

SOUTHWEST CORNER

PLEASE, DON'T PANIC! John Hathaway's excellent column the SOUTHWEST CORNER will return in the December issue. The column which each month brings REPORT readers up-to-date on the activities of railroading in the Southwest is one of the most comprehensive and informative articles available to railfans. It is REPORT's pleasure to bring you this feature each month.

REPORT MISCELLANIA

PSRMA's office in the depot has been officially vacated. In the early days of the museum, an office was obtained for business and meetings. For several years, the office has been unused, except by Wally Duthie who ran a rail-excursion business. All furniture removed from the office has been temporarily placed in the Southwest Railway Library next door along with other museum property.

A new museum brochure has been printed. The brochure measuring 8½x11 is a brief introduction to the museum and what we are trying to do. The brochures will be available for members to distribute when and where they can. If you would like some, contact Jerry Windle, 282-6770.

A commemorative medallion for BART is available for \$2. This medallion is being stamped on circular blanks stamped from the rails. How much more authentic can you get? Write the B&C Company, 119C Kain Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94706.

Get those work gloves ready! An all-out effort to restore PSRMA's line truck is planned for the new year. Plans call for the truck to be used in parades and other public events to call attention to the museum. Watch for further details.

Chop Kerr has a number of railroad items for sale. These are items offered in conjunction with last year's Golden Spike celebration and quite collector's items they are becoming. Included are the special Golden Spike medallions at \$5. An outstanding portfolio of four pictures of American type locos including engines #119 and the Jupiter are available for \$5. Two posters; a copy of the original 1869 "Great Event" and one published last year for the celebration are only \$2 each. He also has a number of railroad spikes at 50¢ each. These are large spikes in good condition which could be polished or even plated with chrome or bronze for an attractive desk piece. Contact Chop at 291-4787 if you are interested.

board notes

Highlights of the November 3rd PSRMA Board Meeting

A new meeting place for our General Meetings was discussed. The depot has bad acoustics, plus outside noises. Possibly a location where PSRMA could maintain a semi-permanent display of equipment to be operated like the loco-staffings last year. This location, hopefully, would be in the metropolitan area.

A check with the County revealed that PSRMA equipment, i. e. locos and cars, could be transported over county roads to a museum site. Costs are now being formulated for museum information.

Ideas on the leasing of member-owned equipment to the museum were discussed. Members owning equipment i. e. locos, cabooses, etc, would be able to lease their equipment to PSRMA where they could store it at the museum site. In return PSRMA would be able to increase its roster without any additional expense to the treasury.

Chop Kerr, ass't. director of procurement, reported that there are several pieces of rolling stock available for purchase, including several steam engines. Unfortunately most are back East and movement to San Diego would be prohibitive cost-wise.

Dave Parkinson, vice-president, presented a letter which will be going to all members shortly which will ask members just how much they would be willing to assist the museum should we enter a financial transaction for a museum site. The reply will in NO way commit the member to anything. This will merely be a planning guide so a positive financial base can be established.

membership

It's that time of year again. Time to renew your membership in PSRMA. If you are truly interested in seeing PSRMA achieve its goals, then your support and assistance is needed. This past year saw a lot of activity within the museum. If you want to be part of it during 1971, better send in your dues right away! Don't forget! Contributing membership is \$3 a year with a Regular membership at only \$10. Already 1971 is shaping up as one of PSRMA's biggest and greatest. Won't you join us?



REPORT

Issue 73

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

November, 1970

Our apologies are extended to those readers of REPORT who may have been mislead or offended by last month's SOUTHWEST CORNER. The article was a railfan's wishful look at the future of America's railroads. Unfortunately, this was not made clear at the beginning of the article so perhaps many of you were taken in. I have received many comments, mostly bad, about the article. It is unfortunate that when word does reach us about REPORT it is some typographical error, or technical error or whatever. I feel that even though we get these comments from time to time it is an indication that REPORT is being read. This is our goal. We will attempt to keep REPORT informative and entertaining for our readers.

Jerry Windle
Editor, REPORT

Flea Market

PSRMA's participation in the annual UCSD Flea Market met with moderate success. After expenses, the booth made a profit of \$40. The flea market which hosts groups and organizations trying to raise funds, attracts some 15 to 20,000 people during its 6-hour run. PSRMA's booth consisted of a game for children where they could win a goldfish. For the adults, a selection of railroadiana was offered for sale. Museum brochures were passed out as well as personal contact with visitors was made. One membership resulted from the efforts of those manning the booth who were; Dick Pennick, Dave Parkinson, Chop Kerr, John Hathaway, Jerry Windle and Dave Hobson.

Only 45 of the 275 goldfish remained unclaimed when the flea market closed. These were "donated" to the City of San Diego's reflecting pond in Balboa Park.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The sight of railfans hawking goldfish is really something to behold. This should be considered to be above and beyond the call of duty. Real dedication to PSRMA and the establishment of a museum. Congrats, fellows!

RAILROAD NEWS

The Southwest Railroad Historical Society is offering a 52-page booklet written by Lloyd W. Jones, retired General Attorney for the MKT entitled HUMOR ALONG THE KATY LINES. The book recalls some of the cases he was involved in during his long tenure in the MKT legal department. Also included are accounts of a planned train crash in 1896 in Crush, Texas. The first 1,000 books will be signed by the author. All this for \$2.25. Write SRHS, P.O. Box 609, Garland, Texas 75040.

Effective October 1, the New Orleans-Los Angeles "Sunset" became a "tri-weekly" operation joining SP's "City of San Francisco" and "Cascade" on a three-times-a-week schedule. Westbound trains leave New Orleans on Monday-Wednesday-Friday, and eastbound trains leave LA on Tuesday-Thursday-Sunday. SP is instituting a coast-to-coast sleeping car service - the first since 1956 - with the SOUTHERN and PENN CENTRAL, contingent upon whether or not the SOUTHERN gets permission to reduce its connection into New Orleans to a tri-weekly status. Cars would lay over night in New Orleans in both directions permitting the passengers to visit one of America's most interesting cities.

Reprints of the First Official Guide published in June, 1868, and also the Golden Spike Commemorative Issue June 1869, are still available at \$3 and \$5 each respectively from Railroad Publications, Inc., the same company that prints the present Official Guide.

'Blue Goose' finds a new home - PSRMA

What's a "Blue Goose"? It's the most recent addition to PSRMA's growing collection of railroading equipment.

A distant cousin of the Rio Grande Southern's famed Galloping Goose, the Blue Goose is a railcar built by the Plaster City Railroad in the mid-fifties. The railroad has graciously donated the Blue Goose to PSRMA.

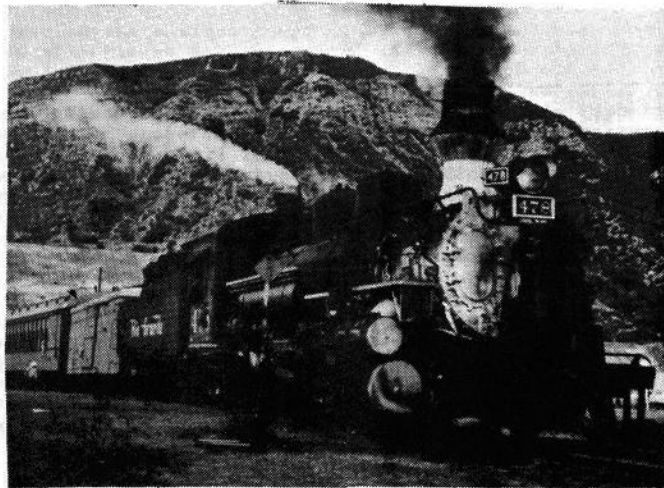
"Built as a conveyance between the main plant at Plaster City and the quarry operations, it was constructed in the mid-fifties from two 1953 Chrysler coupes, back-to-back. An industrial engine powers the vehicle from the center compartment with two forward and one reverse speeds. Each end of the railcar is individually air-conditioned.

The Goose rides on eight rubber tires which are prevented from roaming off the rails by steel flanges mounted on the inside of the wheels. This all sounds very simple, but a closer inspection makes it apparent that an awful lot of planning and improvising had to take place to make this one-of-a-kind railcar a success.

Unfortunately, a new road now makes it possible to reach the quarry by car in much shorter time than by rail so the "Blue Goose" has turned white from the gypsum dust that has settled on it in storage.

PSRMA is truly fortunate to obtain this priceless piece of equipment since it was used on a railroad in the immediate area. Thanks to the efforts of Chop Kerr, our assistant director of equipment acquisition, the Blue Goose is a welcome addition to our ever-growing collection of railroadiana.

*Quoting Henry W. Brueckman, Pacific News Issue 106



The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad ... Is it more than a railroad? Don't fail to read REPORT Editor Jerry Windle's story on what the railroad means to him, on pages 2-3 of this issue. Also a wrap of the events, both

ges 2-3 of this issue. Also a wrap-up of the events, both good and bad that have befallen the narrow gauge line during the past few months.

Notes on an old friend....



PAUSE AT CHAMA ON THE WAY TO DURANGO, 1960

The first time I walked into the Durango yards a part of history came alive. Here were the trains the bad guys held up, the trains that fought the odds, the trains that challenged the mountains and settled for a temporary victory, the trains that looked like toys, the trains of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad...the trains that I love.

My father is solely responsible for this "thing" I have about trains. I have fond memories of hundreds of visits to the "yards" or the "depot" where we spent hour upon hour watching trains, standing in the spray of steam and roar of cylinders.

Unfortunately, I came along just as the steam engine was fading from the scene. I can remember, slightly, chasing Santa Fe 5,000's across Texas and New Mexico only to be left behind in a cloud of smoke and steam.

But the one railroad that has come to mean "steam railroading to me is the D&RGW. It was in the early fifties when my father and I first walked into the Durango yards to a scene I can never forget.

Steam was everywhere. Durango was truly the narrow gauge capitol of the world. The lines extended east to Alamosa and the Rio Grande mainline, south to Farmington, north to Silverton and the Rio Grande Southern was in its final days with the "Galloping Goose" still running - on occasion or whenever passengers warranted.

I felt just like the kid who has just seen a preview of a coming attraction and couldn't wait to get back. Return I did, with almost ritualistic regularity, to watch, ride and record on film a little bit of yesterday disappearing before the pressures of a changing world.

My mainstay for several years was an annual three-day excursion sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club. It was in the late fifties when my father and I were able to make our first trip. I made that first trip riding from Alamosa to Chama, some 95 miles, in an open gondola car eating cinders and smoke and loving every minute of it. That night in Durango, I had to get sunburn oil and chapstick by the dozens. Yup, it was worth it!

But that's how the narrow gauge was. You couldn't get close without getting filthy. Remember one cold morning in the yards to capture one of the "mudhens" first moves after a night's rest. Standing close to the rails I was enveloped in a cloud of steam as the engine chugged by. Only then did I realize that each drop of steam had a drop of oil in it. I was wearing a white jacket!!!

An excursion on the narrow gauge was an experience.... being there at the crack of dawn so you could be on the right side of the train for the best scenery...first off at the photo stops for the best spot...watching in amazement those 44-inch drivers dancing wildly at 30 mph... hours with your head stuck out the window glued to a viewfinder...sitting on the-coach steps watching the aspens drift by...and the unforgettable smell of coal.

After each day's trip, you fell into bed completely exhausted, but eager for the next day's activities. Three solid days of narrow gauge mountain steam railroading. What an experience!!!

Between Alamosa and Antonito the narrow gauge is the third rail and the track runs straight as an arrow. It was here that the Mike's could really strut their stuff. On the narrow gauge they didn't get too many chances to open up, but when they did it was an experience to behold!

The churning drivers...the staccato beat of rapid exhausts...the 1880 vintage cars bouncing around so me had to sit, it was impossible to stand.



"STRUTTING" BETWEEN ALAMOSA AND ANTONITO, 1958

Taking water at Antonito, the standard gauge was left behind for it was narrow gauge from here on as the "mike" made its first challenge on the Rockies. Crossing and recrossing the border of New Mexico and Colorado, the tiny train made its way up and over Cumbres Pass into Chama. On our return trip it wouldn't be so easy. We would have to pick up a second engine for the steep climb up to the summit. Then the helper would be cut off and we would follow him down to Alamosa watching as he wound his way down back and forth before us in the valleys below.

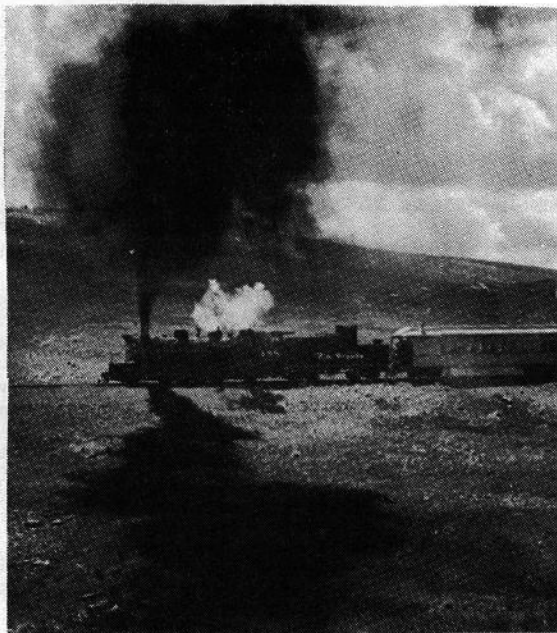
Still heading west, we scoot across fertile fields into Durango. If all went well, we would only be an hour or so late, but there were no complaints. Even once when we were four hours late pulling in.

The second day was the one we had waited more than a year for...the trip to Silverton. The true picture of an early Colorado ghost town, Silverton was nestled in a valley surrounded on each side by mountains well over 14,000 feet tall, but the highlight of the Silverton branch is the "highline". The most photographed piece of track to be found anywhere in the world.

The "Highline" is the story of the narrow gauge told in less than a mile of track. For it is here that the tiny rails creep along the sheer face of a granite cliff 600 feet above the Rio De Las Animas, the River of Lost Souls. Blasted from solid rock, the roadbed hugs the cliff as the train keeps to the 5 mph mandatory speed limit. Wheel flanges reach a wailing squeal as the wheels fight the tight curve of the rails.

notes . . .

But the little engines and big men of the narrow gauge have won only a temporary victory over the Rockies. Someday the railroad will be completely gone, but the mountains will remain behind unchanged in thousands of years. When the gold veins petered out, the railroad staggered, but tourists from across the globe provided a shot in the arm. But even this seems doomed and the tiny railroad will be only a memory in the history books.



LOS PINOS VALLEY, 1960

Colorado once had more than 1,000 miles of narrow gauge track extending in almost a complete circle in the Southwestern corner of Colorado. Today less than 150 miles of useable trackage remain intact.

It may be gone, but for me it will always remain. I can't remember the steamers of the Fort Worth & Denver or the Santa Fe or the Rock Island too well, they all served my hometown where I spent so many countless hours watching them along with my father.

But to me, the D&RGW is the railroad I can relate to. As each rail and tie have been ripped up and sent off into the pages of history, it has become more endeared to me. The trains may be gone, but the memories remain. That's why, to me, the D&RGW is more than a railroad...it's a part of my life.

Jerry Windle

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

14 - Puerto Penasco Excursion for the Chula Vista CoFC

DECEMBER

1 - Board Meeting, 7:30pm, San Diego Trust & Savings
25 - Christmas

JANUARY

6 - Board Meeting, 7:30pm, San Diego Trust & Savings
18 - Annual PSRMA Dinner, Sir George's El Cajon, 7:30pm

D & RGW WRAPUP

The past several months have seen several dramatic changes made in the remaining Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow gauge system. September saw the Silverton branch hit by the worst flood since 1927. Also that month scrapping began on the Chama to Durango segment of the line.

The most promising development this past summer was the purchase by the joint Colorado-New Mexico Railroad Authority of the 64-mile Antonito-Chama line. Financed by similar appropriations of \$295,000 from each of the states, the line has been saved from the scrappers. Since that last train operated over that railroad in November, 1968, numerous slides and parallel highway construction had made much of the track unserviceable. Volunteer workers, mainly younger people from New Mexico, worked all summer removing dirt and rock from the track and repairing innumerable breaks in the rail.

The D&RGW began delivering the 10 steam engines and 142 assorted freight cars to Antonito in late August

The D&RGW began delivering the 10 steam engines and 142 assorted freight and work cars to Antonito in late August. The first train, pulled by engine 483 and manned by volunteer crews, arrived in Chama September 6, the same day the flood forced the Silverton line out of business for the year. That first trip took five days with weeds on the tracks and mechanical problems accounting for the delays. A special train was operated on October 4 for representatives of the news media and other officials.

Most of the activity on the line - named the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad - has been the movement of cars and engines to Chama. The last train operated the weekend of October 17-18, leaving only the rotary snowplow OY in Antonito. Chama has hired a full-time armed guard to watch the rail equipment.

A special train worked out of Chama on October 12, for the filming of "Shootout", a film starring Gregory Peck.

As of the middle of October, rail was being torn up and being removed between Chama and the Colorado State line at milepost 383. No scrapping has taken place in Colorado yet as the work has stopped where the railroad enters the Ute Indian Reservation. The Cole Construction Co. from Houston is salvaging the line for the D&RGW, with the scrap rail supposedly going to a buyer in Mexico.

Aside from the work in the Animas Canyon, which has only recently seen the rails once again joined and open to travel by handcar to speed delivery of men and materials along the track to restore the roadbed before the snows, the D&RGW is finally taking some steps in Durango to guarantee some sort of future operation of the Silverton line. Shop crews were only seen recently unloading a truckload of spare parts from Alamosa. So far, all shop machinery is still in Alamosa, although several stalls of the Durango roundhouse are to be converted into a machine shop, forcing engines 481 and 497 outside into the weather.

Heavy and complex machine work is to be sent to the D&RGW's Burnham shops in Denver, so the Durango facility will still not be able to service fully engines and cars. Large piles of new fencing are on hand, with the possibility of the engine and car repair facilities being fenced off from the public.

Next Summer may see the two lines again in operation. The ultimate fate of the Silverton lies in the hands of the D&RGW top management and the Chama operation may flounder without additional financing. Both lines are needed, however, and many in the region feel that they will compliment each other rather than compete for attention.

From the SILVERTON STANDARD
Friday, November 6, 1970