides business, Rick Kang’s N scale switching module from Calgary, a slide show clinic on model railroad photography by John Allen, plus the famous “Reno Raffle (?)”.

Rogue Valley Model RR Club
PO Box 1362
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