

# THE MANIFEST

## January-February 2024



Greetings!

I must apologize for my long absence. I have had some personal issues I have had to deal with. However, all is well or getting there and you will be receiving your newsletters monthly from this point forward.

I hope the holidays found you are well and that you enjoyed them with family and friends.

Please note that our annual dues are due now, (if you have not already paid them). Our next meeting will be February 13, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at the Model Railroad Building.

Our story comes from the NMRO (National Militant Rail Fan Organization). With the permission of Scott Whitney, I am printing one of his stories on their page "*I Carry A Camera*". I hope you enjoy.

### UNSTOPPABLE

It was sunny and cool in the city of the little engines and a stiff wind was blowing out of the northwest. My partner and I were assigned routine patrol on the daywatch

around the Connecticut River valley. His name is Evans mine's Whitney, and I carry a camera.

We started our patrol in the vicinity of Claremont Jct. This was back when the Central Vermont Railway still owned the line prior to its sale to New England Central. We were awaiting the arrival of southbound train 324 which was due to pick up a car from the Claremont Concord Railroad. We set up our lookout post near the crossing and across from the former depot. At our disposal was our NMRO 'big gun' Panasonic video camera.

The normal procedure, for the move the train was to make, would be for them to stop the train north of the interlocking at Claremont Jct. and drop their train there and then pass through to the hand throw switches for the interchange. This day was different and for some reason the dispatcher had forgotten to line the switch and signal for that movement. In such an instance there are two ways to proceed. One would be to wait the full seven minutes for the signals to 'time out' and then make the move. A quicker way is to accept the signal as shown and then (with permission) back out of the interlocking which would then be immediately available to be reset to the correct route.

Today's move was to be the latter and we were somewhat surprised to see the locomotives heading toward us on the main track, until we understood what was going on. The engines stopped within the interlocking and then reversed their move toward their train. They passed north of the interlocking and then kept going and going and going.....

A voice over the scanner broke our stunned silence: "Do you see 'em yet?" "Nope, they're gone!" was the excited reply. We had a runaway in progress!!!

Let me pause here to explain why the train ran away... The crew's normal habit, in order to save time, was to bottle the air (close BOTH angle cocks at the point where the train is to be parted, instead of just toward the engines,

thus trapping the air in the rear portion of the train). After parting the train, the crewman would then partly open the angle cock on the standing cut in order to let air escape. This is supposed to keep the air brakes from going into emergency and requiring longer to pump up again after recoupling. However, there is a very present danger in that practice with today's brake systems. The ABDW brake is designed to take emergency reservoir air and admit it into a brake pipe to help quickly recharge a train line. All it takes is a slight increase in train line air pressure to cause one ABDW brake to release and cause a chain reaction to release a whole train. This is what CV train 324 experienced at Claremont Jct.

As fast as we could, we were code three in hot pursuit of a train running away backward toward Windsor, VT, video camera rolling the whole time. Our first attempt at an intercept was at Balloch crossing, about four miles north of Claremont. Unfortunately, the train was rolling too fast to do anything about it. We followed the train as best we could until we could reach it at Windsor.

At Windsor, as fate would have it a CV track maintainer was working on a rail joint near the station. Very fortunate indeed was the fact that he had a spot close enough to the main line to reach his work without having to have his very large truck on the main with its hyrail gear. The maintainer heard the crew's conversation with the dispatcher and removed his cables from the path of the errant train.

Windsor itself sits at the bottom of a bowl so there was no danger of the train proceeding much further up the line. The only danger was that of striking someone at any one of several crossings within the town. By the time the last few cars were approaching the point at which we were standing on the Windsor Station platform, it had slowed enough to allow me to grab a handle on the next to the last car and swing aboard. A quick trip up and over the top of

the car allowed me to reach the only partially open angle cock and dump the air from the train's brakepipe. Soon after the cut of cars stopped, the head end of the train showed up to retrieve it.

The aftermath of the story is almost as interesting.... The crew thanked me for the assistance and we went on our merry way. A few days later I related the story to some of the folks at work and one of them had a later conversation about the incident with a CV official. The response at that end was: "What runaway?!?" The story was related, and some folks got some time off. I got something for my heroic action also... I got a CV hat. [Whoopie...zzzzz]

## CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	Bruce Kelly wilmingtonnorthern@sprynet.com 541-613-1638
Vice President	Ric Walch engmgr@medfab.com 541-772-6255
Treasurer	Jerry Hellinga ghelling@jeffnet.org 541-944-2230
Secretary	Chris Manley chrismanleysteam@gmail.com 541-591-8579
National Advisor	Allen Dobney adobney@gmail.com 541-324-3563

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Chief Mechanical Officer      Jerry Hellinga  
                                                 ghelling@jeffnet.org  
                                                 541-944-2230

Burger Shack                      Allen Dobney  
                                                 adobney@gmail.com  
                                                 541-324-3563

Newsletter & Entertainment Chris Manley  
                                                 chrismanleysteam@gmail.com  
                                                 541-591-8579

Webmaster                          Allen Dobney  
                                                 adobney@gmail.com  
                                                 541-324-3563

OFFICIAL Publication of the Southern Oregon Railway  
Historical Society

P.O. Box 622  
Medford, Oregon 97501  
soc-nrhs.org

