



THE MANIFEST

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON CHAPTER, NRHS – FEBRUARY 2009

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WEB SITE: [HTTP://WWW.SOC-NRHS.ORG/](http://www.soc-nrhs.org/)

RAILROAD PARK NEWS Activity at the Railroad Park remains slow due to poor weather and freezing temperatures, but there is some progress. Last month Ric Walch used a trencher to dig a deep trench for new electrical lines between our Southern Pacific Section Tool House and the Mack Walch Archives building. There is plenty of electrical capacity available from the Tool House and its nearby location is a natural choice.

On account of large rocks and buried concrete, the original idea was to trench from the Archive Building to the nearest corner on the Tool House; then run electrical conduit inside the shed to the electrical breaker box. However, we decided to try trenching the entire route. Ric Walch and his brother Russ rented a DitchWitch to dig the required 18" deep trench for the electrical to come from the Speeder Shed to the new building. In the process they hit concrete foundation of one tank, tried to go along the tank and then around the corner, but tank zigged the wrong way. They made a noble effort.

In the end they got a trench pretty much completed at a new location. They tore up the compressed air line in two places. There were chunks of trench, piles of dirt, and pieces of compressed air plastic line everywhere, making the area look like a combat zone!

Steve Bruff, who watched the digging, said, "Digging in this park is an adventure and should only be done by stout, stalwart men of strength and perseverance!" Well, maybe. So as not to hog all the fun Jerry Hellinga used his backhoe to dig another electrical trench for the Live Steamers. Yep! Jerry struck a huge multi-wall block of concrete, an old brick cistern, and a little more concrete. Jerry had to bring over our chapter air compressor to jack hammer the concrete, and cut the steel rebar down to the level of the trench.

To do the electrical work we have employed Mike Krug of Krug Electric. Mike and one of his electricians came a few days later and in pretty short order installed the PVC pipe in the trench and new panel in archive building. They measured for the wire and will come back to install the wire soon. Prior to that Steve Bruff and Rick Aubin repaired the broken air line.

Looking forward towards opening day, Steve Bruff has removed the handrails leading to our CB&Q and SP cabooses, plus the SP flanger. He sanded smooth the wood; then treated them with linseed oil and Thompson's Water Seal so the railings will remain in good shape. The same work is being done to two of our park benches. For our chapter's 5-ton flatbed truck Steve removed the sideboards, sanded and painted them a black color.

ARCHIVES/LIBRARY BUILDING We are getting ready to wire the Archives Library building. If some of you club members are like me you may have some bits and pieces from your last house wiring job laying around the shop. This is your chance to clean up that mess and help the club out at the same time. If you would like to donate wire, boxes, outlets etc., you can drop them off at the park in the library building or you may contact Steve Bruff or any of the board members and we will make arrangements to pick up your donation. Anything will help and be greatly appreciated. Anything that we don't use we will put in storage for our future projects. — Best Regards, Ric Walch

POTENTIAL REPAIR AREA DENIED Last month we told of our exploring the possibility of using an existing railroad facility to repair and restored the roof of our 1912 Pullman dining car. We sadly report that our request to the property owner was denied.

The property we were looking at is the former Georgia-Pacific tank farm facility in White City, where they unloaded and mixed resins and glues for the surrounding timber industries. As the demand for such products diminished with the downturn of local timber products, G-P shut down their tank car facility about five or six years ago. The property has been up for sale ever since.

With three stub-ended tracks under a metal shed, it would have been perfect for our needs. However, in the end the officials at G-P chose not to allow us access based on possible liability issues. They wish to concentrate solely on selling the property. This is not the first time they have denied a similar request for use of their property. So, unless someone has a few million dollars they'd like to donate for us to buy the property, we will continue to search for other possibilities.

MORE SOC BROCHURES A couple of months ago with your MANIFEST we sent each of you one of our new Southern Oregon Chapter, NRHS color brochures. Designed by chapter member John Sipple, the brochures are exactly what we need to advertise who and what we are through handouts and the placement in locations such as visitor centers and motels.

John is an editor for Model Railroad News in Merlin. He used his publishing connections at Mustard Press to have 3,000 of these wonderful color brochures printed free of charge for us. At our January 27th chapter board meeting John gleefully announce that his source has made 7,000 more copies for us at no charge. These brochures are perfect in that five, ten or fifteen years from now they will explain chapter activities and purpose without being outdated. Thank you very much, John.

CHAPTER PROCEEDS FROM RAILROAD SHOW All the bills are paid, the totals are in, and so Rogue Valley Railroad Show Committeeman Bruce McGarvey issued letters to all five Railroad Park clubs explaining the results. Here is part of Bruce's letter.

“The 31st Annual Rogue Valley Railroad Show is now history A lot of smiling families were evident in a packed floor, especially on Saturday. A big THANKS to all of you and your members for the great exhibits and support.

“This year's show was another one of our 'best-attended shows'. There were over 3,600-ticketed visitors and 250+ vendors and exhibitors. All in all, over 3,800 rail buffs attended. This was a slight decrease from last year's attendance and therefore less income, plus our expenses increased (e.g. Armory rental up \$450) – resulting in an overall lower net income compared to 2007. The bills are paid, a refund check was deposited today, and the net profit amounts to \$8,779.72.

“Following is an accounting of each club’s show hours and their share of the show profits.”

Club	No. of hours	% share	Dollar Share
Morse Telegraph	36	14.1	\$1,235
Southern Or. Chapter, NRHS	50	19.5	\$1,715
Rogue Valley Model RR	56	21.9	\$1,921
So. Oregon Live Steamers	50	19.5	\$1,715
SW Ore. Large Scale Trains	64	25.0	\$2,195
Totals	256	100%	\$8,780

SISKIYOU LINE HISTORY (The High Cost of Siskiyou Grade) Chapter member, author and historian Larry Mullaly passed along two interesting newspaper articles to this editor. Larry, and his wife Alice, spend a lot of time doing research at the Southern Oregon Historical Society. In the past they have shared with us some of the interesting things they’ve found, and they do so again.

In an e-mail to me last month Larry wrote, “Attached is some fairly graphic operating detail regarding the Siskiyou Line in the steam era. It comes to me from Medford Historian Ben Truwe. Thought it might be useful for your fine newsletter.”

The article comes from the Mail Tribune dated February 8, 1911. It tells of Southern Pacific’s reaction to a 1908 I.C.C. edict where they set new rates for hauling lumber. I copied the newspaper article verbatim. In some places the newspaper reporter seems a bit confused by facts, but in general the story comes across.

Southern Pacific Officials Testify Regarding the Expense of Mountain Operation as an Excuse for Resisting Ordered Reduction of Rates.

Portland, Feb. 8, 1911 — General Superintendent J.M. Davis of the California Division of the Southern Pacific railway, told a story of almost insuperable difficulties encountered by the company in operating over the Siskiyou mountains to Examiner Ward Pronty of the Interstate Commerce Commission today. He gave this recital to prove that the company could not afford to haul lumber across this formidable range for \$3.40 and \$3.60 a ton, as ordered by the commission. Many interesting facts were presented in regard to the operating difficulties faced, and the expense of the work.

The maximum grade on the Siskiyou is 3.3 per cent, and for 52 miles of the mountain section the curvature ranges from 6 to 11 degrees. In a distance of 207 miles there is 107 miles of the track on a curve, only 100 miles of reach [rest] being left on a tangent. When Barnum & Bailey’s circus of 84 cars was taken over the mountain last summer, Mr. Davis said that 16 locomotives had to be used.

In the matter of brake shoes alone the general superintendent declared the company underwent a heavy expense at this point, because of the extraordinary grades. In the past year he said that 11,170 shoes had been removed from company trains at Ashland, whereas only 164 were removed at Red Bluff on the southern run. Shoes are about two inches thick when put on, but when it is found at Ashland that they are worn to ¾ inches thickness, they are removed, because it is found that crossing the mountains will wear out more than a half inch shoe. This heavy duty is made necessary to prevent accidents on the steep grade.

A rail that had been used five years on this section and had become what the company regarded unsafe was put on a valley road, and had been in use 14 years since, showing the difference in wear where curves were heavy and where the track was tangent.

Ties were also removed before they decayed on the mountain section, because the heavy strain, whereas they were kept until they decayed in the other sections, taking about two years in the difference of the life of a tie on the two sections of track.

In the matter of tonnage that could be handled, Superintendent Davis estimated that the same locomotive could handle ten times as much gross tonnage in the valley as on the Siskiyou section. The consolidated freight engine, weight 187,000 pounds, and with 43,000 pounds tractive power, prevailed on the Siskiyou, yet Superintendent Davis says it requires four of these engines to get a train of 38 to 40 cars across the mountains. Putting the figures into what he styled the most instructive until, he said that they could handle but 32 tons for 1000 pounds of tractive effort. Getting the average for each locomotive, he thought 348 the figure, which is marginally less than the company made the average at the former hearing and for this discrepancy Attorney J.N. Teal, took the witness to account.

On cross-examination, Attorney Neal made the witness say that there had been no changes of grades, curves, tunnels or other physical condition of the track since the 1908 decision of the Interstate Commerce Commission. On this point the attorney is emphatic, as he is trying to prove that the increase ordered by the railway from the commission rates of \$3.40 and \$3.65 to \$5 is without any change of cost charges since the commission made its previous inquiry.

The second newspaper article from Larry is an announcement from Southern Pacific concerning the construction of six miles of new railroad from Tolo (near Central Point) to White City, the site of former WWII military training base, Camp White. Following WWII the demand for finished lumber would be at its highest as new post-war home and business construction zoomed. At this time the only railroad connection between White City and Medford was on the privately owned Medford Logging Railroad, and they were busy enough.

Much of the former military camp buildings and grounds were ideal locations for new businesses to answer the needs of new construction materials. As business grew in size the need for a first class railroad spur was a must, and these businesses lobbied to the Southern Pacific to help the situation. Today this former SP spur is the White City Branch of the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad. Thanks Larry, for sharing with us more local history.

WHITE CITY SPUR TRACK WORK STARTED - May 10, 1951 Mail Tribune Work has started on the long discussed six mile railroad spur from Tolo to White City. The project is due for completion before September 1. The spur will be single track, with a 35-car interchange track at the point where the main Southern Pacific connects with the track owned by the White City Lumber Co.

About 60 Southern Pacific workers will lay rails and construct three bridges; the longest a 300 foot span across Bear Creek. Other work will be contracted. Grading near Tolo, installation of culverts and fencing is already way.

The transportation requirements of the White City industrial area have been estimated at 35 cars daily over the new line. Passenger traffic, not contemplated immediately, can be handled should Camp White be reactivated or other developments justify inauguration of that service.

Local lumber operators have stressed the advantage of opening the entire right of way between White City and Tolo for further industrial development of the area. With that accomplished by the new spur, a number of firms have indicated an interest of obtaining sidings on the line.

Entire cost of the spur track is estimated to be in excess of \$350,000.

The January General Meeting is Tuesday, February 10th at 7:00pm at the Rogue Valley Model Railroad clubhouse at the Medford Railroad Park. Come on by for entertainment and good fellowship.

Your Chapter Officers for 2009

E. Don Pettit, President 541-601-4772
Ric Walch, Vice President 541-772-6255
Syd Stoner, Secretary -541-878-8120

John Powell, Activities Director – 541-826-1992
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Art Turner, Chief Mechanical Officer – 541-826-6291
John Sipple, Dir. Of Public Relations – 541-776-2292
Tony Johnson, Newsletter Editor/Historian – 541-944-9176

GOOD OLD DAYS OF RAILROADIN' This month I'll share another story from my friend "Topper", a former SP engineer now working for Union Pacific. This month he reflects working on the Southern Pacific with one unusual employee named Marty. We've all worked with some strange fellow workers at one time or another, but I doubt we've worked with someone like Marty.

People I've worked with by Topper Marty was restricted to yard service. This guy used to be ahead of me in seniority. At the time he was 62 years old and so you could see his seniority didn't help him at all. Anyway, he was a fireman on the Western Pacific, was furloughed in 1964 when all the railroads got rid of their firemen, and he hired out over in Oakland in 1970 or 71 as a fireman.

At the time I didn't know if he still drank, (I'm assuming he didn't) but they used to call him "Party" instead of Marty because he was quite a drinker. I guess he was locally famous when he used to work "Pool Four" down in Watsonville. He used to go downstairs to the bar at the Resatar and was quite well known there. Before that, he used to work "Pool One" when we used to stay at the St. Claire in Tracy.

He also had a sleep disorder and would fall asleep a lot, so he's been in a number of incidents that are related to inattention. That's the best way to put it.

One of them, which could have been pretty serious, happened as he was coming out of Watsonville - he was to go up the Milpitas Line. In San Jose, to get from that line to the Milpitas Line, you go through "Depot One" (I think that's what it was called then) to go around the wye. For the commute trains to leave San Jose, it was a rigid switch on all of those tracks, and then there was what was called a "starter signal" on each track that was either red or green. The herder would come down and line the switch, and then when it was your turn to go, he'd flip the light from red to green. That meant for the train on that track to go.

So, here comes Marty with a freight train in "Depot One" in broad daylight and goes right out the West End of "Depot One", heading towards the Milpitas Line. He goes right by the red starter signal for him, runs through the rigid switch for the commute trains (one which just started to pull and went into a rather abrupt stop) and I guess they met Marty at Warm Springs.

They were going to pull him out of service, but he got out of it because he'd just gotten bumped out of Pool One and gone back into Pool Four. He said, "I didn't know anything about starter signals. It was my first trip in Pool Four."

Because of the idiots we had in management at that time, they bought all of that because some of the signals were kind of hard to see on account of vegetation and a wall at the West End. This guy had worked that Pool for five years - and they bought it.

Not too long after that, he "ponton'd" a switch engine up at the [West Oakland] diesel shop. He made a direct hit on it - I mean this thing was knocked over. It was the 2598 and it was "buried" on the fireman's side, all the way up to the running board - that's how hard he knocked this thing into the clear. It was right after Anschutz bought the company and they got rid of Lacy (and Lacy's Raiders) and were going through their "kinder, gentler railroad" period as far as discipline was concerned.

Marty wouldn't sign any kind of discipline letter, so, due to our "kinder, gentler railroad" he got an oral admonishment because they started a program where everyone's slate was wiped clean and your first offense was an oral admonishment, your second offense was a short suspension, your third offense was a longer suspension, and they might suspend you when you got to four or five offenses.

Marty's most memorable event happened early one year. He'd been working the Cal-P Line for 7-10 years or something like that. At Roseville he gets on a train on 245 Track to come to Oakland,. He goes down the main line and the Antelope operator tells Marty on the radio, "We're going to run you against the current of traffic between Antelope and Elvas." So Marty goes, "Duh, O.K."

Once again, in broad daylight he gets down to the beginning of double track between the PFE Yard and Antelope — and that's protected by a spring switch, and it's got a high mast signal with a "P" plate on it to mark it's a protected signal.

Marty gets down there and the signal's red, the switch is lined to go against the current of traffic (I guess they had been single tracking all day) so he goes sailing right by that. You can't do that - you've never been able to do that. Now he's going against the current of traffic, he's approaching the interlocking with nothing but red signals on the signal bridge — and he goes sailing by that!

Well, the story that I've heard is that there were several management people in the control operator's office while this was happening, and before Marty got down to the beginning of double track at the spring switch, the control operator just jokingly said to the management people, "You know, I bet he doesn't even stop for that." Sure enough, Marty goes right by it and they watch it light up on the boards.

Now they're saying, "We can't believe this. I bet he doesn't stop for the next one either."

They're kind of being facetious about it. Well, when they saw the model board light up with all these track indications, that's when they decided to call Marty on the radio and ask him if he wouldn't mind stopping.

He required a track permit; it required he stop and line the spring switch and a whole bunch of different things... none of which he bothered to do. So, he was dismissed and was off for slightly under 6 months. Apparently he came to the local management in Oakland, and begged for his job back because his wife and his daughter were giving him such a rough time at home. ("When are you going to go back to work, etc.")

So they worked out a deal where he signed a waiver to come back on what's known as "leniency". What that means is that you come back without prejudice to his case. He can't appeal it for back wages and things like that, or have the discipline removed or anything of that nature. He can't try to take this thing to the labor board or anything like that.

And the company decided that he needed to be restricted to yard service. All he can work are switch engines. He can't even work a job that goes to Richmond, San Leandro or something like that. He's not supposed to go "patch" trains and that kind of stuff.

A few years later I got a call from Bill Reeves, the Trainmaster and Bob Wolcott, the Roadforeman, and they wanted to know if I would mind if Marty rode around with me for a couple of days and would I please show him what he needs to know.

So, he rode around with me on a Monday and Tuesday, and I will give him credit - he stayed awake both nights. I showed him about the Desert [Yard], showed him about the C.T.C., went down to the Homestead [Yard] and showed him everything and what to watch out for.

His first question was on Tuesday when we were at West Oakland interlock, "So, WR-49 controls this?" Of course, that's wrong. Good Luck.

I guess he really tried hard to comply with all that was required because he became "overly in compliance" with rules. He went real slowly and this really upsets the switchmen when they ride on the end of pig cars. This guy really shouldn't be running engines, but that's one of the problems when you have a union - they want to keep this guy on his job.

Marty's crew hated him. He's was just as lousy in the yard as he was on the main line.

One time his crew was told to keep the cars on [track] "69" together. So, they were shoving in to make a joint and all of a sudden the foreman turned around and Marty decides he's going to kick the cars for no apparent reason. Nobody gave him a sign to do it. They had to chase the cars through "69" and I said they'd probably get the signal at Elmhurst.

He almost ran into us one night, and actually it was at 6:15PM when it was still broad daylight! We were shoving down the "Tie Pile" lead and he's going to come out of "Tie Pile 5" and he came out on his own - nobody gave his a sign or told him to come out. He just got into the engine and took off. My foreman just

happened to be riding on the point of our cars so he hollered at Marty on the radio to stop, otherwise it would have been another collision.

I guess Marty's wife didn't fix him any lunches to eat. Those two days Marty rode with me he had brought stuff from Church's Chicken across the street (which must be the worst food in the world), and he brought something from Burger King (or someplace like that). So, he's got two complete lunches, plus he had a banana and some other stuff. Between 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM he'd eaten two complete lunches, both days... so he's not starving.

He used to dye his hair with some stuff, and on hot days it used to run down the back of his neck. I thought it was governor oil, but it probably wasn't that high a quality. I noticed that when we were walking over to an engine that I'd have to stop twice during the couple hundred yards we walked to let him catch up.

Oh, his shoes were held together with masking tape (I don't know if they still have it). He looks like he just came in on a freight train, and not as the engineer.

Marty retired many years ago. Things aren't quite as interesting now.

Letters from the Readers After reading last month's article "Alco's Worst" by Topper, I received responses from two friends about the Alco model C-415 diesel, the subject of Topper's writing. The first response comes from SP historian and author Joe Strapac.

Dear Tony:

Topper's discussion of "Alco's Worst" brought back not-so-fond memories.

Those unloved machines were apparently placed on the SP in some kind of lease-purchase arrangement, with Alco holding the "pink slips" and SP using them. I'm not sure at this late date what the precise details were, but Alco was desperate to try to break back into the locomotive market and really could not force anything on longtime customer SP — unless the railroad had no financial risk.

Another item... they were unevenly balanced as far as weight on each axle was concerned. The engine was at one end and that became the "heavy" end. Someone at the SP, early on, had the inspiration of running them in MU pairs to get optimum use out of their poor weight balance. This also paid off on transfer runs from City of Industry to Los Nietos, where SP had to utilize trackage rights on the UP for a few miles — and UP demanded at least 3,000 horsepower on tenant SP's trains. Two C-415s met UP's criteria; they were less of a problem in this semi-road assignment.

Finally, they were thoroughly hated by that segment of SP's engineers who lingered a little too long on the chow line, if you get my drift. Apparently the senior members of the Brotherhood (all with day jobs at Taylor Yard in Los Angeles) had some clout and got the C-415s re-assigned to City of Industry, where brothers with less seniority (and presumably slimmer behinds) could enjoy Alco technology at its finest.

It is notable that SP never officially retired the C-415s. They just all shipped out to Mexico more or less in a single group. You could have heard the sigh of relief all over the Los Angeles Division!

The second response is from chapter member and retired Southern Pacific-Union Pacific engineer Mike Pomykata.

"I hired out on the SP in 1966. I ran those Alco's several times when I was working a hauler out of Anaheim and City of Industry. The only thing they were good for was the table top control stand playing cards or sleeping. Being that the throttles were linked together, I had my fingers pinched a couple of times while resting my hand in that area."



(LEFT) These two photos show the new electrical lines that will provide power from the SP Section Tool House to our new Mack Walch Archives building. While the digging along the Tool House was tough (far left), the digging along the new archives building was easier to do.



(LEFT) Of the many jobs we have to do during the off season is to repair and maintain safety hand railings, steps and benches before the next season opens. In this photo Steve Bruff has removed hand rails from several caboose entrances. On sawhorses he sanded them smooth, applied linseed oil, and finished them with water sealant.

(RIGHT) While we may have had our problems finding buried concrete while digging our trenches; the Live Steamers had a tough go of it, too. It may be difficult to see in this photo, but next to the shovel is a three ring wall of concrete, reinforced with rebar. After jack-hammering the first portion to trench level, Jerry found stenciled markings showing 30 inches, meaning there was more than 30 inches more of concrete underneath.

