



The Passing Track

March-April 2011

Newsletter of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club

PO Box 1362—Medford, OR 97501

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

Park Session for 2011 Underway

The annual ritual known as the Public Run Days at the Medford Railroad Park are underway. With the usual hiccups to start the season, the Club's layout settled down on the second weekend to near perfection. Our guests who were first timers were duly impressed. Those who are re-visiting for the second or umpteenth time were quick to find the "new" additions to the layout, and were equally impressed. Both Sundays were accompanied by some rain, but not enough to dampen anyone's spirits. With Easter being the more quiet of the two April park days, the RVMRC had a more relaxed atmosphere to allow most folks the opportunity to be "toured" around the entire layout, including some loose supervision from White City to Butte Falls. Most of our guests got the nickel tour to boot. On both Sundays, some of our visitors were handed the controls to several of the trains. Needless to say, there were many very happy guests to the Club.

More than ever, Club members who run trains on Sunday need to be able to share our story with the visiting publics. While few are masters of the history, design, electronics, and operations of the railroad, all of us can use a little refresher about such topics to be able to relay to our inquisitive visitors. As shared so wonderfully by Larry Tuttle at last month's general membership meeting, the history of the Railroad Park gives one a monstrous sense of accomplishment. The Medford Parks division on the City of Medford website has the wonderful DVD produced by the Railroad Park. It is definitely worth the time to view it, if not alone for the game of guessing who those younger versions of our older club members are.

As to the history of the Pacific and Eastern...

The Pacific & Eastern began as the Medford & Crater Lake Railroad in Dec. 1904. Official ground breaking was in April 1905. The railroad reached Eagle Point in spring of 1907 and due to higher than expected costs ceased operation in May 1907.

In May 1907 James A. Hill, who was also involved in the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railroad purchased the line renaming the railroad the Pacific & Eastern Railway. It was Hill's goal to use the line as part of a bigger plan of reaching California. Construction was restarted to Butte Falls and progressed smoothly. The line to Butte Falls was finished on April 1, 1911. An economic downturn in 1918 doomed the line with operations ceasing in Jan. 1919.

The rails lay dormant until August 1920 when James N. Brownlee and Millard D. Olds pooled their resources into the Brownlee-Olds Lumber Company. Brownlee also bought the Pacific & Eastern Railway and all rolling stock. Their goal was to use the line to move timber from the nearby mountains to a new mill in Medford. In 1923 Brownlee sold his shares to Olds. In May of 1924 Olds sold everything to John S. Owen. Owen and his backers formed the Owen-Oregon Lumber Company. The Medford Logging Railroad Company was incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary.

In the late 1920's serious thought was given to extending the line from Butte Falls to Klamath Falls. It was the hope of the planners that the line would give shippers a second route for product moving out of the valley. The financial collapse of 1929 ended the dream as funds became unavailable to finance the project.

...or did it? And now, the rest of the story.

The Medford Corporation ran on the rails of the former Pacific & Eastern through the 1930's. Eventually Medco and other lumber and business interests in the Rogue Valley became frustrated with the iron grip the Southern Pacific had on freight traffic in the area. These companies began to reconsider a rail line over the Cascades tying in with the Great Northern. When the Great Northern got wind of these plans, it took another look at completing the Pacific & Eastern and offered financial assistance in exchange for preferred interchange in Klamath Falls. It came as little surprise that Weyerhaeuser Timber Company's West Block Lines, radiating out of Keno toward Buck Lake, came within thirty miles of Medco's lines heading southeast out of Butte Falls. Weyerhaeuser was contacted and it was agreed that the Great Northern and Rogue Valley interests would form a common carrier railroad and take over certain Weyerhaeuser lines in exchange for handling Weyerhaeuser log trains to Keno and Klamath Falls.

By 1940, money had been raised, a route surveyed and construction begun. As the United States entered World War II, the Pacific & Eastern entered Klamath Falls.

Over the years improvements were made. Grades and curves, acceptable on a logging line had to be eased for the P&E. Heavier rail and additional ballast was installed. The railroad was rebuilt to allow 25 mph freight service and 35 mph passenger trains. In the winter of 1942, a slide took out 450 feet of main line on a cut west of Summit and a westbound freight was unable to stop, the engineer and fireman perishing. The following year, a heavy eastbound failed to stop on the grade into Keno and collided head-on with a fast westbound, again with tragic loss of life. A decision was made to install Automatic Block Signals in the mountainous part of the P&E in order to detect slides, other trains and track defects.

In 1989, the current year on the P&E, business is good and there is still lots of timber and lumber moving as well as other freight (the Spotted Owl timber wars and the Great Recession of 2007 have not yet started). The Great Northern has become the Burlington Northern and the P&E interchanges with them as well as the Southern Pacific. P&E shippers enjoy a choice of routes out of Klamath Falls: BN's Inside Gateway to Stockton, CA. and points south; BN's Oregon Trunk to Wishram, WA. with connections east and west; and SP's Modoc Line to Nevada and points east.

In Medford, the P&E interchanges with the SP's Siskiyou Line with some traffic to and from the California and Oregon Coast in Grants Pass. The California and Oregon Coast was once envisioned to connect Grants Pass, OR with Crescent City, CA. While it actually only made it as far as Waters Creek, just west of Wilderville, OR, in our scenario, it was completed to Crescent City, which has become a secondary west coast port.

The next time a visitor asks a question about the P&E, you will have a story to tell.

April Board Meeting Notes

The Board of Directors met on April 13, 2011 with 7 members present. Our finances are reported to be in good standing. Our current rate of interest being received on our accounts is in the neighborhood of 1 to 1.5%, an improvement over the past several years.

The DCC System was rebooted last Sunday. On Monday several of the hand held controllers were found with batteries still in place. Several were found with batteries turned the wrong way. The number of addresses available appears to be closer to 120 and not 999, making it more important to dispatch (clear) engines at the end of a run session. When releasing an engine throttle must be at zero and all accessories need to be cleared for the slot to be cleared. All MU'd sets need to be cleared. Rail joiners have been found to be failing in several areas, particularly in the yard. They do not appear to be able to support the weight being placed on them when cleaning the rail. Dave S. will look into some type of support.

Already 70 of 84 tables for the November 2011 Railroad Show have been spoken for. One vendor from may be looking into renting a whole room downstairs with 20 tables. There may be an event looming the week of June 26 thru July 1, 2012. In conjunction with that show, there will be an "Evening at the Park" for attendees. There may be a show at the Armory open to show attendees on Friday and to the public on Saturday. We may be committed to having the park open. There also is a possible May 2012 PNR/NW Region Regional Convention to be held in Southern Oregon, and may be a combined meet including N. California.

Four members have failed to respond to inquiries about their overdue membership and will be removed from mailing list. Two new associate members were accepted. Two hundred newly designed membership applications will be printed.

Bruce reported that, "I'm going to make an at least one extension so visitors to shows who are unable to access the inside of the layout will be able to operate a train from outside the layout. We had one visitor who was unable to operate his train from inside the layout due to physical restrictions.

Dick Stark reported a breakthrough from the other clubs to assist with parking lot duties. Mike Miller from the G scale group took the lead last Sunday and did a fantastic job. Question was asked to the painting of the lines in the parking lot. City has hired a sub contractor for the job and has agreed with all requests. Job will not be done until we get some dry weather.

Missing engine mentioned last month is in safe hands. Dave S. talked to Loren Snyder and received the following. The engine is a combined model in that the larger super structure is designed to be used as an Nn3 locomotive and the smaller as Z scale. This from Joe Dimato at Micro-Trains who is currently in charge of the locomotive. Dave S. said the loco was in the donation from Coral Edwards and may be the prototype that Keith was working on in his home shop. Loren will keep us in the loop.

Good article covering the club in the April newsletter from the Greeley, Colorado club. Newsletter is posted on the bulletin board.

Highlites From the March Board Meeting

Dick Stark passed around a picture of the display he and Bruce put together for the Medford library. Basically, it shows off the park's 30th anniversary and will be on display for the next 2 months. Library really likes the display and will be placing signs to direct patrons to their display which is located on the second floor. Later there is a chance for another display in November and December. November is Model RR Month. Dave Carr commented, "At least there is no blue engine. Thomas is gone." To which Bruce responded, "Not so fast- just look a little closer." To which a mighty groan was heard.



The Historical Society is getting ready to mail out invitations for contributions to complete the rebuild of #4. Would we like to include the club membership? Bruce suggested an article for the newsletter would be a good way to inform club members about the Historical Society's goals for the #4.

The Corvallis club will be dismantling their layout. The club voted to tear out the "Old" layout and start over. You may want to consider a quick trip north in the near future to see what is going away. The club is known as The Corvallis Society of Model Engineers.

Larry mentioned that on Monday morning (March 14) we are expecting a visit from Bill Kempner. Bill is associated with the Greeley, Colorado club that was in *Model Railroader* several issues ago. Maybe we can develop an interchange with the Greeley club, whose layout features a connection to Klamath Falls. The morning visit will be followed by an op session at George Booth's in the afternoon.

In Remembrance

Robert "Bob" Edwin Griffith gently passed away at his home Monday, February 28, 2011. He was surrounded by loved ones at his passing. Bob was born in Des Moines, Iowa, on February 6, 1926.

Bob and his wife, Winona, were very successful square dance callers throughout the Midwest. Bob retired as a captain from the Des Moines Fire Department in 1981, and moved to the Rogue Valley that spring. He was active at the Medford Senior Center, flew model airplanes and loved modeling trains. Bob spent many days on the course at Cedar Links or just in the restaurant having coffee with the boys.

Bob is survived by his brother, Jerry; two sons, Gary and Brian Griffith; and grandchildren, Tony, Francisco, Danna, Clint, Katie, Drake, Dillon and companion Louella. He was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Winona. Bob will be missed by many.

Board Officer Elections in May

Elections for board officers will be held at the May General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, May 25. Those interested in holding an office, please contact any of the existing board officers or Jim Dougall.

May 2011 Calendar of Events

General Construction/New Layout Saturdays

Generally From 10:00 AM to 4 PM

Operations Session**

2nd Saturday of Each Month

Saturday, May 14
10 am to 3 pm

Board Meeting

2nd Wednesday of each month
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

General Membership Meeting

4th Wednesday of each month
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

**Please sign up for engineer and conductor assignments upon arrival. By coming before the session starts, you have time to setup/acquire throttles, radios, and motive equipment, if needed, as well as become familiar with the assignment. Operations session begins promptly at 10:30.

Rogue Valley Model RR Club
P.O. Box 1362
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RAILROAD TIME CARDS 2011

Apr 30 - PNR/NMRA 1st Division Spring Mini-Meet, Douglas County Library, 1409 NE Diamond Lake Blvd, Roseburg, Ore. Doors open at 8 AM, Meet and clinics start at 9am. Clinics, door prizes, model contest, and more. Contact Nick Lehrbach at lchrbach@rosenet.net for more info or go to: <http://pnr.nmra.org/1div/> and *The Brakeman's Rag*.

May 7 – National Train Day, Discover the Railway. Events in Ashland, Coos Bay, Portland and Toledo, Oregon. Event Info at: www.nationaltrainday.com

May 7-8 – Model Train Swap Meet & Show, Rickreall Grange Hall, Rickreall, Ore. Swap hours 10-4. Info: Tom Pryor pry626@juno.com or 503-606-0398.

May 13 – *Elephants in Ashland: When the Circus Came by Train* – Victoria Law. Second Friday at the Ashland Historic Railroad Museum, 258 A Street, Suite 7 (upstairs), Ashland, Ore. Program starts at 6:30 pm. Info: 541-261-6605, <http://www.ashlandmuseum.org/>

May 19-21 – SP&SRHS & WPRRH Convention, Riverhouse Hotel & Convention Center, Bend, Ore. Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Oregon Trunk and 80th anniversary of the completion of the Inside Gateway. Info: <http://www.spsrhs.org/> and contact Bruce Barney bcbarney@msn.com or 503-257-8855.

Jun 10-12 – Dunsmuir Railroad Days, Fri. 10 AM through Sun. 6 PM, Dunsmuir, Calif. Check web site for details <http://dunsmuir.com/index.php>

Jun 10 - *Tombstone Tale Preview: Stories of Ashland Ancestors* – Tombstone Players. Second Friday at the Ashland Historic Railroad Museum, 258 A Street, Suite 7 (upstairs), Ashland, Ore. Program starts at 6:30 pm. Info: 541-261-6605, <http://www.ashlandmuseum.org/>

Jul 3-9 – Extra 2011 West, The Unconventional Convention, NMRA 2011 National Convention and Train Show, Sacramento Convention Center, Sacramento, Calif. www.x2011west.org/index.html

Sep 8-11 - SPH&TS 2011 Convention, Doubletree Hotel, Portland-Lloyd Center. <http://www.sphts.org/convention/>

Oct 8 - PNR/NMRA 1st Division Fall Mini-Meet, Eugene, Ore. Info: <http://pnr.nmra.org/1div/>

Oct 8-9 - Eastern Cascades Model RR and Central Oregon Live Steamers Open House, Bend, Ore. HO club and 1½ inch railroads on 5 forested acres. Info: <http://www.ecmrr.org/default.aspx> or 541-317-1545.

Oct 22-23 – 4th Annual Model Railroad Show & Sales Event, Klamath Rails Model RR Club, Klamath County Fairgrounds, Klamath Falls, Ore. Sat 9-5, Sun 9-4. Info: Steve Hart 541-892-2550, Joe Brick 541-883-3071.

Nov 26-27 – 34th Annual Rogue Valley Railroad Show, Medford Armory, 1701 S. Pacific Hwy, Medford, Ore. Info: Brad at 541-535-7952, Bruce 541-890-8145 or wccrr@charter.net

Two drunks were walking down a New York street when one fell down the subway steps. When he got back up top he told his drinking partner, "...boy you got to see that guy's train set in the basement!" 04/18/2011