



## The Passing Track

June 2008

Newsletter of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club

PO Box 1362—Medford, OR 97501

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

### Board Election Results

*The election for Board Officers was held during the May general membership meeting. Dave Carr was elected for a second consecutive term as President. The Club elected Jay Mudge as Vice-President. Jim Dougall continued as Secretary, and Bruce McGarvey won the Treasurer's position. Due to his stunning election loss, John Gerritsma will continue to be the Passing Track editor. The Board would like to thank those on the Election Committee, those who threw their hats into the election "ring", and those who participated in the vote of the new board members. Once again, the Club is in good hands.*

### Theft at Club During Sunday Open House

The P&E's SD-9 in custom depot olive green was stolen during the May 11 Sunday open house. Jay Mudge reported that he had just finished pulling the train into the yard, and was then distracted to address a problem another member had with DCC, and when he returned to the yard, the lead engine to his train was gone. There were other members on the floor, but no one recalled seeing anything suspicious. This past Sunday, however, Dave Spakousky, being extra diligent as a result of the unsolved theft, observed some very suspicious behavior from one of our visitors, and then later recalled having seen the same person during the time the theft occurred. While merely being identified as "suspicious" at this time, the man was described by Dave as mid-fiftyish, somewhat unkempt, wearing scruffy, baggy clothing. The man left the park riding a bicycle. Dave will continue to identify this man to other members, so we can be especially diligent should the man visit the Club, again.

The Club took immediate action by constructing two-foot high Plexiglass window along the entire stretch of the modular yard. In addition, members are all instructed to be more vigilant about who is visiting the Club and what their actions are. Jay continues to monitor e-bay and other sites for possible sale of the SD-9. The mood in the Clubhouse the Saturday following the theft was rather somber. While this theft certainly does not rank among the annals of heinous crimes, there truly was a feeling of personal violation among the Club members. This is simple proof that we are passionate about our layout, and each of us have left a part of our being somewhere on and around the layout. Additional diligence on behalf of *all* Club members will hopefully deter any future thievery. The incident has also been reported to the police. The Club has provided Jay with a replacement SD-9. Jay thanked the Board, but quipped that the replacement is in the wrong color (i.e. not yet painted to P&E colors)...to which Dave Carr quipped that the one that was stolen was also the wrong color (i.e. before Jay custom painted it).

## May Board Meeting Notes

The Club Board met on May 14, 2008. Four Club officers and five members were present. The club's finances continue to be in good standing, with the major current expenses related to the building of the permanent layout. Year-to-date large expenses are the new heating/cooling unit and the Club's insurance. Membership dues are due June 1 for the upcoming year.

Bruce McGarvey reported that he installed two energy efficient spotlights. He also reported the light over the front porch is not working properly. The Board approved the purchase of a replacement light for about \$33.00. Bruce also reported that Rick Aubin of the Historical Society has access to railroad ties for the park's landscaping needs and Jim Dougall volunteered to help Rick bring them to the park. Ed Kleinman requested and was granted a key.

E. Don reported that Dan Wilkinson rebounded and repaired a book from the Club's library. In appreciation, the Board voted to give Dan a share certificate of the P&E stock.

Carlos Furcal submitted an application for a student membership and it was approved by the Board. An application for regular membership (without the membership fee) submitted by Don Terrell was denied by the Board.

E. Don also reported that there are problems with Proto 2000 wheel set and axles. The Board approved expenditure for replacement wheel sets from Intermountain for the Club's fleet.

Dave Spakousky requested that club members have trains ready to go on Saturday before the Sunday run sessions to avoid lengthy setup efforts. He also encouraged members to continue with the scenery efforts.

A number of groups are scheduled to visit the RR park, soon. ESPEE in Oregon will visit on June 7. KADEE will visit on June 20. The Junction City Modelers are discussing whether they will be at the Club for an operation's session over the Labor Day Weekend.

The Board acknowledged the following individuals with appreciation for their help in hosting the various visiting groups so far this year: Bruce McGarvey, Jay Mudge, Wil Cleveland, Dave Spakousky, and Jim Dougall.

Bruce noted that a railroad-themed wall sculpture was sold for \$5.00 by one of the Club members. It was, however, on consignment for \$50.00, so the Board approved to reimburse the consignee for an additional \$30.

The Board approved to obtain a replacement engine to Jay for the one that was stolen.

The Board also conducted business at the May General Membership meeting. New officers were elected (see above). Ed Kleinman was also authorized to purchase signal detection devices for approximately \$270.

### Operations

Until now, the issue of Operations has been moot. The permanent layout was simply not far enough along to seriously plan for real railroad operations. As we progress with the scenery and the signaling/electronic detection systems, the Club is at a crossroads. Thus, the observations and discussions currently at hand...

Larry Tuttle made observations on the ESPEE visit versus the Sunday open house crowd, and noted how much fun and interest there is from a group that knows a thing or two about REAL railroad operations. He compared the open house crowds who come to see trains running in circles and/or at unrealistic speeds in circles. The more trains in operation, the better. *[Having visited a number of prominent layouts open to the public (the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry, and the various clubs in the San Diego Model Railroad Museum as two examples), I have also observed that this is a very common format and expectation for public viewing of layouts--ed.]* Larry, however, has begged the question, is such a format appropriate for the RVMRC?

As Larry explains, "To start with, we need to embrace "Model Railroading is Fun!" Our trains must run reliably *[even the massive number of unrealistically fast trains running on the Chicago Museum's layout run flawlessly—ed.]*; we need to run them professional. Visible pride in a flawless operation is the goal. Then, we need to orchestrate these trains to put on a show. The first step is to form a new gang, the Operations Gang. We need to determine what we want in the way of a public show and then train our operators to put it on."

"Going back to my years in Evans Valley Fire/Rescue, we had an old saying. "If someone screws up, ask the standard question. Who trained him?" Larry notes that in our case, the answer is no one, because we have not spent adequate time training Club members in railroad operations. Our permanent layout is specifically designed for operating sessions, and all we seem to be doing is

running trains “in circles”. Once the public understands railroad operations, they will enjoy the layout more.

Spurred by Larry’s email and question, the topic was discussed further at the June Board meeting. The following are highlights from that discussion.

- Several long-time members commented that the chaotic running of trains, some with constant maintenance issues, needs to end, and the Sunday run sessions need to better reflect the operational purpose for which the permanent layout was built. This means equipment on the railroad must have appropriate coupler heights, car weights, steel wheel sets, functioning equipment, etc. E. Don is available to help with meeting the Club’s standards.
- Club members must become proficient in the use of DCC. The Club has an outstanding offer to help those who cannot afford DCC and/or do not have the skills needed to operate DCC. In addition for those who prefer DC, there is still a DC loop planned for the Klamath Falls extension of the permanent layout, and DC is always available at shows in which the modules are used.
- We all need to be trained in railroad operations. We need to think like REAL engineers. We need to shed our toy-like approach to model railroading. Some recalled the early days of the modules when new members (novice engineers) were assigned to veteran conductors to learn the appropriate ways to run a train.
- We need to accommodate all Club members as much as possible, but need to stay focused on running the permanent layout as an operating railroad.

Discussions will continue and no decisions were made at the June Board meeting. However, Board President Dave Carr emphatically stated that we will return to the basics to lead us in a direction that implements the features of the permanent layout as they were designed (i.e. back to the operational days when the modules were the “permanent layout”—in other words, our “roots”).

# June 2008 Calendar of Events

## Public Run Session

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Each Month  
10:30 AM to 3:30 PM

## Board Meeting

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of Each Month  
7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

## General Construction/New Layout Saturdays

Generally From 9:00 AM to 4 PM

## General Membership Meeting

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month  
7:30 PM to 9:00

## RAILROAD TIME CARDS 2008

June 13-15 – **Railroad Days** Dunsmuir, Calif. Historic train cars will be brought to Dunsmuir by Union Pacific. Enjoy handcar and speeder car rides, parade, downtown walking tour, and more. Info: <http://dunsmuir.com/visitor/railroad.php> or 1-800-Dunsmuir.

June 12-15 – **Chilliwack Interchange 2008 – PNR 2008 Regional Convention**, Chilliwack, BC. Best Western Rainbow Country Inn. Info: [www.chilliwackinterchange2008.com](http://www.chilliwackinterchange2008.com)

June 26-28 – **SP&S Historical Society Convention**. Info: [www.spshts.org](http://www.spshts.org)

July 13-19 – **“Anaheim Special”**, NMRA National Convention, Anaheim, Calif. Info: [www.nmra.org/2008/](http://www.nmra.org/2008/)

Oct 11-12 – Central Oregon Live Steamers & Eastern Cascades Model Railroad Club Open House. 21520 Modoc Lane, Bend, OR. Info: 541-317-1545

Nov 29-30 – **31<sup>st</sup> Rogue Valley Railroad Show**, Medford Armory, Medford, OR. Model railroad displays, exhibits, swap meet, door prizes, and more. Info: Bill 541-821-5547 or Brad 541-535-7952 [bfawcett@mind.net](mailto:bfawcett@mind.net)

If you know of shows not listed here please let me know so we can share that information with our readers.  
Contact Bruce at [ivcrr@charter.net](mailto:ivcrr@charter.net) or 541-890-8145. 06/09/2008

## The Warning Signs: You might be a Model Railroader if...

- You name the places on your railroad after your wife and children.

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