



THE MANIFEST

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON CHAPTER, NRHS – SEPTEMBER 2008
PO BOX 622, MEDFORD, OR. 97501 WEB SITE: [HTTP://WWW.SOC-NRHS.ORG/](http://www.soc-nrhs.org/)

MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT This will be my last memo as president of the club. Nominations will be coming up soon and I have decided to not continue as president. This decision was made strictly for personal reasons. It has been a difficult year for me and I am going to take a break to help get my personal life and my professional career back on track. As most of you know, my wife Charlie is still recovering, I lost my son, uncle, aunt, ex-wife and my dad is currently in his final days.

I will continue to be active in the club and I will see everyone on run days, club activities and working down at the park. I appreciate all of the support from everyone while serving as president and to quote California's governor "I'll be back". — Best Regards, Ric.

FRIED CHICKEN, ANYONE? Our August 30th annual potluck picnic was a big success. Members, families and friends from the five Medford Railroad Park clubs brought plenty of food and appetites as we got together for our annual potluck dinner; once again hosted by the Southern Oregon Live Steamers. An estimated crowd of between 70 and 80 people showed up; all bringing an enormous quantity of delicious food items.

Each year the Live Steamers provide the beverages. This year, because of a little lack of communication, Billie Rockey of the Live Steamers called me and asked if we (Live Steamers) should bring some fried chicken because we did last year. I suggested bringing 50 pieces of fried chicken from their local Albertson's. They purchased 100 pieces!

The next morning Mike Benke of the Southwest Oregon Large Scale Trains club told me he was going to bring five whole fried chickens, like he did last year. Then, as the guests began to arrive at the picnic grounds, another person brought along a big bucket of KFC chicken. There was going to be no shortage of chicken at this picnic. Fortunately, other people brought everything from salads, to desserts, to yummy main courses of Mexican, Italian and American dishes.

We began eating at 6:00pm and everyone got all the food they wanted. The rest of the evening we socialized and rode Live Steamers club trains into the night. As president of the Live Steamers, and as a member of the Railroad Park Committee, I was thrilled we had so many people show up at the park to have an evening together. One of the main goals of the Railroad Park Committee is to solve problems common with all the clubs, such as our parking situation. We want to remove any barriers that prevent the five clubs from interacting with each other. We want the Medford Railroad Park to be everyone's park, and seeing the turnout and fun at the potluck assures us we're heading in the right direction.

Oh, in the end there was only around a dozen pieces of chicken left over!

LIBRARY BUILDING PROGRESS The new “Mack Lloyd Walch” building has a roof now. Through the combined efforts of Jerry Hellinga, Dan Wilkinson, Rick Aubin, Art Turner, Steve Bruff and Chrisanne Murray, the tarpaper and roof shingles were laid down during the three hottest days of August. On any cooler day it may have only taken one day to do the whole job, but they chose to work on the roof from 6:30am until it got hot around 11:00am

Chrisanne is a friend of Dan and she provided an air-powered staple gun to speed up the laying of roof shingles. With Dan and Chrisanne on one side and Jerry, Rick and Art on the other, they carefully aligned their work as they worked towards the center of the roof. All in all they put in a lot of bending and sweat to get the job done.

The next stage was the installation of gables on each end of the building. Jerry, with help from Art, did all the gable work. A few days later Jerry and Larry Tuttle installed two of Larry’s contractor’s doors until we purchase new permanent doors. At least for now we have a secured building waiting for the next step, which will likely be the interior wiring.

Currently the Mack Walch Library Fund needs more money for further construction, but since this is a private, unbudgeted project, Ric is working to complete the building with donations of material, labor and money. We ask you to consider helping in any way you can. Inside the Railroad Park itself Steve Bruff created a poster to see if the general public is interested in helping. He hung the sign by the building with a donation jar and we received about \$72.00. That was good considering that particular Run Day was slower than most run days this season. This is what the poster says.

Would you consider helping us finish this Museum-Archives-Meeting building?

Donations are our source of funds to buy materials. For instance, one Medford company has donated \$5,000 which we used for foundation concrete (at a significant cost discount from Savage Concrete), framing lumber, trusses and roofing. No tax monies are used in any Railroad Park construction.

All labor is supplied by members of the five Railroad Park clubs.

Perhaps you would consider funding all or part of the money needed for:

\$1,600.00 — Electrical. Wiring, outlets, circuit breaker breakers, light fixtures

\$ 800.00 — Insulation. Walls and ceiling.

\$ 830.00 — Sheetrock. Interior walls and ceiling.

Your name(s) will be prominently displayed on a plaque inside the building (\$300 min. donation).

Information or questions? See the docent inside the red ("CB&Q") caboose. Or call Steve Bruff (days) 261-5741, or Ric Walch (days) 770-1154.

Thank You!

National Railway Historical Society
Southern Oregon Chapter
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In addition we received a \$1000.00 donation from Tony Johnson for the library-archives building.

DINING CAR NEWS We have more good news to share about our 1912 Pullman dining car. Last month we told you the good news that Art Turner was successful in getting one of the two dining car's generators operating for the first time in years. A couple of weeks later Art, Monty and Dan worked on the other generator, which can run on either gasoline or propane. Art spent about 90 minutes working on alternate generator when Dan and Monty showed up. Here is a report from Dan.

"This last week there was Art, Monty and I. Art was there working on installing the rebuilt fuel pump, plugs and wires before we got there. Monty and I were there about 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Art was probably an hour longer.

"We first got the 'alternate generator' running. This generator runs on gas only. It took some adjustment to get it to run smoothly. Once that was accomplished, we tackled the wiring. After some 'head scratching' we discovered that they had removed a main circuit breaker from that generator to the main breaker panel on the inside of the car. We borrowed the 50 amp breaker from the other generator and placed it in the breaker box for the alternate generator and 'bingo' we had power to the car. So we now have power to the entire car except for the big air conditioning unit under the car. This includes all lights, plug in sockets, the little air conditioner in the kitchen, water pump, radio (when its case is put back in), fans and refrigerator, which has recently been overhauled. (New compressor with accompanying fixtures!)

"We did run the refrigerator long enough to find out that it does work and was starting to cool the inside down. We also located and tried all switches and found everything to be working. The only thing necessary is to label the main breaker panel switches so that their function is clear to all. Currently we are using the breaker at the generator to turn power on to the car once the generator is running. This generator should provide most everything we currently need for the dining car. We do need to buy a box of 4-foot florescent tubes to replace the ones that are burnt out. I'm going to check at Costco and Wal-Mart.

"The main generator runs fine. It is currently running on propane. We have a problem in that it is putting too much power (voltage) into the system. This may be as simple as running it at a slower rpm. Or it could be a voltage regulator problem on the unit itself. This may require having to get an Onan technician to come out and check things out for us. Once all this is accomplished, we'll put a new breaker in and check its function out. Currently we are using a propane bottle provided by Jerry Hellenga. We do need to buy a new propane bottle with a new valve. The old one is out of date. A new seven gallon bottle with new valve is about \$28.00 and filling it will be close to \$20.00. Both generators need to be run monthly to keep them performing well."

All this good news means it will cost the chapter less when we need to get this car up and running. Short term we are looking into holding a chapter meeting soon inside the dining car. This could be a simple nighttime meeting or perhaps an afternoon meeting with lunch. It would be a great way for many of our members to see this historic car in person. We'll keep you posted.

To continue working on the dining car Dan Wilkinson has issued a challenge to all chapter members and those others interested in this worthwhile project. Here is the challenge Dan proposed at our August 26 Chapter Board Meeting.

"I would like to issue a challenge through the next Society News Letter asking for at least 20 members to save their pocket change for a month for a donation of \$25.00 generating \$500.00, (83 cents per day for 30 days = \$24.90), to be used for the purpose of electrical repairs and possible purchase of lighting fixtures for the Dining Car. This would be for items other than what has already been budgeted for the repairs to the Dining Car roof. I have a friend who has located fixtures that might be

appropriate in our efforts in restoring the dining part of the car. It would also help eliminate having to come up with money from the already tight general fund.”

Right after Dan made the challenge five members (Art, Jerry, Don Pettit, Bruce McGarvey and Ric Walch) dug into their wallets and gave Treasurer Nancy Aubin \$25 each as their answer to Dan’s challenge. We ask all our other members to try to answer the challenge with money of their own.

One last word about the dining car: in our report last month we mentioned the total additional expenses so far in getting the generators working at \$105.11. Chapter member Tom Dill graciously sent the chapter a check in that amount to cover the costs. Thank you, Tom for your donation.

P&E HOPPER CAR PROJECT The sound of hammer blows banging loudly against a metal hopper car, disturbs the quiet solitude of the rural country air surrounding the tranquil setting known as the Medford Railroad Park. (*Egad! Where did I come up with that stuff? – Tony.*) Steve Bruff and Dave Mihevc have yet to call it quits on trying to remove all the dents and dimples from the top of our 1899-built Pacific & Eastern Railroad hopper car.

During August both men took turns heating the steel and pounding flat the lumpy steel rim around the car top and removed additional dents in the steel walls. In the old Navy Seabee vernacular, this is a “Big Sweat Project.” This job would be difficult enough if we had the proper tools and shop facility, but using a torch and sledge hammer while standing on scaffolding makes it more difficult. In spite of the drawbacks the two men are nearly finished with the metal work.

Steve reports, “The project has moved to preparations for painting the car. Fabrication of the steel brackets for the side walkway will be completed at a later date, as will the four corner steel step brackets. I hope to have the car painted during September.”

OTHER PARK NEWS If every NRHS chapter has a person who seems to be searching everywhere for an item useful to their chapter, then our own Dan Wilkinson is our man. With an eye out for anything we might be able to use in our new Mack Walch Library-Archive building Dan spotted two nice display cases available from Copy Quik in Grants Pass.

In a message to our Chapter Board, Dan wrote, “There are two glass cases that the Society may be interested in. The first is a wall case with two halves. The left side is 5'h x 49"w. The right side is 5'h x 62"w. The depth is 5" on the outside and the interior depth is 2¾". There are sliding glass doors on both sides and it comes with locks and keys for both. This is built as a corner mounted unit. They are asking \$50.00 for this case. I told the owner that I would let her know on Wednesday [the day after the Board meeting] if we were interested. The glass doors for this case would be worth \$50.00 alone. We would have to remove the case from the wall ourselves.

“The second is a lighted floor case that is 60" w x 44" h x 20" d. This is similar to the one in the CB&Q caboose. The glass part is 27" high and has an adjustable shelf that is about 30" long. The bottom half is storage with three doors on the back side. It is mounted on casters so it is easily movable. I purchased this shelf for \$50.00. I did not want to lose the opportunity and if the Society is interested they can have it for that amount.”

It is probably no surprise that your Chapter Board quickly approved the acquisition of the two display cases. Just prior to the August 30th Annual Railroad Park Potluck Picnic, Roger Phillips and Dan transported the large two-sided corner glass display case to the park, where it was placed inside the Mack Walch Library-Archives building for safekeeping. The display cases will make fine additions by allowing us to display more of our chapter’s smaller railroad items.



(LEFT) For those of you who could not make the August 12 Chapter Membership Meeting, you missed a chance to share your ideas on how our chapter can set up displays and entertainment inside our new library-archive building. A dozen members came that day and shared many great ideas. Here Ric Walch (3rd from right) is laying out some preliminary ideas for the group to consider. — *Tony Johnson photo*

(RIGHT) Inside the building we shared ideas on where we should set aside an area for video presentations for the public, wall and free standing displays, where to install electrical outlets and so on. We considered traffic patterns from the front door, lighting, storing archives in the offices and more. We soon discovered many of the ideas are quite similar. When it's time to decorate the inside, we'll have a good plan. — *Tony Johnson photo*



(LEFT) The group then headed outside and discussed how we might set up displays under the canopy and along the south wall. We all agreed we should develop the dirt area behind the building with shaded benches and tables, pathways, trees and more. This area will also include a path along the fence to reach the future foot bridge that will go over the SOLS tracks to reach the new garden railway. — *Tony Johnson photo*

(RIGHT) Laying the tar paper and shingles began early in the morning of August 14 as the weather forecast was for 106 degrees. Looking like "Omar the tent maker" is Dan Wilkinson on the left, and Rick Aubin on the right. Dan's good friend Chris brought her staple gun to speed up the process. Also helping were Steve Bruff and Jerry Hellinga. — *Tony Johnson photo*





(LEFT) The roofing paper is nailed down on the south side; now it's time for the north. Chrisanne Murry is walking towards a roll of paper as Steve Bruff gets ready to load the chapter forklift with the bundles of shingles. Within an hour of this photo the temperature climbed to over 90 degrees... and it wasn't 11:00am yet! — *Tony Johnson photo*

(RIGHT) Do not confuse this photo of Dan Wilkinson with that of "The Karate Kid" bird stance. When the temperature climbed it had an adverse effect on Dan's mind. We thought we heard him mumble something about "driving in roof nails with my feet." We talked him out of that idea. — *Tony Johnson photo*



(LEFT) In this photo Chrisanne and Dan have finished more than half of their side of the roof. No problems were encountered, even with the extreme heat. — *Tony Johnson photo*

(RIGHT) The roof is finished after three days of hard work. A few days after this photograph was taken, Jerry Hellinga installed the needed roof vents on the other side of the roof. — *Tony Johnson photo*



DUNSMUIR-McCLOUD RAILROAD TRIP UPDATE During our August 25 Board Meeting Ric Walch reported there are now 13 members signed up, plus 4 non-members, for reservations at the Caboose Motel in Dunsmuir. If you would like to stay overnight in one of the cabooses you will have to contact the Caboose Motel yourself for reservations.

If you don't care to stay overnight, but would like to join the group in Dunsmuir and the trip on the McCloud Railroad, the group will meet at the Amtrak depot parking lot at 9:00am Saturday morning, Sept. 27th. After a little train watching the group will drive to nearby McCloud for lunch and a train ride. Ric says the train ride should be about "twelve dollar-ish".

POSSIBLE DEPOT PLANS IN GOLD HILL For the last couple of months Ric Walch has been watching out for a new development that may bring great benefits to our chapter. At our last Board Meeting Ric gave us this update.

As you know our chapter owns what's left of the old Woodville (latter to become Rogue River) Depot. Built around 1884 the depot was retired by Southern Pacific when it was replaced by a new depot. The old depot was purchased and moved downtown and used over the years by a number of businesses. When the last owner needed more space he sold the building to a local Rogue River resident. He took the building apart and used about 50% of the structure for out buildings on his property. The rest of the building he stored under cover.

In late 2005 our chapter acquired the other half of the structure, where it presently is under protective storage in White City. We had no firm plan when we bought the building, but we felt we would either reconstruct the building at the Railroad Park, or perhaps reconstruct it as part of a future tourist hauling railroad when that opportunity arrived. In addition, last December our members disassembled the old 1889-era Howard House in Medford because much of the wood could be used to fill the missing pieces of our depot, and could also be used to restore our wooden 1941 Great Northern caboose.

Now back to the present. Last year there was some discussion about a developer planning a new tourist-business area next to Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad's ex-Southern Pacific mainline in Gold Hill. There was some talk about the desire to operate a tourist railroad from there, but nothing firm has been proposed. However, Ric Walch has been in discussions with the City of Gold Hill, elected representatives and others about the idea of reconstructing our Woodville depot next to the mainline and operating it as a museum. There appears to be plenty of local funding for creating a local "Gold Rush era" set of office and commercial buildings and have our depot as a tourist centerpiece.

The idea has merits because apparently we won't have to keep the museum open seven days a week and we won't have to put up the money. We would use the building to display local railroad history and as an outreach for our chapter and the Medford Railroad Park. Of course this is very early in the discussions, but it may become an excellent opportunity for us. We will report more when we have concrete proposals and plans.

The September General Meeting is Tuesday, Sep. 09 at 7:00pm at the Rogue Valley Model Railroad clubhouse at the Medford Railroad Park. Come on by and visit as we share some video entertainment. Last month we showed a video of two different Union Pacific maintenance of way operations: the P-811 concrete tie train and a tie replacement train. If there are no other films we'll show how railroads undercut and clean their ballast with modern machines.

Your Chapter Officers for 2008

Ric Walch, President 541-772-6255
E. Don Pettit, Vice President 541-601-4772
Jerry Hellinga, Treasurer 541-772-6432
Steve Bruff, Dir. Of Public Relations – 541-261-5741
John Powell, Activities Director – 541-826-1992

Bruce McGarvey, National Director – 541-779-8145
Art Turner, Chief Mechanical Officer – 541-826-6291
Rickie Aubin, Secretary - 541-779-4259
Tony Johnson, Newsletter Editor/Historian – 541-944-9176
Nancy Aubin, Membership Director – 541-779-4259

GOOD OLD DAYS OF RAILROADIN' This month we have space for another tale from retired Southern Pacific engineer Tom Weston. Tom lives today in his hometown of Tracy, CA. This is Tom's 28th article in our newsletter.

STEEL TIRES by Tom Weston Before Diesels came and changed railroading forever, and most railroads still depended on steam engines for their main source of motive power, they used what they called "messengers" on dead or disabled steam engines being shipped from one shop to another. On the Southern Pacific Railroad, messengers were fireman used out of the freight pool. He was supposed to make sure the engine was running normally, with no smoke from over-heated bearings or sticking brakes.

I was called for one of these messenger jobs on a cold winter day in the early 1940s. The engine was the SP2372, a so-called ten wheeler, which just meant that it had a four wheeled pony truck on the front and six driver wheels. When I was called, I asked the crew dispatcher where I could find the engine. He said, "Oh, it's in a freight train somewhere in the yard. The train is going to Fresno." When I finally found the engine, it was 10 cars ahead of the caboose on an 80- or 90-car train going to Fresno via the old West Side [Line] through Los Banos, CA.

All steam engines in those days had a storm curtain at the rear of the cab. It was just a sheet of canvas fastened to the back of the cab with a wooden rod on the bottom so it could be rolled up out of the way when not in use. It came in mighty handy when backing up on cold and rainy days.

When I climbed up into the 2372, I noticed the storm curtain was gone! It was too late to do anything about it then, because the train was almost ready to leave town. A few minutes later, we did pull out of the yard, and as soon as we started to pick up speed, I knew that I was in for a really cold trip! This is absolutely nothing colder or deader than a steam locomotive with no steam in its boiler! When it is steamed up, it seems like it is alive. Without steam, it is just a big lump of cold steel. When the train stopped at Los Banos to take water, I looked the 2372 over and everything seemed to be in good shape. There was no smoke to indicate that anything was running hot, and the brakes released fine when the engineer released the train brakes after taking water.

Then I made a decision that was a big mistake and could have gotten me into a lot of trouble and maybe even fired! I decided to go back to the nice warm caboose and ride to Kerman CA, where I was sure the train would stop for water again. Then I would get back on the engine, where I should have been all the time, and ride it the rest of the way into Fresno. Unfortunately, the engineer decided he had enough water and only slowed down to head into the Biola Branch because at that time the SP was using this branch line to get trains from the West Side Line to the East Side Line and into Fresno Yard without going all the way from Kerman to Fresno on the main line and then back out to the yard, which was a couple of miles west of Fresno.

Now when the engineer released the train brakes after slowing down to head into the branch at Kerman, the brakes on the 2372 did not release. And because I was not there to release them, which I could have easily done with the brake valve on the 2372, the brakes stayed applied all the way into Fresno Yard!

When the train finally stopped in the yard, I could hardly see the 2372 through all the smoke. Every wheel on that engine was so hot you couldn't get near them. The steel tires on all the driver wheels, which all steam engines had and which were about 3 or 4 inches thick, had gotten so hot and expanded so much that they had slipped completely around the wheel. Loose tires could be very dangerous, because they might slip off the wheel and do a lot of damage. Anyway, I was really worried and thought I was in big trouble.

Strangely, or maybe I should say luckily, I never heard a thing about it! Later I found out the reason why. The 2372 was headed for the Bakersfield back shops for a complete overhaul! So, I guess a few slipped tires didn't matter.