

THE MANIFEST

December 2019



Volunteers are not paid because they are worthless but because they are PRICELESS

GREETINGS ALL:

I had a great time at the annual train show and it was a pleasure to see many of you there. Thank you again, everyone who volunteered, and stepped in to help when we needed someone to help out.

I am not certain of the numbers as far as the attendance, gross or net income, but the show seemed well attended, especially on Saturday, albeit we had some inclement weather.

At our meeting, which is December 10, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. we will hold election of our board of directors. Please feel free to come and if you have a nomination please feel free to give us that name.

Once, again I am including our donation PDF, Allen has updated it from the last newsletter. We really, really need your help in this so:

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PRINT AND SHARE

The Southern
Oregon Railway
Historical Society



NEEDS YOUR HELP TO
FINANCE THE DEVELOPMENT
OF A TOURIST RAILWAY IN
BUTTE FALLS, OREGON

We Need Funds To

Purchase Rail, Ties, Switches, rail
components, & building materials.

To donate or volunteer go to
soc-nrhs.org

(Or talk to a Society member)

Your donations are tax deductible.

We are a 501c3 non-profit organization.

Thanks to all those who have already donated

Our story this month is a Christmas one. It came from "Freaky Folktales" and is free to share online, social media, etc. So I am sharing it here with you all. ***I did not correct the spelling errors***

AT THE CURVE OF THE LINE,
a ghost story for Christmas

As found in "Freaky Folktales"

<https://freakyfolktales.wordpress.com/at-the-curve-of-the-line-a-ghost-story-for-christmas/>

Yes sir, as you say, an engine driver needs to have his wits about him. With a train-load of passengers under his care and at his mercy, he hasn't much time for wool-gathering.

I often think what a terrible thing it would be if by some mysterious means a driver and his stoker were to suddenly die on duty when the train was rushing along at full speed, leaving the engine to go on its own sweet way. No living power would be able to stop it, and it would have to go on and on, either until it met with some obstacle, when its living freight would be hurled to destruction, or until the fires got too low to supply the steam pressure.

A queer thought? Well, yes, you're right: and I admit there is little likelihood of such things happening; but it is a possibility all the same, and you can't stop a man's imagination from running on strange fancies.

As a matter of fact, I was once on the verge of sudden madness myself, when I thought there was only a minute between me and eternity. And I have had one or two other unpleasant, blood-curdling experiences during my twenty odd years on the line.

As you say, it is very seldom you hear of a railway man going off his head, and those who are entrusted with the position of driver—even on slow trains—are all tried

hands. In fact, on our line it is a standing rule that every man who wishes to become a driver must first serve for some time as stoker, then he is put on as a sort of probationer, and allowed to drive a goods train. If he proves himself steady and efficient, painstaking, and reliable, he is next promoted; and, finally, he has a remote chance of driving one of the great expresses.

Yes, I've had one or two accidents in my time, not through any carelessness of mine, though. Indeed, I don't know of any driver on our system who has had fewer than I have, and I can honestly say that I have never once been reprimanded for negligence of my duties or failure to realise my responsibilities. Still, as I say, there have been a few accidents, and a few deaths, for which my engine was indirectly responsible.

No. I am glad to say I have never been in a collision —not a real one that is, though I once thought I was in for it. The incident happened two Christmases ago, and if ever a man was near losing his reason I certainly was that night. It was a most uncanny experience, but, as them novelist chaps say thereby hangs a tale: and a weird, ghostly tale it is.

Supernatural? Yes, I reckon that's about what you would call it; but to me it was a very natural and serious happening at the time.

You would like to hear the story? Well, so far as I am concerned, you are welcome; but, seeing that you are going up tonight, I would not advise you to hear it unless you have a strong nerve. It's a strange, unearthly tale, more so because it's true.

Very good. Just as you like; only I didn't want to frighten you.

It was just after I started running this express that the affair occurred, and it was Christmas Eve, too—a couple of years ago tonight. I was going this same journey, and had started away with a light heart, and without fear of danger ahead, as I had got used to the engine, and began to feel quite at home on the route.

It had been snowing hard all day, and a keen frost having set in towards evening, the ground sparkled in the moonlight for a long distance ahead.

As you will perhaps know, just beyond Colverstone there is a great plantation, thickly overgrown, which, even in broad daylight, obscures the road ahead.

Just at the other side of this wood there is a curve, and the line runs in a sort of semi-circle for about two miles, so that when you get clear of the trees you can see Midwich Station at the other extremity of the curve, and apparently not more than about a mile distant as the crow flies.

It is just a little wayside place, and none of the expresses, either on the up or down journey, ever stop there. They rush straight through Midwich at full speed.

Well, sir, two years ago tonight, as I stood cracking jokes with Bill, my stoker, about the turkey and plum-pudding of the morrow, I suddenly paused and put my hand to my forehead, on which beads of cold perspiration had suddenly gathered.

Bill was busy firing at the time, and did not see my movement, neither did he hear the low moan that escaped my lips, or notice that my breath was coming in hard, fitful gasps, and, dazed, bewildered, terrified as I was by the sight before me, I had the presence of mind to keep the truth from him.

It was then I caught sight of him dropping the shovel, sinking to the floor and twisting his neck to face me; cold and mechanical was the arc of his turn, as if time had slowed, and when he faced me he did so with a look that I will never forget so long as I live. His eyes had sunk so low in their sockets that all that could be seen were the fleshy whites, wet and glistening, bubbling from the heat of the furnace. And then he spoke, but the words were hollow and empty:

“The curve, she’s at the curve. It’s no good——”

I whimpered to myself, grasping hold of the wheel for support; and I continued to stare, numb with horror, at the line ahead. When I turned Bill had resumed firing almost as if he had never left the spot.

Sir, it is, indeed, a marvel to me, as I look back now, that I didn’t become a drivelling, senseless idiot that night.

For, just as we cleared the wood, I had glanced across the bend towards Midwich, never for a moment expecting to see anything on the move. The first train we were due to pass was the down express, at a point 15 miles farther north.

But as I looked I realised that a terrible catastrophe was imminent, for there, rushing towards us round the snow-clad curve, and on the same line of metals, tearing along at full speed, was the down express.

I clutched the brake and gave it a wrench, yet knowing that it was hopeless, and the next minute she was close upon us, rushing madly on towards destruction—their destruction and ours.

A collision was inevitable!

I tried to murmur a prayer through my clenched teeth and parched lips, but my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, my brain began to swim, and, as I say, it is a wonder I didn't go stark, staring mad.

I closed my eyes, but not before I had caught a view of the white, drawn face, the firmly-set lips, and wide, fearful eyes of the driver of the runaway, as I took it to be.

The hopeless, helpless look on his face struck greater terror into my own heart, and I held my breath, expecting sudden and immediate death. Whether I stood thus transfixed for one minute or three, I cannot say, but the next thing I remembered was hearing my stoker exclaim:

“By George! I clean forgot to buy the wife a Christmas-box! First time I've missed since we were married!”

He whistled thoughtfully; then suddenly he looked at me.

“I say, Bert!” he exclaimed anxiously, “aren't you well? Your face is as white as death!”

I roused myself and rubbed my eyes.

Then, before I answered him, I looked ahead again. The line was clear, and we had already passed through Midwich, yet no collision had occurred!

I moistened my lips and laughed mirthlessly. I was trembling like a leaf.

“I— I felt all right—when we started!” I muttered; “but—I don't think I'm up to the mark to-night, Bill. I— I've just seen a ghost!”

Bill laughed good-humouredly, evidently thinking I was jesting.

“Ghost of a departed turkey, I expect!” he said with a chuckle. “You certainly do look as if you had something on your conscience.”

He gave vent to another hearty laugh, then started to whistle again as he turned to the fires.

As I realised that he had seen naught of the phantom, I tried to pull myself together, confident that what I had seen was only a trick of my imagination. I thought I must be on the verge of a bad illness, and I felt worried, especially when, ten minutes later, we passed the down express at the proper place.

I kept a sharp look-out on the following night, and for several nights afterwards, but I was thankful not to have the same experience again. And though I did not mention the affair to anyone else, I could not help puzzling my brain over the strange and uncanny experience.

In course of time I had almost forgotten that fearful night, and, being still in excellent health, I had had more than one quiet chuckle over the fear of illness which had then possessed me, when, suddenly, and without warning, the matter was brought forcibly back to my mind.

It was Christmas Eve again — a year ago tonight.

We had just emerged from the wood, and Bill was standing for the moment looking out, when suddenly I saw his face blanch and his eyes almost roll from their sockets, while he clutched hold of my arm for support, his whole appearance was one of complete, irresistible terror.

His lips moved, and he appeared to be trying to speak, and if it were not for moving my ear close to him would his words have been lost “She’s at the curve. It’s no good—
—”

He inclined his head in the direction of Midwich, and in that instant I guessed the truth – the down express was coming again!

Suddenly Bill made a spring, and the next moment would have jumped from the engine had I not gripped him firmly round the waist and pulled him back.

He turned his great, staring eyes up to mine, and for a second looked at me with dumb agony; then he started to wrench at his collar, as if it were choking him, then to foam at the mouth, and an instant later, with a piercing cry of “Maggie! Maggie!” he fell to the floor in a fit.

I looked fearfully ahead.

The night was dark, drizzly, and moonless, but that only accentuated the horror; for there, close upon us, was that terrible phantom train, flames belching forth from the funnel as natural as could be. And as I looked, my nerves tingling, I saw the ghostly driver hurled bodily from the engine and thrown violently forward, his face snowy white, his eyes laden with terror, as he passed silently by, within a foot of my right hand, into the blackness beyond.

A minute later we were passing through the dimly-lighted station at Midwich; but it was some time before Bill recovered. Then I told him of my own experience on the previous Christmas Eve.

And now, sir, I shall have to leave you. Here’s Bill coming, and we are nearly due to start. We have both steeled our nerves for another encounter. To my knowledge, the phantom has only appeared on the two occasions mentioned, and I believe it will appear again to-night.

You are really going north with us? Well, don’t go and frighten anyone else, but if you want to see something that’s as uncanny and terrifying as anything can be, just

put your head out of the window as we clear the wood. I'll guarantee the sight will give you a bit of a start!

Southern Oregon Railway Historical Society
Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes of November 12, 2019

1. **Call to Order:** Membership Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Bruce Kelly, President.
2. **Roll Call:** Bruce Kelly, Allen Dobney, Jerry Hellinga, Chris Manley, and Ric Walch were all present, as well as several other members.
3. **Minutes** were read by Chris Manley and approved by Allen Dobney and seconded by Jerry Hellinga, with one typo correction.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Jerry Hellinga had forgotten to bring his report so we did not have one at this meeting.
5. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. *Medco 4:* Jerry is still needing to see about the waiver. Allen Dobney has almost finished the doors and windows. Jerry found paint that will cover anything without using primer and, in addition, he found the rivets he needs.
 - b. *Burger Shack:* N/A
 - b. *Newsletter:* N/A
 - c. *Website:* N/A
 - d. *Butte Falls:* N/A
 - e. *Surplus:* Allen is organizing books for the train show, as well as magazines.
 - f. *RR Park:* Water was still on in the park, Tim from the city is aware of that issue. An old tear in the fence needs to be

repaired. In addition, Ken found gate unlocked on 11/11.

g. All of the vendor tables have been sold for the train show and Life Savers is not attending this year.

The Umpqua layout is going to be larger this year.

The advertising banners are being put up around town, Kim Jamin has done a fantastic job with the advertising for the show, thank you Kim!

6. **Old Business:** We will be having an election of officers on December 10, 2019.

7. **New Business** Jerry will is pressure washing CB&Q Roof. He will use a forklift to reach the roof rather than a ladder, but still needs someone else to assist him. Ken Moordigian will help if he can, Jerry will call him when he is ready. It will cost about \$200-\$500 for silicone base for roof. A brand called Gaco has 50-year warranty. Jerry would do one coat now and one in spring. It was voted on and approved that we do this.

8. **Good of the Order:** We had a new member application, Dale Wheeler; however, Mr. Wheeler forgot to include his check. Chris Manley will email and/or call him to remind him to send a check. He was voted in as a member subject to his payment of dues.

9. **Adjournment** Meeting was adjourned at 8:23 via motion from Allen Dobney and second by Jerry Hellinga.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Please note I, Chris Manley, have a new phone number as listed above of **541-591-8579**

UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

If you know of any other events that should be added to our newsletter, please email, me at (chrismanleysteam@gmail.com)/ call, (541-591-8579), with the details.

Our next meeting is Tuesday December 10, 2019

Allen Dobney will be presenting a slide show: "Milwaukee Road Volume 4"

*Meetings are in the **Model Railroad Building** and begin at **7:00 p.m., on second Tuesday of the month.***

If you have never been to the park, it is at 799 Berrydale Avenue in Medford (Behind Fire Station) off Table Rock Road. The model railroad building is at the far end of the parking lot.

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