



The Passing Track

April-May 2005

Newsletter of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club

PO Box 1362—Medford, OR 97501

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

June Calendar of Events

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

Public Run Session

Sundays—June 12 and 26

10:30 am to 3:00 pm

New Layout Construction

Saturdays— June 4, 11, 18, 25

Generally between 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Construction/Cleanup Sessions:

Thursdays—June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Board Meeting:

Wednesday, June 8

7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, June 22

7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

May Board Meeting Recap

The RVMR Club Board met on May 11. Lights and safety were discussed at length. Recently, two club members experienced minor injuries as a result of a lack of lighting in the area between the Clubhouse and the parking lot. The lack of lights caused the Miniatures Club to stop meeting at the Clubhouse. The lack of illumination presents not only a safety but security problem as well. LTM has offered the Club a utility pole should we wish to make the arrangements for installation. Bruce will get with several other Park clubs and organize a return trip to City Parks Department to plead our case. Our hope is some collaboration from the City to get some lights put up. Two new members were approved—Rich Stark, who has been a member previously (#219), and Vincent Mascaritolo, an electrical engineer interested in signaling and associated electronics. A runaround track has been proposed for the Eagle Point area. LBF expects to complete our special car order in about two weeks. A loss of lease on the previous manufacturing facility, and recent move to a new facility has complicated production for a spell. Programs for the General Membership meeting in May includes club board elections and another video segment of Tracks Ahead. Upcoming programs include tree clinics. Bud Shirley has offered a primer on signaling, but likely not for a Wednesday membership meeting. Some problem switches have been replaced with DCC friendly Atlas switches. More replacements are expected. Some changes in the electrical panel are needed—upgrade to 20 amp circuits--to accommodate immediate needs.

Clifford Niesen (1913-2005)

Clifford Francis Niesen, 92, passed away April 16, 2005, at his home in Crescent City.

Mr. Niesen was born April 3, 1913, in Minneapolis. He grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area as well as in California's Central Valley. He studied aircraft engineering at Oakland Polytechnic College in the 1930s. He worked for Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank, Calif., where he was on the design teams for both the P-38 fighter plane and the Constellation airliner.

He married his wife, Millicent, on June 19, 1937. In 1954, Mr. Niesen moved his family to Crescent City, where he worked primarily as the assistant county engineer. He moonlighted to support his large family by designing numerous homes and business buildings around the county. He was also clerk of the Mountain School Board in Gasquet where the board planned and built the "new" facility, which was recently lost to fire.

His hobbies were model boats, trains and airplanes, and he enjoyed the activities of the local model building clubs.

Mr. Niesen is survived by his wife, Millicent; brother Arthur Patrick Swift, Jr.; seven children and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren.

A memorial services will be held later this summer when his family will be able to attend.



The family prefers contributions be made to the Del Norte Scholarship Foundation, 1301 E1 Dorado St., Crescent City, CA 95531.

Cliff was a Charter and Life Member (number 23) of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club. A number of us had the luxury of visiting him and his layout last fall. Though he was on the mend from a fall and broken hip, he managed to come up the stairs to his layout, and as you can see, had a "million dollar" grin. Millicent read all our newsletters to him and reported that "some of his happiest times were about model railroading. He was so proud of his Life Membership."

Del Norte Short Lines Revisited

The passing of Cliff Niesen evoked some strong recent memories of visits in 2003 and 2004 to the various coast members and their layouts. The following is a note Cliff's wife Millicent wrote to the Club upon his death:

"Clifford Niesen swung on the caboose of the last train out, Saturday, 4/11/05 am. This hasty card does not allow space to write all of your names, but I want to thank you ALL so very much for: 1) Your dear card, recently, which you all signed; his sight was gone, but I read it to him and he knew. 2) His life membership; he was so proud of that. It hangs framed, in our living room. 3) Your pictures and report of your C.C. Railroad

layout tour. That really pleased him so much! 4) The years of friendships he enjoyed with you. Cliff went peacefully, after several months in a hospital bed at home. It was a peaceful release. God Bless you all."

Love, Millicent

The Club's prayers and thoughts are with you, Millicent. Your note is a reminder for all of us that we provide one another with a camaraderie and richness that enhances our collective lives. In Cliff's honor, here is a portion of the September 2003 *Passing Track* story of the Del Norte Short Lines.

...The 6 or so vehicles in the convoy quickly descended upon Cliff's house, a wood-sided home with an awesome view of the rocky oceanfront. Cliff, recovering from a recent stroke, was a new face to only a few of us. Members of the Del Norte club come to Cliff's monthly for an operating session on his layout. Cliff's layout is accessed by a steep, but sturdy pull down ladder just off the kitchen and on the edge of the living room. Small talk completed, we anxiously ascended the ladder. More remarkable that day than any of the layouts was Cliff's determined climb into the attic layout, his first visit to his layout in many months...remarkable because Cliff's mobility is made possible only with a walker, the result of his stroke. Being unhappy with his job in Burbank, California in the 1950's, Cliff packed his wife and 7 kids



A smiling Cliff Niesen is happy to be in the attic, a partial display of rolling stock in the background.

to this community with not even the promise of a job! It is this kind of determination that Cliff exhibits as he joined us in the attic. The layout is a loop to loop with a couple of towns. It is modeled after the Marysville to Oroville line of the California Northern Railway. Railroad operations are intense with pitfalls quietly designed into the session.



There never seems to be enough time, or room, to complete one's operations. With 7 throttles and 4 yards, there is a room full of operations. It is easy to see that the people frequenting this room are model railroaders. There isn't a tool of the trade not present somewhere in the nooks and crannies of this room. In addition, Cliff adorns the room with plenty of display cases and railroad related stuff. A side room displays Cliff's other love--remote controlled airplanes.

Gathering once again downstairs, the group was treated to homemade goodies and juice, served by one of Cliff's daughters. Cliff's wife, Millicent, joined the party, and another round of introductions occurred. Looking at his daughter and then turning to his wife Cliff quipped, "now, how many kids do we have?" where upon his wife retorted, "if you weren't in that walker Cliff, I'd crack your knees with this cane." That playful banter was just a mere drop of the warmth we all felt in Cliff's house.



John Wilson, a Del Norte Club guest, and Ron Abrahamson chatter about operations on the California Northern.

Klamath Falls Museum Expresses Thanks

Judith Hassen of the Klamath County Museums writes:

“The staff and volunteers of the Klamath County Museum thank you for sharing your model trains, your knowledge of model trains, and your delight in all trains with us. The three days you were here, March 11, 12, and 13, were filled with the sounds of trains running and the sounds of people talking and laughing. We had a wonderful time! And your fabulous trains and gracious club members helped us bring \$1,027 into the museum in admission fees.

Thank you, too, for welcoming the members of our new model railroad club in Klamath Falls. They are excited about next year and talking of building modules and layouts. They want to set up in the large meeting room and open the connecting doors. (We'll have to turn off that alarm!)

We look forward to visiting your railroad park this summer and attending your railroad show in the armory on Thanksgiving weekend. Please come in to the museum anytime you are in Klamath Falls. You are our special friends and we will always make you welcome.”

In addition, Joe and Daniel Brick write:

“Bruce, Brad and all the RR gang at the RV Model RR club. We just can't thank you enough! You did a great job, again! Thanks from all of us here in Klamath Falls.”

April Board Meeting Notes

The Board met on April 13th, 2005, with E. Don Pettit calling the meeting to order. The Secretary was out of town so Jim Dougall graciously took notes. The March meeting minutes were approved. There was no treasurer's report because Bruce McGarvey was also out of town. Jay reported that both the modular layout and the permanent layout ran well, with no problems, for the first Sunday run open to the public on April 10. Jim Dougall reported that he has been sorting through donated magazines for issues that the library can use to fill

voids in the Club's library. He has also been sorting through and placing donated books on the library shelves. The library is out of shelf space for all of our magazines and book collections. This has made it necessary to surplus many of the railroad prototype magazines, such as *Trains* and *Pacific Rail News*, to make room for model railroading type magazines. More surplus of magazines will be required. Next project will be the inventorying of the Club's video collection. Jay Mudge reported that the April General Membership meeting program will be another *Tracks Ahead* video. Jim Dougall gave a report on the results of the Club sales at the April 8th through 10th 2005 Eugene Railroad Show and Swap Meet. The total Club sales for the weekend was \$601.25. Jay Mudge reported that he gave the details of the RVMRC special car production run to LBF Company in Roseburg. The cars will be offered in kit form, prepainted and lettered. Kits will include metal wheels and Kadee couplers. The kits should be ready in about a week. Brad Fawcett reported that the Rogue Valley Model “A” Club will visit the Railroad Park on Saturday, April 16th, from 11 am to 1 pm. Brad Fawcett, Jay Mudge, and Jim Dougall said that they would be at the Railroad Park building during those hours to show the layout and answer questions.

Better Late Than Never

The April and May *Passing Tracks* have been combined into this single issue. A change in work-related duties and an extra assignment resulted in the *Passing Track* editor being unavailable to complete the April until well into May. You can always submit items of interest to jcgerritsma@charter.net, or hand deliver them to me at various Club functions. I also respond to phone calls (664-1139). *Ed.*

PNR Event at RVMR Club

The Club has been asked if we would like to host a PNR/NMRA mini-meet in Medford some time this fall. Any and all suggestions for activities and participation are welcome. Please contact Bruce McGarvey.

1ST Division Meet in Bend, Oregon

**June 4th at the China Sun Restaurant
150 Bend River Avenue**

Clinics will start at 9 am, with the doors opening for socializing at 8. There will be a favorite open model contest, along with a chance to win a door prize just for attending. Several layouts will be open for tour including the HO scale layout of the Eastern Cascade Railroad Club. So here is a chance to spend some time in beautiful central Oregon and enjoy some model railroading. You might even find time to check out the “larger” scale railroads in town, too. This event will be open to members of the PNR/NMRA and non-members also. Feel free to contact me at mdadams006@aol.com for more information.

I would like to hold a board meeting (during lunch?) if at all possible at this location. The meeting room will accommodate 60-70 people. We have been asked to take lunch at the restaurant as a condition of use of the room. Roads should be good to Bend at that time of the year. The China Sun Restaurant is located south of the Shopko store in the Bend River Mall. There are several hobby shops in the area, as well. As usual, look for some good clinics and door prizes. Hope to see many of you there.

Michael Adams—1st Div. Superintendent

Unique Modeling Idea

Remember these? For those who never saw the Burma Shave signs, here is a quick lesson in our history of the 1930's and '40's. Before the Interstates, when everyone drove the old 2 lane roads, Burma Shave signs would be posted all over the countryside in farmers' fields. They were small red signs with white letters. Five signs, about 100 feet apart, each containing 1 line of a 4 line couplet...and the obligatory 5th sign advertising Burma Shave, a popular shaving cream. (For those traveling in Northern Arizona, three sets of the Burma Shave signs are still in existence today along US Route 66 between Seligman and Kingman...*ed.*)

TRAINS DON'T WANDER
ALL OVER THE MAP '
CAUSE NOBODY SITS
IN THE ENGINEER'S LAP
Burma Shave

CAR IN DITCH
DRIVER IN TREE
THE MOON WAS FULL
AND SO WAS HE.
Burma Shave

DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD
TO GAIN A MINUTE
YOU NEED YOUR HEAD
YOUR BRAINS ARE IN IT
Burma Shave

PASSING SCHOOL ZONE
TAKE IT SLOW
LET OUR LITTLE
SHAVERS GROW
Burma Shave

RAILROAD TIME CARDS 2005

Jun 4 – PNR Mini-Meet, Bend, Ore. China Sun, 150 NE Bend River Mall Drive. Clinics and layout tours. More information in newsletter. Clinics start at 9 AM, layout tours to follow.

Jul 2-3 – Getting Around – Transportation theme, SOHS Hanley Farm, 1053 Hanley Road (Hwy 238), Central Point Ore. 11 AM – 4 PM, RVMRR Club to be a part of the exhibitors.

Jul 5-9 – Go By Train 2005, Nat'l Railway Historical Society Annual Convention, Lloyd Center – Double Tree Hotel, Portland, Ore. Info: www.nrhs2005.com/

Jul 9 – Dunsmuir Railroad Days. Info: Dave Smith at 530-235-0369 or milepost322@yahoo.com

Jul 17 – FUMC all church picnic, Sunday at the RR Park. More info to follow,

Oct 8 – Corvallis Model Railroad Swap Meet, Burton County Fairgrounds, Corvallis, Ore. 10 AM – 4 PM. Info: Patrick Sloma at 541-760-5245, p.sloma@comcast.net

Oct 8-9 – Eastern Cascades Model RR Club & Central Oregon Area Live Steamers open house, 21520 Modoc Lane, Bend, Ore. Info: 541-317-1545

Oct (TBA)– Northwest Narrow Gauge Meeting, Salem, Ore. Info: Dr. Monte Pearson at drrock-1@earthlink.net

Nov 26-27 – **28th Annual Rogue Valley Railroad Show**, Medford Armory, Medford, Ore. Info: Brad Fawcett 541-535-7952, bfawcett@mind.net. Watch this space for details.

If you know of shows not listed here please let me know so we can share that with our readers.
Contact Bruce at iwccr@charter.net or 541-779-8145. 03/18/2005bhm.

Thought for the month: "The San Francisco Cable cars are the only mobile National Monuments!"

Rogue Valley Model RR Club
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