

# The



# TRAINMASTER

Official Publication of the Pacific Northwest Chapter, National Railway Historical Society.



## DECEMBER 1989

### Hobo—Whence It Came

Here is another explanation of how a term used around railroads originated.

Take the noun *hobo*. It has identified those people who hitch rides on freight trains. The April 1989 issue or *The Order Board* from NRHS Tampa Bay Chapter says it is a corruption of the term *hoe boy*. (They got their information from *Hobo News*, so it must be accurate — or at least sanctioned.)

It seems that, years ago, roving bands of men did seasonal farm work and were called *hoe boys*. To get from place to place, the freight trains provided ideal transportation. They would ride the trains and hop off upon reaching a likely looking place for employment.

They carried a hoe — their working tool — and tied their bundle of belongings on the business end as they carried it over their shoulder.

As time went on, *hoe boy* was shortened to *hobo*.

—Jerry Webb

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## CHAPTER TIMETABLE NO. 327

### REGULAR RUNS

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**, December 7, Thursday, 7:00pm, at the Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club on the corner of N. Vancouver Ave. and Russell Street. All Chapter members are welcome.

**MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING**, December 15, Friday, 7:30pm, at the Portland General Electric auditorium on SE 17th Avenue between Powell and Holgate. The business meeting will start promptly at 7:30, with the newsreel and program following after a short break. **VOTE ON 1990 CHAPTER BUDGET**. Refreshments will be available; please bring some money to feed the "kitty" so Kitty can continue to feed you. The program is listed below.

**WEEKLY NO-HOST LUNCHEON**, every Saturday, 12:00 noon, at the Semaphore Restaurant at the corner of SE 17th Avenue and Holgate Blvd. Our group sits in the back. Come on down!

**ROLLING STOCK WORK SESSIONS**, every Tuesday, at the Chapter's tracks in Brooklyn Yards. Working hours are 9am to 3-4pm, with lunch at the Semaphore. There's a lot of work of all kinds to be done, and your contribution would be welcome. Contact Bob Hoffman at 659-8402 to see how you can help.

**CHAPTER LIBRARY OPEN HOURS**, Saturday, December 16, 1 to 4pm at Room 1, Union Station. On duty: Jim Loomis. NOTE: The Library will be closed December 23 for the Christmas holiday.

### EXTRA BOARD

**DRAIN HOLIDAY PREVIEW**, December 2-3, Drain, Oregon. The Chapter's museum car 76 will be in attendance at this event.

**DECORATE UNION STATION FOR CHRISTMAS**, Saturday, December 9, 10am - noon. Details on page 2.

**GREAT AMERICAN TRAIN SHOW**, December 16-17, noon-6pm at the Multnomah County Expo Center, 2060 N. Marine Dr. Admission \$4, under 12 free (with adult). The Chapter will have a table there.

**NEW YEAR'S TRIP TO SEATTLE**. It looks as though the *Mount Hood* will be laid up, but Amtrak is running and the hotel reservations are still good, so a Chapter trip by train is still a possibility. If you are interested, contact Dave Stimic soon at 234-6967.

**ANNUAL CHAPTER BANQUET**, Saturday, January 27, 6pm at the Mallory Hotel. More details will be available at the December business meeting and in the next issue of *The Trainmaster*. Capacity is 80 people, so plan to reserve early if you want to get in.

### DECEMBER MEETING PROGRAM

*New Zealand Railways*  
slides by Gordon Zimmerman

*Program begins after business meeting.*

Notice: Programs are needed for future meetings. Anyone who is willing to present a program (slides, film, etc.) at a chapter meeting, please contact Dick Nock at 657-3868.

## The TRAINMASTER

is the official newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, published monthly for the benefit of its members. Articles which appear in *The Trainmaster* do not express the official National Railway Historical Society position on any subject unless specifically noted as such. Material from *The Trainmaster* may be reprinted in other publications provided credit is given as to the source. Please address contributions, correspondence, and exchange copies of newsletters to:

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MEMBERSHIP in the PNWC-NRHS is available as follows:

Regular...\$25/yr.  
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For more information contact the Membership Chairman, at the above address.

## DEADLINES

are terrible things, but they pop up every month without fail. The deadline for each issue of *The Trainmaster* is the 20th of the previous month. I always try to squeeze in late material, but I can't guarantee that anything received after the 20th will make it—be warned!

—RS

## A Friend Passes

How does one say a final goodbye to a friend, pen pal, and a generous giver of thoughts, ideas, and material of interest to this old railroad buff?

Such a man was Chapter member Walter W. Henzi, 1917—1989.

He hired out for the Union Pacific in 1947 and was promoted to engineer in 1957. His first job there was as a fireman. Before that, he was a firebuilder for the Northern Pacific Terminal Co. during World War II and went firing there, as he says, "to make enough money to get hitched."

I was introduced to Walt in 1978 by Cliff Gannon, a retired Portland Terminal Co. engineer, and a neighbor of Walt's. Cliff came to my home at the beach to show me two old black-and-white photos of the N.P.T. Co. that belonged to Walt.

That was the start of a great friendship between Walt and me. His letters were written in beautiful, flowing handwriting and were of such great interest that I saved all 32 of them. He usually ended his letters by saying, "I'll tie up now" or "I've run out of steam" or "The sand dome is empty."

Walt inherited almost the entire railroad photo collection and other memorabilia from Herb Arey and he gave me more than 200 N.P.T. Co. photos, as he knew I collected pictures and memorabilia from the now-named Portland Terminal RR Co.

A visit to his basement in his home in North Portland was a lesson in railroad history. He had model UP engines that ran, plus many other items of interest to a railroad historian (such as any member of our chapter).

No doubt he will be watching from that huge railroad in the sky to see if we are taking care of the railroad collections of the past, and he'll be looking for a future of growing railroads.

Gosh, I miss those letters! The last one was written June 22, 1989. In my previous letter to him I had enclosed an item of railroad history and he said, "Will use it in one of my railroad albums of the future." He was not planning to leave us.

My last letter to him was dated July 29, 1989. Now there will be no answer. Now I have run out of steam!

—Jack Runciman

## Decorate Union Station

Holiday cheer for travellers!

Saturday, Dec. 9

10am - noon

You are again invited to help the Chapter decorate Portland Union Station for the holiday season. Marilyn Edgar has most of the needed decorations, but more would be welcome (no electrical or breakable ones can be used, though).

Things to bring:

- » Wire and tape to hang them with.
- » Stepladders to stand on.
- » Snacks to share.

For more information, contact the Edgars at 236-7271



## CHAPTER BUSINESS

isolated until the new connecting track was completed last year.

We had perfect weather with clear skies and the temperature hit 80 degrees, a record for the day. Stone Mountain is the world's largest exposed mass of granite and is located about 17 miles east-northeast of Atlanta. Georgia's Stone Mountain Memorial Park includes 3,200 acres surrounding the mountain and features all kinds of attractions. With the great weather, the area was receiving heavy use.

The park is probably best known for its huge bas-relief sculpture depicting Confederate heroes President Jefferson Davis and Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson on horseback. Some call it the South's Mount Rushmore, and the sculpture was commenced, but not completed by, Gutzon Borglum. Our train made the five-mile loop around the mountain over the tracks of the Stone Mountain Scenic, which has been operating in the park for about thirty years. They had hoped to power our train with ex-Atlanta & West Point 290, a Pacific 4-6-2 steamer that was built by Lima in 1926 and retired in 1953. Owned by the Atlanta Chapter, it was restored to operating condition only this summer. Unfortunately, some broken pistons rings prevented use of the locomotive for our trip and the locomotive remained in the shops.

We also got to view scores of cars and other pieces of equipment owned by the Chapter, as well as to be briefed on plans for a museum building on the property. A direct switch connection with main line railroad tracks exists at the museum site.

Dinner that night was at the restored Georgia Railroad Freight Depot, which at 120 years is the oldest existing building in downtown Atlanta. Cocktails, dinner and a program featuring a number of speakers who covered local railroad history, completed the day's events.

The business meeting convened at 8:31 am, Sunday, with Dr. Raymond A. Wood presiding. Elections of officers were held. In 16 of the 17 regions, including the Northwest Region, there was only a single nominee for Regional Vice President, and Gerald K. (Jerry) Webb, Sr., Pacific Northwest Chapter member, was duly elected to replace Hugh Robertson, who had chosen not to run again for the office he assumed last year.

Two new chapters were issued charters: Suncoast Chapter of Sarasota, Florida, and Midland Valley Chapter of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Unfortunately, the Winter Haven/Lakeland Chapter in Florida, which was only chartered in May, 1988, had its charter rescinded. Since being accepted, that chapter simply had failed to respond to any and all formal contacts and communications from National. After some debate about giving them 'one last chance', the board voted to oust the Chapter from the society.

Good news was a report that the financial dispute

dating from the National Convention in Boston in 1986 has finally been settled. The NMRA agreed to a compromise on what was owed and a check for \$5,400 payable to the NRHS has been received (and presumably cashed!) A 1990 budget for National of \$195,650 in income and \$192,065 in expenses was approved.

Reports were made on upcoming National Conventions. All members were urged to try to make the next one which will be held June 14 through 17, 1990 in St. Louis, Missouri. Two steam locomotives, Frisco 1522 and UP 844, will definitely be operating there, and there is a possibility that steamers Norfolk Southern 611 and Cotton Belt 819 may also appear. Future convention sites are Huntington, West Virginia, San Jose, California, and Chicago, for 1991, 1992 and 1993, respectively. National received a check for \$7,920.42 as its share of the \$33,884.17 profit made at this year's Asheville, North Carolina, convention.

Protests continue over the handling of the 1988 Tri-State Convention in New Jersey. A total of \$44,912 was reported lost, and yet promises were made that all those owed refunds will eventually be paid.

A selection process for choosing the sites of future meetings has been developed and the procedures will be set and advised upon early next year.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 am.

That afternoon over 30 of us were taken out by members of the Atlanta Chapter for an impromptu visit to the former Pullman Company car shops that are located just three miles east of downtown. There we were privileged to inspect the 28-acre facility used by The New Georgia Railroad. We got to see the ailing 290 as well as ex-Savannah & Atlanta 750, a 1910 Pacific also owned by the Atlanta Chapter. All of the equipment and locomotives are serviced and stored at that site. At least three of the cars regularly used by The New Georgia are leased from the Atlanta Chapter.

Following the shop tour, James Hughes, a chapter member, took me out to Stone Mountain for a better and more leisurely look at the state park. On this beautiful fall day, I so finished up a most interesting and well-hosted national directors' meeting.

My trip, however, was not over, for I then proceeded up to Washington, D.C. But that's another story for another time.

### Summary of Minutes - Board of Directors Meeting - November 9, 1989

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Hoffman at 7:00 PM.

## CHAPTER BUSINESS

The board of directors passed the following motions at its October meeting: 1. Instructed Marilyn Edgar to resolve at bill from AAPRCO for \$63.18 for car washing and sanitation service for the car Mt. Hood while in San Diego. 2. Found no basis for the claim by one Chapter member that another member be censured.

The board began its meeting at Room 1 to view the present arrangement of the room in preparation for consideration of plans from the special ad hoc committee appointed to propose future arrangement of the room.

**Rolling Stock:** Bob Hoffman reported that Amtrak has billed the Chapter for \$600 for repairs to the car Mt. Hood while it was in California. A new equalizer for one of the Mt. Hood's trucks has not yet been located. Car 76 has been jacked up for wheel set repair and bolt replacement. The trip to Drain, OR of cars 76 and 3300 is still a possibility on Dec. 2 & 3. The lease of the Chapter's tender to the City of Portland is in effect. Repairs on car 55 are progressing with shelves being installed. NRM has made a payment of \$1500 on the lease of cars 3300 and 6800 for the Yakima excursion. A check for \$1250 has been received from the Washington Central as part payment on its lease of the two cars. The final total of lease payments on the Yakima trips will depend on the total number of use days.

In answer to a question from Fred Dorsett the board advised him that the vote on the dues increase would take place next Friday.

Respectfully submitted, Chuck Storz, Secretary.

### Summary of Minutes Regular Chapter Meeting - November 17, 1989

The meeting was called to order by Chapter President Bob Hoffman at 7:40 PM.

Treasurer Alan Viewig reported the following balances in the Chapter's accounts as of 10/31/89: Checking \$27,886.12. Savings \$57,297.67. Alan said that he expects more than \$16,000 to be in the checking account at the end of the year if the level of expenses stays down.

The membership passed the following motion at the November meeting: Increased annual dues to \$23 for 1990 and to \$25 for 1991.

**Election:** The following were elected as officers and directors-at-large for 1990: President, Bob Hoffman. Vice President, Bill Carter. Secretary, Chuck Storz. Treasurer, Maxine Rodabaugh. National Director, Rich Carlson. Directors- at-Large, Chuck Bukowsky and Gerald Schuler.

**Activities:** Marilyn Edgar announced that the annual Chapter banquet would be on Saturday, January 27 at the

Mallory Hotel. More information on the banquet later. A Mt. Hood New Years trip may take place if the car is repaired in time. The committee will put up Christmas decorations in the Union Station on the second weekend in December.

In response to a question from Terry Parker President Bob Hoffman ruled that the 1990 Chapter budget could be discussed at the next meeting before a vote is taken on it. Nothing in the by laws prevents such a discussion.

Respectfully submitted, Chuck Storz, Secretary.

## Donations Wanted

The Rolling Stock Committee is seeking donations of 3/4" (or thicker) plywood to be used for shelving in car 55. Any grade will do. Pieces need to be at least 16 inches wide and 4 feet long in order to be of use. Quantity needed: *lots*.

Members might want to consider buying a sheet for donation to the cause. If you have some wood to contribute — or if you know of anyone who might — please contact Richard Parks at 228-9422.

## Tragedy at Saugus

Shortly after midnight, June 20 1938, the westbound Milwaukee Road Olympian derailed off of a steel bridge over Custer Creek, some 26 miles east of Miles City, Montana. The center pier had been washed out by a flash flood and the bridge collapsed under the train. This bridge had been inspected just an hour before by a track walker who said that the creek had been almost dry when he had inspected it. Also, there was no rain along the right of way at the time the "Olympian" approached the bridge. The crew had no warning of the impending disaster. The engine, tender and six cars went into the roaring torrent. Two days later 39 bodies had been removed from the wreck with a submerged, mud-filled Tourist sleeper still to be removed from the creek with an estimated 18 bodies. The Yellowstone river was being patrolled as far as Glendive 50 miles downstream because one body had been found there. A diner, observation and two Pullmans were all that were left on the rails of the 10-car Olympian.

Seven Milwaukee road employees who were deadheading, knowing that Custer Creek seldom carried any water, helped out in the early rescue. William Shearer, veteran engineer for the Milwaukee said, "I thought we were on the ground at first, then when water started coming in the coach I said 'Boys' we're in the old

*Continued on page 7*

## NEWS—HISTORY—TRAVEL

### Centennial

On November 11, 1989, Yakima, Washington celebrated the State's 100th birthday, in part by honoring railroading. It is fitting that this should be so, as the city was founded by the Northern Pacific Railroad.

When the NP reached the upper Yakima Valley on its way to Puget Sound, the city fathers of the existing city of Yakima could not agree on certain things. As a result, the railroad bypassed Yakima, establishing a station and important railroad facilities four miles north. The station was called North Yakima.

The writing on the wall was plain to see by most business people, and it wasn't long before they moved "lock, stock, and barrel" — including their buildings in some cases — to North Yakima. Old Yakima declined in importance; some time later it changed its name to Union Gap, and the "North" was dropped from the name of the new town.

For some 70 years, Yakima remained an important railroad center. Then came diesels, improved highways that spawned trucks, and, finally, Burlington Northern, whose management saw Stevens Pass and the Columbia River as preferred routes to Seattle. Yakima's railroad importance faded nearly away.

When BN finally said "forget it," the route from Pasco to Cle Elum was sold to the Washington Central Railroad. There, imaginative leadership has brought back respectable freight service and is doing something BN brass would have a mental block on — tourist passenger operation. And the Washington Central is making a success of it.

The depot building in Yakima remains standing and is being refurbished. Saturday, November 11 was the date for official dedication of the "new depot," even though the renovation has not been completed.

The east portion is occupied by the waiting room and ticket office. New carpeting has been installed. The room is painted in a ivory color. The walls have 4-by-12-inch ivory-colored tile from the floor to about five feet height. Six pillars (also covered to five feet with tile) support an oblong domed center ceiling section, indirectly illuminated. The lower section of the dome is ringed

with multiple lions' faces, mouths agape. At present, seating is provided by two high-backed wooden benches, reminiscent of old-style railroad waiting rooms. The benches take up only about a third of the floor space. The ticket office is located off the waiting room, on the track side.

A hallway letting off the center of the west wall leads to restrooms and a stairway to the second floor. Refurbishing continues in the west part of the depot that housed baggage and other railroad offices. The upstairs is occupied by offices of the Yakima County Development Association, which is in charge of the refurbishment.

There are three entries into the waiting room, each with two beautifully refinished wooden doors with windows. One opens to the track side, the second onto Front Street. The third opens onto a parking lot, on the other side of which stands the former Railway Express Agency building, which fronts on the city's main east-west boulevard, Yakima Avenue.

The November 11 dedication included ribbon cutting, short speeches,

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*People would touch the engines to see what a real steam engine feels like.*

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driving a ceremonial "last spike," and the nose-to-nose setting of two operating steam locomotives. One, the 4449, came from the south. The other, steaming in from the north, was Baldwin-built, coal-fired 2-4-0 number 51, formerly of the Great Western Railway and now the nucleus of the newly formed Yakima Valley Rail and Steam Museum located in Toppenish, about 20 miles south of Yakima.

The two engines came within eight feet of each other. The throng of several thousand people crowded around, some climbing on the pilots of the engines to have their pictures taken.

The 51, painted black with only its

number on the side and a silver smokebox, made quite a contrast to the brightly-colored 4449. Steam escaping from the front of the 51 added to the colorful event.

People would touch the engines, to see what a real steam engine feels like.

After about 20 minutes together, both engines sounded the three blasts from their whistles that announced their intention to back up. The move began slowly. Dozens of coins placed on the rails behind number 51 caused the tender to make a rattling sound as it passed over them. It took the driving wheels of the engine to flatten them.

The first of four days of public rides behind 4449 had started the day before, November 10, with a trip from Yakima to Ellensburg and return through the Yakima River Canyon. The consist included the Washington Central Dinner Train cars, with brunch served on the morning trip and dinner on the late afternoon trip. Those who preferred not to eat rode on our Chapter's two cars *Red River* and *Milne Gillespie*, or the articulated car *Columbia*.

We rode the afternoon train, going "coach" on the *Columbia*. Leaving about 3:20pm, the train headed north on the former Northern Pacific mainline across the Natches River, through Selah Gap, and across the Selah Valley area to the mouth of the Yakima River Canyon. We were paced by about two dozen cars on the curving two-lane road that used to be the main highway between Yakima and Ellensburg.

Arrival at Ellensburg was about 4:40pm, at dusk with a light rain falling. The Ellensburg NP depot is still there. Across a brick-paved parking area is a small park with an NP caboose and semaphore signal on display. The depot has re-opened and the train was there long enough for everyone to get off and look in at a winery tasting room, several small craft businesses and a small cafe.

The 4449, which had run engine-forward to Ellensburg, ran around the train and nosed onto the rear. There are no turning facilities at Ellensburg; the engine had to return tender-first to Yakima.

A warning blast from 4449's deep-throated whistle brought passenger scurrying from the depot to

*Continued on page 7<sub>e</sub>*

**Tragedy, from page 5**

Yellowstone. It was a few minutes before I found out it was Custer Creek. Why, I've put a train over that Creek a thousand times and never seen over a bucket of water in it once."

Shearer then said, "We all we crawled out of our coach. It was hard to see much. The mail, Express and Baggage cars which were between us and the locomotive were piled up every which way."

"We crawled along the pile like monkeys, wondering how anyone could be alive. Mike Cain and Ed Hamm, brakemen, were the first to get out on the bank. They went to Saugus to telephone for help."

"Then Chris McGee, the conductor, and I got out. We all crawled back over the wreckage again — I knew the boys in the engine must be dead. We saw a woman jump out of a window she had smashed. She floated down against the pile of wreckage. She must have drowned. Her husband yelled for us to help her, but it was of no use. The other men in our group, who were all 'deadheading,' H. Shipley, fireman, C. Tarbox, conductor, J. Clifford, engineer, and J. Umhoefer, retired conductor, helped the people get out of their cars. But it was hard going".

The above is taken verbatim from several United Press news items in the newspapers of June 20, 21, 22, 1938. The total dead thought to be over 44 and the number injured was not published at that time. This was the worst western rail disaster since two Great Northern trains were hurled down the mountainside by an avalanche at Wellington, Washington on March 1, 1910 with a loss of 96 lives.

Compared to the airplane tragedies of our modern times, this was not such a great calamity, especially when you realize that the majority of the passengers walked away. But

**Laugh Track**

*Laugh Track* has been suspended (for only a short time, I hope) for want of material. If you have any specimens of railroad humor suitable for publication, their contribution to this space would be welcome. —RS

remember that the communication was probably an old fashioned crank telephone in a phone booth at a siding in the middle of nowhere. Today we would have radios for communication and helicopters to take the injured to hospitals. Then they had to use rescue trains to get the people out of there.

What did the only two, the engineer and fireman see, that last moment as the bridge collapsed under them. The train was probably doing 60 mph to be able to keep their schedule average speed of 49 mph on that division. We can only guess.

And the passengers, who were jolted awake from their sleep to find water coming into the cars. These things happened very rarely on modern railroads. But it happened. Track walkers, block signals, and other safety devices were of no help in forecasting a flash flood on the creek.

The Milwaukee Road is now gone. The Olympian, later called The Olympian Hiawatha, is gone. The rails have been torn up on what once was a transcontinental railroad, but the history is still with us.

—Kenny Prager

# The MILWAUKEE Road

**Centennial, from page 6**

board their cars. Darkness was falling.

The track through Ellensburg parallels the old main highway, which is now built-up from downtown to the I-90 with businesses, all brightly lighted. I felt an almost hypnotic feeling as those lights glided by. Looking out the window, the scene took on almost a double vision as I became aware of the reflection from soft lights inside the car competing with the lights moving by outside. It was a pleasant, comfortable feeling.

At grade crossings the lights of waiting cars cast a searchlight beam through steam and smoke from the engine. From up front came the hauntingly beautiful music of the 4449's whistle. There is nothing like it!

We soon passed the interchange, leaving the colored advertising signs behind; only an occasional farmyard light was left to attract our attention. The clouds made it very dark outside. As I let my mind wander while riding on the comfortable, slightly swaying train, I found myself concentrating on the reflections as a shadowy farm passed: a tree, some brush and an occasional motor vehicle on the road beside the track.

Off in the distance, a serpentine line of car lights crawled down the side of the mountain range. It was the I-82 grade into the Kittitas Valley from Yakima. While I watched, the train passed packing sheds, and the car's trucks clattered over the frog of the switch to the spur tracks.

We entered the Yakima River Canyon. The darkness deepened as we

were hemmed in by the high canyon walls. Looking upward out of the window, we caught sight of the last of the evening twilight.

Looking forward, we saw the lights of the 4449 as it swept into the sharper curves. The smaller lights under the streamlined covering showed the driving wheels turning, and the tender "headlight" cast its beam on the canyon walls. Looking closely, we saw the flicker of firelight in the firebox. Showing less brightly, but warm and friendly, were lights coming from the Washington Central dinner train coaches coupled next to the pilot of the 4449.

In place of the earlier couple dozen cars on the canyon highway, only four cars were pacing. No passing — the vehicle occupants were relaxing and enjoying the view of the train across the river

The clouds and mist had been left behind. The moon, a little more than half full, played hide-and-seek behind the mountains as the train twisted through the canyon. When the train, the moon, and the river were in the right alignment, we were treated to one of nature's most lovely views — moonlight on the water!

All too soon we exited the south end of the canyon, the lights of the Selah area sparkling in the darkness. The 4449 sounded her hauntingly beautiful whistle for several road crossings. We curved through Selah Gap, crossed the Natches River, and entered the tangent track, gliding to a perfect stop in front of the Yakima depot.

—Jerry Webb

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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