



## The Passing Track

May-June 2011

Newsletter of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club

PO Box 1362—Medford, OR 97501

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

### The P&E RR Cartography Project

*by Ron Harten*

At May's general meeting there was a discussion about next year's regional NMRA meeting in Medford. The P&E will host several operating sessions during the meeting. It was noted that the P&E did not have a detailed track plan. There had been a 'concept diagram' drawn by Dave Spakousky. During the actual construction, the builders filled in the details as they progressed. It was a more artistic approach. Net result: no final track diagram! Seeing the pain on several long time member's faces when the subject was being discussed, I decided to volunteer to draw up the track plan. There were no objections. Besides, being a new member who just was beginning to figure out where trains should reappear after disappearing into various tunnels and holes in the scenery, I thought it would be a good way to learn the track plan. There were several holes into which I had seen trains go and never emerge again! Perhaps this was the source of some of the eBay traffic I had heard members talk about.

I am using a program called 'Empire Express' to design my own Spruce and Allegheny layout at home. It is fairly easy to use and includes a catalog of commercial track components from all the major manufacturers, allowing you to pick the pieces and fit them together. There is also an auto connect option which along with flex track makes the task fairly easy. It also contains a catalog of DPM structures which can be customized with buildings specific to the P&E. It was a perfect tool for the job.

Before releasing the final diagram, I thought it would be fun to test the reader's knowledge of the layout's track plan. I have created a series of questions (answers to come in a later issue) about the track plan. See if you can identify the areas being shown or answer the questions being posed. For example do you really know where the main line is in some of the yards? I sure didn't. The final

diagram will be put on the web site after the articles are published in the newsletter. You will be able to download both PDF and JPEG versions.

## May Board Meeting Notes

The Board of Directors met on May 11. Ten members were present. Exit light above back door has been repaired. Fire extinguishers have been recharged. It was mentioned that gutters are falling away from the rafter tails. Looks like we need to replace gutter spikes with screws.

Regarding DCC, only 120 slots are available for locomotives, a far lower count than the 999 we were led to believe. Batteries have been changed out in the command station. *[At a previous Public Run Session, Jay Mudge directly connected the computer to the system and using Loconet Checker was able to manually track the number and type of engines in the memory and delete those who were not supposed to be active. In addition, he was able to reset the number of slots to 120 (rather than the old method of resetting the system) and finally conquered the "Slot Max" error! More information can be found at <http://homepage.swissonline.ch/trachsler/>--ed.]* We could eliminate the slot max issue if the club had a computer with 2 serial ports. Three would be preferable. Jim Dougall said he had an older base that we could use as a start. No problems were reported on Sunday with the system *[or since--ed.]*.

Seventy-eight of 84 tables for the November railroad show have already been have been rented and room 101 has been paid for in full.

Suggestions for programs include that we do a "hands on" resistor installation clinic. Jerry Hellinga has been working on axles using a program sent to him by Dave Carr. Jerry said he has had no failures using the system. For the resistor installation session, bring good tools, means of applying ACC and some type of magnification to see the small parts and details. Also need a fine brush to apply conductive cement and a small open container to hold a few open drops of ACC. Question was asked if we shouldn't wait if we are going to use new axles until they have been run through standards to check for wobble. Suggestion was made to take axles off cars, install resistors and put axles back on the cars. Can be done in the truck but would be much more difficult. It was decided to take cars from the layout, pull out two axles, install resistors, reset axles and place car back on the layout. Larry suggested we start after lunch on the 21<sup>st</sup> and continue every Saturday up to the June op session. Question was asked if the number of resistors will overload the system. Ed said some time back that the system should not see a serious downturn or have a problem. Dave Spakousky will contact Ed to verify.

A Family membership for Logan Harter and his mother Lori Harter was approved. Logan has been spending a number of Sundays running trains under Larry's tutelage.

The Latest *Model Railroader* donated by Andy Anderson has been added to the *MR* section of the library. A large number of *Trains* magazines have been donated of late which may be given to the Historical Society to sell. Larry mentioned that we could additional storage in the cabinets with a few minor adjustments.

Larry added that we are going to leave the access openings to the hidden staging open for now. Openings will be trimmed out and painted. Doors could probably be added later if found to be necessary.

What is the status of the decals? How soon are we going to know? Jerry said he has been busy working on some grants and has not had the time to pursue the decal issue with Kadee.

Larry presented a bill for web site host of \$181.00 for the last 2 years. Question was asked if we couldn't combine the budgets for internet and web host as both involve the internet? After a short discussion Jerry made a motion to add \$200.00 to the internet budget to include the web host. Seconded by Larry.

Ron Harten presented a Crossing Gates Project proposal for 3 highway crossings as follows: "To install crossing gates at Medco/McAndrews, Vilas Road and Highway 62 in Eagle Point. The crossing at McAndrews would be signals(one double headed at an angle). The highway 62 crossing would be with single lane crossing gates/signals with red LED's added to the arms w/o sound (\$38 extra). The Vilas Road crossing would be a flashing grade crossing." A breakdown of costs will be available upon request. Copy of proposal will be on file with minutes from May BOD in the club files. The board authorized purchase of all necessary components to fulfill proposal.

Larry made the observation that several kids were fingering the layout as they worked their way along the layout. Scenery is built fairly sturdy to allow for touching and is easy to replace. Touching may prevent reaching in creating more damage and disrupting trains. Larry suggested continue to monitor, but not prevent, kids from touching the edge of the layout. He also noted that during op sessions engineers in yard limits are responsible for switches as they approach.

The 2012 regional mini-meet scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup> thru the 5<sup>th</sup>. It will be a joint PCR/PNR/NMRA Joint Convention to be held at the Red Lion Motel in Medford. There could be between 250 and 300 attendees. Preliminary schedule will have operating sessions for attendees on Thursday and Friday nights. We will let visitors run the trains with club members serving as hosts and assisting when needed. On Saturday the park will be open from 1pm to 5 pm to allow attendees to enjoy what the park has to offer. Signal module has been requested to be on display at the Red Lion for attendees to see and ask questions and open discussions. With a unanimous support from the membership, the board voted to support the convention.

## Election Results

The Board as existed in the 2010-2011 year has been voted by the membership to be retained for yet another year through May 2012. Dave Carr remains as president for the 6th year. Vice-president is Larry Tuttle. Secretary is Dave Spakousky and Jerry Hellinga retains the job of treasurer. The membership present for the election had some fun at the expense of those running for office, and a last minute Dave Carr decision to run for President brought about a call for a quick election (should Dave change his mind). I heard calls for "railroading" the man into office, and other facsimiles. After the frivolity ended, however, were a number of compliments for the fine work being done by the past, and now the current, Board of Directors. Those present certainly echo those who were not in both thanking and congratulating our board for the coming year. A suggestion to make the *Passing Track* editor an elected office met with total silence (*well, at least nothing that can be printed in this family newsletter--ed.*). Lori Harter was elected as one of the members at large.



*Operations on the P&E*

## **Operations Sessions Continue**

Operations sessions are being held on the second Saturday of each month. The sessions are designed to move freight in a typical 24 hour period and generally involves moving 200-300 cars around the layout with up to a dozen or so operators. Pickups and deliveries are guided by a car card system. Future plans include run-through trains, ROW work assignments, and perhaps other surprises normally associated with running a railroad. The sessions are planned for flexibility such that even a minimum 6 person crew can have an operational adventure that is meaningful. These sessions typically last from 2-4 hours, depending on one's assignment. There is nothing like testing your puzzle solving senses to maximize the placement of cars such that the car moves are the fewest and empty track is maximized (there is never a thing as too much space). As a result of the current several years worth of sessions, plans are being made to add track to the Crater yard.

## Looking Back

### *Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club Survey -- September, 1999*

It is always a good idea to look back when your desire is to improve the future. Here is one question from a 1999 Club survey about the challenges of the time.

*What do you consider the major problem(s) confronting the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club today?*

- *Inability to involve new members in activities the club. Not enough activities. A lot of members seem to have an attitude. We're not acting as a group but as a bunch of individuals each with his own agenda. Communications.*
- *Lack of interest and enthusiasm by the members. Too few doing too much of the main work.*
- *More people need to be allowed to work (don't throw a bucket of water on the spark of initiative!)*
- *Meeting nights - Too structured, operating sessions too complicated. Whatever happened to running trains for the FUN of it? To see your equipment go around a great layout?!*
- *No one wants to work on the layout or take a position on the Board. Most "members" are lazy when it comes to working and they just want to watch the "choo-choo" go round and round. And they are selfish. It's "What I want to do, the heck with the club needs."*
- *It keeps getting harder for me to get down to the meetings.*
- *Lack of interest. A few people intimidating the rest. Internal fighting.*
- *One of the major problems, from my own perspective, is a limited ability to commit time and energy to the club. There are obviously many reasons for this limited commitment of time and energy: job conflicts; family responsibility and needs; commitments to other organizations...and each group expects some level of participation; part year residency or may live some distance from Medford; health or mobility problems. Most members have at least one of these conflicts and may have two or more. Some people have a knack for juggling all these commitments and responsibilities, but over time they wear down and some form of "burn out" occurs. They may withdraw from organizations that do not offer an interesting, enjoyable, and relaxing atmosphere...and/or otherwise meet their needs and expectations.*
- *Recruitment and integration of new members. Capturing the enthusiasm of a broader group of current members. More exposure to the general public.*
- *Lack of cooperation by some members. We're all busy but I'm amazed some are only busy on work nights and not busy on play times.*

## May 2011 Calendar of Events

\*\*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.

### **General Construction/New Layout Saturdays**

Generally From 10:00 AM to 4 PM

### **Board Meeting**

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

### **Operations Session\*\***

#### **2nd Saturday of Each Month**

Saturday, May 14  
10 am to 3 pm

### **General Membership Meeting**

**4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month**  
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

**Rogue Valley Model RR Club**  
**P.O. Box 1362**  
**Medford, OR 97501**

## **RAILROAD TIME CARDS 2011**

**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.ashlandrrmuseum.org/>

**Jun 10-12** - Dunsmuir Railroad Days 2011, weekend festivities includes model railroads, a parade, trains, plenty of food, music with dancing in the street, and FAMILY FUN!!! Info: <http://www.dunsmuirrailroaddays.org/> or 1-800-Dunsmuir.

**Jul 8** - *Fourth of July 1933* - Delores Schwab. Second Friday at the Ashland Historic Railroad Museum, 258 A Street, Suite 7 (upstairs), Ashland, Ore. Program starts at 6:30 pm.

**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](http://www.x2011west.org/index.html)

**Jul 16-17** – 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Oregon Kite Festival, Port of Brookings Harbor, Brookings, Ore. Free two-day festival, national and international kite flyers, workshops, vendors. Info: 541-412-2941, <http://www.sokf.org/>

**Aug 12** - *The Science of Steam and Steam Engines* - Bill Ainsworth. Second Friday at the Ashland Historic Railroad Museum, 258 A Street, Suite 7 (upstairs), Ashland, Ore. Program starts at 6:30 pm.

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

**Sep 9** – *Alfred E. Perlman: Twentieth Century Railroad Visionary* – Lee Perlman. 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.ashlandrrmuseum.org/>

**Oct 8** - PNR/NMRA 1<sup>st</sup> Division Fall Mini-Meet, 33733 Seavey Loop Road, Eugene, Ore. Clinics, layout tours, popular model contest, and more. Info: <http://pnr.nmra.org/1div/> and Lee Temple 541-225-7394 [ttandt@ram-mail.com](mailto:ttandt@ram-mail.com)

**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** – 4<sup>th</sup> 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** – 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Rogue Valley Railroad Show, Medford Armory, 1701 S. Pacific Hwy, Medford, Ore. Info: Brad at 541-535-7952, Bruce 541-890-8145 or [iwccr@charter.net](mailto:iwccr@charter.net)

**Railroad Prohibitions:** At one time, these were (and sometimes still are) actual laws or [railroad](#) rules.

*Texas law once said: When two trains meet each other at a railroad crossing: each train shall come to a full stop and neither train shall proceed until the other has gone. Huh??*

*Believe it or not, putting salt on a railroad track in Alabama was once punishable by death. 06/08/2011*