

The



TRAINMASTER

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



MAY 1990

Railfan Notes

4449 fans will be disappointed by this one: the scheduled June trip to Vancouver, B. C. has been canceled. No reason has been given.

Fall Party Cruise and Excursion is being offered by Western Star. Take Amtrak and bus to Vancouver, B. C., spend two days riding on BC Rail, then travel by cruise ship from Vancouver back to Portland. If that sounds good to you, contact Al Haij at 659-7840 for more information.

Columbia River Chapter is planning a public excursion trip on the former UP line between Burns and Ontario, Oregon in October. We'll print more information on this as it becomes available.

Sumpter Valley trip. Activities Committee Chair Esther Rosu is planning a Chapter trip to the Sumpter Valley Railroad and other points in eastern Oregon that are of interest to railfans. Tentative date is the second weekend in September. When arrangements are completed, details will appear in a future issue of *The Trainmaster*.

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CHAPTER TIMETABLE NO. 332

REGULAR RUNS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, May 10, 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, May 18, 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. 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 and Saturday, at the Chapter's tracks in Brooklyn Yards. Working hours are 9am to 3-4pm on Tuesday, 10am to late afternoon on Saturday. There's a lot of work of all kinds to be done, and **your contribution would be welcome.** Contact Richard Gray (656-0260) or Bob Hoffman (654-0914) to see how you can help.

ARCHIVES WORK SESSIONS, Thursday, May 10 & Saturday, May 19, 1 to 4pm at Room 1, Union Station. Help is needed to get things organized and catalogued. Contact Bob Weaver at 659-9201 for more information—or just show up!

CHAPTER LIBRARY OPEN HOURS, Saturday, May 19 & 26, 1 to 4pm at Room 1, Union Station. On duty: Bob Slover.

EXTRA BOARD

Shasta Daylight '90, CHAPTER EXCURSION TO REDDING, CALIFORNIA, Saturday-Sunday, May 12-13. Looks like a sellout!

LONGEST DAY TRAIN RIDE and ANNUAL CHAPTER PICNIC, Friday, June 22, 6:30pm at Battleground, Washington. Instead of the usual Zoo train, this year's picnic will be on the Lewis and Clark to Yacolt. Sign up now! See page 2 for details.

NRHS National Convention, June 14-17, at St. Louis, Missouri. Engines UP 844, SLSF 1522, N&W 611, and SSW 819 will attend — why don't you?

SP 4449 TO VANCOUVER, BC and return, June 19 to 23, sponsored by the Northwest Railroad Museum. **CANCELED.**

CHAPTER EXCURSION ON THE SUMPTER VALLEY, early September (tentative). Date and other details still have to be nailed down.

PNWC Jazz Special EXCURSION TO ASTORIA, OREGON, Saturday-Sunday October 6-7. This run over the former SP&S line will be made using our own rolling stock.

MAY MEETING PROGRAM

To Be Announced

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 Esther Rosu at 659-5157.

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.
Joint...\$30/yr.

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

**The Longest Day Train Ride
and Chapter Picnic**

**Battleground Wash. to Moulton Falls & Yacolt
On the Lewis & Clark Railroad**

Friday, June 22, 1990

Departs Battleground 6:30 pm

- » Inside & outside seating
- » Hot dogs and soda pop included in the fare.
- » Bring a side dish to pass or a picnic basket for your own family.
- » Eat on the train, or at Moulton Falls while the train goes to Yacolt to turn.

- » Included in the Picnic price: *Banjo Fun*: • Banjos • Tuba • Washboard • Straw-hat music to sing along with.

» **Please reserve your seats early! Space is limited, and we must pre-sell this trip on order to reserve the equipment.**

Fare: \$8 single, \$15 per couple, children 3-12 years \$1 each, under 3 years free.

Bring your friends and neighbors — Chapter membership not required.

Car Pooling Available. Leaves from the Gateway Park & Ride at the Gateway station on MAX. Contact Esther Rosu at 659-5157 if interested

TICKET ORDER FORM

MAIL ORDER TO:

_____ Couples @ \$15= _____
_____ Singles @ \$8= _____
_____ Children @ \$1= _____

PNWC-NRHS
Annual Picnic
Room 1, Union Station
Portland, OR 97209-3715

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

CHAPTER BUSINESS

Notices

CAR HOST SIGN-UP

The May business meeting is one of two each year when members may apply to have their names placed on the car host roster. If you would like to become a car host on future Chapter excursions, sign up with Jerry Webb at the May meeting.

Committee Reports

CONCESSIONS

Marilyn Edgar, Chair

Although I verbally thanked all the helpers for our great day of Swap Meet '90, I failed to give our editor something to print for those who just might not always make it to the Chapter meetings. So, with most happy heart for a sellout day, I wish to thank all the people who made our part a success:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Freda Webb | Jerry Webb |
| Tammy Auburg | Tony Reghitto (Gofer) |
| Barbara Dougherty | Jim Edgar |
| Chuck Bukowsky | Marge Bukowsky |
| Mildred Messmer | Fred Dorsett |
| Sara Ackerman | |

...and most of all Nita Reghitto, who stuck it out all day with me. I apologize if I have forgotten anyone; it's been almost two months.

LIBRARY

Walt Grande, Chair

Archives report, by Bob Weaver

Plans and maps. Chris Schoof catalogued over 100 original drawings, blueprints, calendars and other large-format items. We've developed a cataloguing form and gotten some advice from the Oregon Historical Society map librarian on cataloguing, preservation and care of our maps and drawings.

SP&S AFEs moved. Nick White, Jerry Webb, Russ Schoof, and other strong backs moved the AFE bookcases from Room 1 to Room 1A. Dale Miller completed the dirty job of removing the surface dust from the AFE boxes, then placed them in their new location in Room 1A.

Photograph cataloguing. Russ Schoof developed a computer database for the Chapter's photograph collection. It has the capacity to sort by railroad, subject matter, locomotive type, car or equipment type, road number, location, date, photographer name, etc. Russ is working on a manual to make this sophisticated system clear and usable.

SP&S Mechanical Department records. Bob Fornoff, Walt Grande, Jerry Webb, Freda Webb and others helped with the survey of the contents of the SP&S letter boxes. These records, acquired about 1973 (probably saved from the dumpster by alert Chapter members), sat unattended for at least 15 years. The Committee has examined 50 of them, first cleaning them off and then recording the contents and the preservation needs of the records.

Room 1A door secured. Bob Slover installed a locking door handle in Room 1A. The room is now easier to use and more secure.

Recent donations. Al Haij donated a library display rack. Al also gave us an Amtrak map, a collection of Portland Traction drawings, Burlington Northern newsletters and other magazines, and material from the Southern Pacific Passenger Traffic Department.

Bob Melbo of Southern Pacific gave the Library a Kalmbach *Trains Album of Photographs*, Southern Pacific Lines, 1945; a collection of 50 photographs of western railroads; and some railroad enthusiast newsletters from the 1940s.

Terry Parker donated a small collection of papers of John V. Watson, 1890-1966, a Pullman conductor.

Former Union Pacific employee Frank Dennis gave us a Union Pacific map and provided additional information, documents, and photos for the Library's Allen Tuttle collection.

Maynard Laing of the Puget Sound Railway Historical Association donated a Southern Pacific Portland Division timetable, 1949.

Work parties. Archives work parties are planned for Thursday, May 10, and Saturday, May 19, from 1 to 4pm. These are "regular runs," work sessions held every month on the afternoon of the Thursday Board meeting and the Saturday after the membership meeting.

Volunteers are needed to help catalog the vast collection of SP&S corporate records, mostly from the Mechanical Department. These records document maintenance and operation of the railroad's rolling stock and locomotive fleet, including its steam locomotives. In some cases the records reach back into the 1910s.

Archives cataloguing project. The Library has catalogued a few more collections. The recording format used is an adaptation of the USMARC (U.S. Machine Readable Cataloguing) Archival and Manuscripts Control format used in historical societies and libraries all over the country. This will allow our collection descriptions to be published in the National Union Catalog.

CHAPTER BUSINESS

MEMBERSHIP

Fred Dorsett, Chair

Please welcome the following new members to the Chapter:

WILLIAM E. CRAIG

900 SW 5th Ave., Ste.1600, Portland, OR 97204

CAPT. JOSEPH H. WUBBOLD III

P.O. Box 19300, Multnomah Sta., Portland, OR 97219-0300

Summary of Minutes - Board of Directors Meeting - April 12, 1990

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Hoffman at 7:10 PM.

The Chapter board of directors passed the following motions at its April meeting: 1) Authorized ticket discounts to the Odyssey Club for the Redding trip, such discounts to be based on the number to tickets sold. 2) Authorized the library committee to spend up to \$300 from its budget for new books and video tapes. 3) Authorized the opening of a limited checking account (\$200.00) for the rolling stock committee, to be assigned to the committee chair, for the purpose of making funds available for the purchase of supplies needed on short notice for car restoration and repair.

Bond Program: Al McCready reviewed the collection of documents needed by the Chapter's attorneys to initiate the bond program. A number of items were still missing and are needed immediately. The board agreed informally to the appointment of Alan Viewig as trustee for the program.

Public Relations: Al McCready reported that a number of ads have been placed in newspapers for the Redding trip and that notices have been sent to fifteen retirement homes in the Portland area. There has been a good response to the ads from Willamette Valley towns.

Rolling Stock: Richard Gray reported on the car restoration seminar held at the Sacramento railroad museum. It was mostly on getting started with the restoration of older cars. One important point made was that poor workmanship should be corrected as soon as it is discovered. Guidelines discussed at the seminar, and to being followed by the Chapter, need to be adopted. Bob Hoffman stated that the car repair program urgently needs the help of more Chapter members to work on the cars.

Brooklyn Track Lease: Bob Jackson reported that the number of tracks leased from the S.P. will be reduced to

three and that provision for electric power will be added to the lease.

Excursions: Bill Carter reported 349 tickets sold as of today for the Redding trip. The schedule for the trip was received today. Rooms for 420 have been reserved in Redding. Terry Parker reported that the cost of the trip guide will be just under \$800.

President Bob Hoffman reported: 1) The Oregon Dept. of Transportation trip to Vancouver, B.C. has been canceled. The Chapter had been contacted to lease two cars for the trip. 2) A proposal has been received from Randal O'Toole for a Portland Rail Preservation Symposium to take place in the fall of 1990. Tentative topics are locomotive and car restoration, historic research, fund raising and public relations.

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Chuck Storz, Secretary.

Summary of Minutes - Regular Chapter Meeting - April 20, 1990

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Hoffman at 7:34 PM.

Treasurer Maxine Rodabaugh reported a balance of \$10,973.11 in the Chapter checking account as of 3/31/90. Ticket sales for the Redding trip are just past the break even point.

National Director Rich Carlson reported that the NRHS has a new headquarters in Philadelphia including space for a library. The 1988 national convention in New Jersey lost \$65,000, and, as a result, the NRHS is monitoring the organization of conventions more carefully. On the Portland Union Station, the two tracks the PDC has decided to remove could be saved due to an unauthorized technical revision of the boundaries of the station historic area.

NRHS Northwest V.P. Jerry Webb reported that he has begun visits to other NRHS chapters in the region including the Columbia River and Oregon Coast Chapters.

Excursions: Bill Carter reported that 440 of the 520 seats for the Redding trip have been sold. The excursion committee will meet next Thursday evening to complete the final details for the trip. The Chapter car host policy will be reviewed by the excursion committee beginning late in May. Jerry Webb reminded everyone that the May meeting will be the semi-annual sign-up for car hosts. Bob Hoffman reported that the contract from the B.N. for the Astoria trip has been received. Museum car 76 will be moved to Astoria on a freight train for display during the time the excursion train is there.

Activities: Esther Rosu reminded the membership that the Longest Day Picnic and Train Ride will be on Friday evening, June 22 and will leave from Battle

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Ground, WA. Esther asked for volunteers to assist on the activities committee.

Property Development/Bond Program: Bob Hoffman reported that the attorneys are pleased with the information furnished so far but that more is needed, especially proof of car ownership. Progress is being made on the cars but more help is still needed.

Rolling Stock: Peter Rodabaugh reported that the power supply has been improved in the Chapter's car storage area with the help of the SP. Bob Jackson reported that the appraisal of the cars will begin early next week.

Jefferson Street Line Proposal: Bob Hoffman reported that Dave Stimac, Peter Rodabaugh and Richard Gray have prepared a Chapter proposal to operate the Jefferson St. line. The City of Lake Oswego sent out thirty requests for proposals to operate the line and at least four other than the Chapter's will be submitted. The Chapter board has decided that the Chapter is not in a position to operate the line but that the Chapter proposal will be submitted to show the Chapter's interest in preserving the line.

Respectfully submitted, Chuck Storz, Secretary

Spring, 1990 NRHS Board Meeting

Rich Carlson, National Director

The Spring, 1990, national directors' meeting of the NRHS was held at the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Ramada Hotel Valley Ho in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Sunday, April 8. Called to order at 8:33 am by President Ray Wood, the meeting was attended by about 70 directors and officers. Other members and guests brought the total attendance to almost 100 persons.

It was reported that National's offices are now in a new location in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and those who work there are well on their way to settling in at the newly renovated location. The Dodge Memorial Film Library has now been moved to this new location, and in connection with this, Carl S. Jensen, Regional Vice President, Appalachian Region, presented a total of fourteen video tapes from the 11 Chapters in his region. As I previously reported, each Chapter has been requested to donate at least one tape to the NRHS library of this fast-growing field of audio-visual recording.

It was reported by David Ackerman, Director of NRHS Membership Development, that as of April 3, total NRHS membership is up about eight percent over 1989, representing over 1,000 more persons. However, 2,654 members have not renewed for calendar year 1990.

One new Chapter, Delmarva, of Parksley, Virginia, was voted into membership of the society. This new Chapter has 19 members.

Proposed by-law revisions, which will be voted on at the June meeting in St. Louis, were presented by C. Alex Rose,

General Counsel for the NRHS. Discussion was fairly extensive on a proposed addition that would allow a person who is an Associate Member who resides in the region to be that region's Regional Vice President. One other interesting proposed change would allow additional categories of membership to be created. The intent is to allow corporations to become members and possibly make financial contributions to the NRHS that are not otherwise possible.

Convention reports included the news that the 1988 Tri-State Convention lost about \$65,000. It was reported there were still a handful of undisputed claims for refunds yet to be made, but that the disputed list is another matter. A motion to censure the Tri-State Chapter for their handling of the claims and other related matters did not pass.

Plans for the St. Louis Convention, which runs from June 14 through 17, are final, and the mailing of those who pre-registered (there were 940 pre-registrants) went in the mail on April 4, with a general mailing to follow in two weeks. Steam engines of Union Pacific, Frisco and Cotton Belt will run excursion trains and Norfolk Southern is sending yet another steamer to the meeting, although this latter train is not an official part of the convention program. It should be an exciting time, and because of the widespread interest, members were urged to respond immediately if they intend to ride the trains. On most of the trains they will have first class, deluxe and coach seating.

Reports on the status of planning on the Annual NRHS National Conventions in Huntington, West Virginia; San Jose, California; and Chicago, for the years 1991, 1992 and 1993, respectively, were made.

Similarly, upcoming board of directors meetings in Owensboro, Kentucky (Owensboro is 30 miles southeast of Evansville, Indiana) this Fall; in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in Spring, 1991; in western Pennsylvania, hosted by the Shenango-Pymatuning Chapter, Greenville, Pennsylvania, near Youngstown, Ohio, in Fall, 1991; in Savannah, Georgia, in the Spring, 1992; and in Lexington, Kentucky, in the Fall of 1992 were reported on.

I made an announcement regarding our Chapter's upcoming Shasta Daylight trip, and made available some brochures that Gordon Zimmerman had thoughtfully brought with him to the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 am.

I made the journey to Scottsdale by Amtrak as part of a ten-day loop trip originating and ending at Portland Union Station. On each of those days I rode at least one train, with stopovers in Phoenix, Los Angeles and San Jose.

I deliberately transferred off the Coast Starlight at Martinez, California, in order to ride a *San Joaquin* train to Bakersfield. The new Japanese-built, single level equipment is comfortable, but the windows are small and climbing the steps while boarding with luggage is not the easiest. The scenery in the mostly agricultural valley is not particularly exciting, but I wanted to travel this route at least once. The trains are well-patronized and aboard the train I met Richard Shea, of San Francisco, who often rides on Chapter excursion trips.

My seatmate on the *San Joaquin* for a while was a Chicano

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woman, who although pressing age 60, had never ridden a train before. She had somehow thought she would be "thrown around" as we moved along and was pleased to find the train ride surprisingly smooth! I think Amtrak has found a new customer.

Although a connecting bus took us immediately to Barstow, there I faced a seven-hour layover that ended up being almost nine hours, due to an over hour-late *Southwest Chief* (No. 4). It wasn't all that bad, as I found an entertaining female bartender in a saloon located on the main drag (it was once part of old Route 66—Barstow is mentioned in the lyrics of the song, "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," and I along with other waiting passengers was entertained by a harmonica-playing young Swiss man from Basel, as we waited in the shadows of the abandoned "Casa del Desierto," a former Harvey House hotel located adjacent to the railroad tracks. Huge and architecturally impressive, I understand attempts are being made to restore this intriguing building, and as we waited in its shadows it was fun to imagine what it must have been like at its peak some fifty years ago.

We arrived two hours late in Flagstaff, and the connecting bus had not waited for the train. The Amtrak agent gave a partial refund to six of us passengers headed for Phoenix, and told us we were on our own. Four of us finally chartered a taxi van in order to get to Phoenix without wasting even more time. I have written to Mr. Claytor of Amtrak to suggest that Amtrak provide a van, when it knows it has incoming passengers who are ticketed to Phoenix, and it has to let the connecting bus depart before the train arrives.

Saturday, April 7 was the day for our ride to the Grand Canyon on the Grand Canyon Railway. Running from Williams, Arizona, 64 miles to the South Rim of the canyon, the newly re-established railroad (the inaugural run was made September 17, 1989) presently uses a 1910-vintage Alco steamer and well-restored 1923-vintage "Harriman" passenger cars that it obtained from the Southern Pacific. For a second train it is using a Santa Fe diesel, pending restoration of a second steam locomotive.

A charter bus took us from Scottsdale to Williams (Williams is about thirty miles west of Flagstaff) and back. The steam engine performed well, and although we were 16 minutes late for a scheduled 10:00 am departure, we arrived at the historic Grand Canyon depot at 12:57 pm, in plenty of time to enjoy a fine lunch in the gracious El Tovar Hotel dining room. It appears there were seven rail sidings at the northern terminus at one time. If ridership to date is any indication, taking the train to the Grand Canyon will once again be the smart way to get there. The National Park Service is encouraging the train as a way to lessen automotive traffic into the park, which has become a real problem since termination of train service back in the 1960s.

This was my first close-up view of the Grand Canyon. I had flown over it at 30,000 feet, but that doesn't convey the awesome feeling you get when gazing over the twelve-mile wide chasm at the South Rim. Before we took lunch, I mentioned to Gordon Zimmerman that I had not seen the canyon,

and so he did for me what a girl had done with him some thirty years prior. Telling me to close my eyes, he led me like a blind man from the hotel porch to an ideal view point. (One cannot see the gorge from the train or hotel entrance as the land rises slightly as you approach the rim.) There he told me to raise my head and open my eyes. It was an incredible sight, and you almost wondered, how can this be! This first look is something I will never forget. Thank you, Gordon!

We got back to the warmth of Phoenix (there had still been patches of snow in the shady areas around Flagstaff as well as snow in the mountains to the north.) On Sunday afternoon, with several other NRHS members I visited a city park where they have a nice layout of live steam and free rides on the freight train, as well as several model train layouts in buildings located there.

Another overnight train ride on the *Sunset Limited* (Amtrak No. 1) brought me to Los Angeles, where I crashed on my older brother for one night at his place in Burbank. From there, I rode a *San Diegan* to ride the new LRT line to El Cajon for the first time. This east-west route is nicely done, and I particularly enjoyed seeing the gauntlet track they have at one point. Light rail ridership in San Diego continues to grow and expansion continues.

I then traveled north to San Jose to see my son for a day. I also visited the maintenance shops of the Santa Clara County light rail system. In addition to their large and impressive fleet of new LRVs, they have four or five pieces of absolutely beautiful, genuine restored vintage equipment. They used local corporate sponsorship as well as volunteers to accomplish the superlative restoration work.

I am personally convinced that their's was a much wiser way to go than what Tri-Met is doing in Portland with its new "vintage" Lloyd Center cars. The San Jose cars retain the real whistles and bells, the compressors, controllers, plate glass and the like, and this authenticity is what makes the trolley cars so enjoyable. Finally, by being restorations, the cars are exempted from many onerous federal regulations. I fear the Portland cars will look and perform like "replicars" such as the Excalibur automobile, having a fake classic appearance, and with about as much charm as a piece of Detroit iron.

The entire Santa Clara operation is first class; trackwork, platforms and equipment are all beautiful, and work continues to expand the line to the south and west.

My final leg was aboard No. 14, the *Coast Starlight*, and I indulged myself with sleeping accommodations on this last segment from San Jose to Portland. It was comforting to have a bed to look forward to and the niceties, courtesies and privacy only a sleeping car provides. At one point late in the night I woke and saw the huge snow-covered Mount Shasta glowing dimly under the moonlit sky. As I lay in bed, it was exciting to watch the scenery roll pass the big picture window quietly and without interruption. Later, sometime before lunchtime, due to signal problems Southern Pacific was experiencing, we were stopped in Oakridge for a long while. But finally we arrived at Union Station in Portland about 4 pm, one hour, 40 minutes late.

NEWS—HISTORY—TRAVEL

Wishram—a Railtown

(The following is excerpted from a speech delivered by Chapter member Clytis Belloit to the SP&S Railway Historical Society, at its 1989 convention held in The Dalles.

This is about the history of Wishram—or Fallbridge as it was called in the beginning. Wishram was the hub of the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway system, located at Milepost 106 from Portland.

To begin, I want you to take a great leap in your imagination back to the year 1912, shortly after Fallbridge was established, the newly-completed Oregon Trunk railroad bridge and the falls below having given it its name. In fact, for the fun of it, let's make the exact date August 12, 1912.

You are the young wife of a rail-roader. You have a two-year-old child in tow and another on the way. You have just arrived at your new home of Fallbridge, Washington, more than a hundred miles from your family and friends in Portland, Oregon.

You look around you...*This is a town?* Shouldn't there be more buildings? And some trees? And Streets?

Ah, there's a store—Bunn's Store, it says. But other than that, only railroad hotels and shacks, here. And all that sand! Already you feel the grit of it against your skin, driven by—what you will come to find—are never-ending, shifting winds.

And the heat! The 95° heat feels twice as hot after it hits and bounces back from the basalt cliffs a short distance behind you.

And that bumping, banging noise coming from the nearby yards...? You'll soon come to recognize and appreciate this jolting, banging sound of the switch engines. Now, you *will* have to admit that the steam engines there are huge, handsome monsters.

And beyond the tracks you *do* see a welcome sight—pools of water alongside the magnificent Columbia River, pools where sun-browned children are splashing each other and diving from a dock anchored there.

You look up to the bluest of skies, one edge touching the high plateaus of Oregon across the river and the other touching the Columbia Hills behind you.

You know you and your family will make a good home for yourselves here—you've *got* to. But you sure wish James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific, who selected this location as a prime division point, had had to start housekeeping here!

You gaze around again; no sign of your husband. Two friendly-faced women about your age come toward you, introduce themselves as railroad wives, too, and explain that your husband was unexpectedly called out on a run. That's what happens when you're new on the job and on the Extra Board. Later on, you find that this friendliness and neighborliness are characteristic of the townspeople living in this tiny, isolated hamlet.

Now to turn to things a bit more statistical. The population at Fallbridge/Wishram was a young one in age, mostly under forty. It was all railroad people, with the exception of George and Carolyn Bunn, store- and landowners, the Coffields with their dairy service, and a couple of others. It would seem that the permanent population fluctuated from 100 to 300 or a bit more during the 1920's and 1930's, although one must remember that the SP&S maintained three hotels there for the men overnight or between runs, and other rails stayed with friends or in some of Bunn's little shacks for the short time they were there.

There always seemed to be a lot

of kids in Wishram, particularly in the steam engine years. In fact, as an explanation for this, tiny, red-haired Mrs Short (Doc Short's wife) is supposed to have said, "The reason for so many kids in Wishram was the 3:00a.m. passenger train from Spokane to Portland. When that train whistled in for the station, it woke everyone up, and at least at that hour it was too early to get up and too late to get back to sleep."

Well, it *was* a good place to raise kids. Both parents and children could testify to that. Always lots of places to play and to roam. Some kids, including the Delaneys, went so far as to explore Sam Hill's Maryhill "castle," full of eerie cell-like rooms on the topmost floor. Young Jim Hayes earned a fair sum of money selling live rattlesnakes he had caught up in the hills—until his mother discovered he was storing them in her canning jars.

From its earliest days, the railroad bridge was always an attraction—and a dangerous one—in order to go over to Celilo or just to watch the Indians fish the falls. And those who had to clamber down onto the piers while an unexpected train crossed over never forgot *that* chilling experience.

Pilot Rock, jutting out above the town, attracted all the kids as it must have for all the Indian children before them. One particularly active youngster—again young Jim Hayes—set off 24 fusees at one time around the three sides of Pilot Rock. As Jim remembers, "The Indians at Celilo said it was a mighty beautiful sight!"

The green oasis of a railroad park and the Columbia River drew kids, rails, and their wives throughout the years—in the bake-oven heat of the summers and the frozen waves of the river in winter, the latter especially in 1919, 1924, 1927 and 1930.

Indian salmon feasts and powwows attracted the kids, whether it

was observing them through Mrs. Horne's telescope, visiting the Indians gathered on the sand spit west of the wye, or crossing the Oregon Trunk bridge to dance with them.

But also, it was a good place to raise kids because everybody kept an eye out for the kids. The rails were coming and going at all hours; there always seemed to be someone about. Besides, more than one former resident has said, "Everybody knew everybody else, almost better than they knew themselves. You couldn't get away with anything."

Wishram people worked together to help themselves and to help each other. The parents, with George Bunn in the forefront, helped establish the Protestant and



Roman Catholic churches in Wishram. (The story of the bad-ordering of the SP&S chapel car for use as their Catholic church is a miracle of railroading finesse.) George Bunn also built a building variously used by the rail families for movies, roller-skating, and dancing, the latter going on into the morning hours (with the help of a little liquid refreshment for the band).

The rail families fought threatening fires together; looked out for each other in the penetrating cold which kept them locked in for days; dug out of mudslides from the hills above. Newly-widowed women—widowed by some fearsome wreck on the Oregon Trunk, the most likely place for accidents—received aid and comfort from their Fallbridge/Wishram neighbors. The lean Depression years didn't decrease the anonymous collection for someone out of work or ill. George Bunn was generous in hiring unemployed

rails, making them interest-free loans for an unexpected emergency, or helping Edith Horne get her Mom's Kitchen going.

Wishram School, established about 1912 by the Hayes, Guerretz, George Bunn and others, was the center of lots of activity in the town, too. In that small school every student was in every operetta and holiday program. Madeline Hite and Doris Linton Krauspe staged the plays; the mothers sewed the many costumes. The dads attended if they weren't out on a run, and even the single men came.

Over the years, basketball and volleyball were favorite sports for the youngsters, with the mother chauffeuring the teams along the narrow, hard-gravel roads to compete against other towns in the region. Sometimes, parents sent their kids to high school in Vancouver or Goldendale. But the youngsters who stayed often had good-to-excellent teachers and frequently accomplished some quite remarkable things. *The Wishram Warbler* won first place in the 1930's for Dick and Roberta Crowley for small school newspapers. The school's first annual in 1940, *Alpha Omega*, was a fine piece of work.

But throughout those first forty-plus years at Fallbridge/Wishram, a lot of changes took place, too. The most obvious change was in the town's appearance. The WPA Writers Project described Wishram this way in the 1930's:

You go down a precipitous grade to Wishram...300 population, nestling in a little dell and overlooking the curving rocky cascades of the river. Small, well-kept houses, roofed in red, blue, and green, give a tidy appearance. A cosmopolitan touch is provided by a two-story stucco bungalow court apartment and a large hotel. Railroad employees reside in yellow-painted houses near the hotel. Numerous poplar trees border winding graveled streets. ...itinerants who "ride the rails" assemble at a "Jungle" near the town."

What a change from the hot rocks and blowing sand of the landscape of the first few years!

Naturally, the proposed name change from Fallbridge to Wishram, set for July 20, 1926, didn't set well with the townspeople. When asked by the railroad powers-that-be to sign a petition requesting the name change as part of the commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, they refused to do so. They felt that their town's name, and *their town as the Hub of the SP&S Railway* system, should keep its descriptive name—by the falls at the bridge.

Remembered by many who were there was the orator of the day,



Chief Men'nenick of the Yakimas. "Aged Brave Dramatic," read an *Oregonian* headline of July 21. "An oration that swept the crowd off its feet...an oration that was enthusiastically acclaimed by the palefaces...one that it was agreed would never be forgotten by those who heard it..."

Another change and a very important one, was in the one-way road leading out of Wishram—the old "turkey trail," as Fred Sartwell has called it. It had been replaced by a real, honest-to-goodness two-lane road in the 1930's. The townspeople could—and did—make good use of it to break out of their isolation.

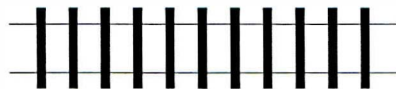
Yet another change during this early forty years had to do with the population. It slowly increased, reaching its height during the 1940's. The population composition, however, remained the same: young, all-railroad families, single men laying over between runs,

moving in and moving out over the years—never static or ingrown like a company mill town or mining town. That gave Wishram a healthy vigor in its early years.

Next, another change, one that the women of Fallbridge/Wishram sure appreciated, for it made their lives a good deal easier. They arrived at an “arrangement” with Jim Mills, the roundhouse foreman, whereby they could use some of the electricity intended for the roundhouse one day a week for their ironing and chores, instead of stealing bits of it throughout the week. They had had enough years of heavy, hot, back-breaking work over scrub boards and sad irons.

World War II brought change to Wishram—lots of change—at this mid-point in its history. The roundhouse was enlarged, operating on a twenty-four-hour, seven-day-a-week schedule. Two switch engines banged their way around the yard. 300 men were employed there, but even at that there was a shortage of workers, clear down to the lowly call-boys. Wishram’s population jumped to over 800. Most significant of all was the purchase of new diesels to replace old steamers when they finally gave out.

Coming closer to the present time, the changes in the last forty-odd years have been of a totally different kind from those in the first forty years. The fact is that the railroads—in the



Laugh Track

Again this month we raid the pages of a late 1930s *The Railroad Trainman* published by the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

We begin with this observation of some auto drivers...

“He isn’t much of a driver, is he?”

“No. He always seems to be rehearsing for an accident.”

Northwest and in the nation—have needed fewer and fewer men. Dieselization, cut-throat competition, and government restrictions all have affected the security and prosperity of the railroads, and consequently their employees and their families. Job cuts have become a constant threat.

Change in the population of Wishram has taken place, both in number and composition. Slowly, it decreased from its high of 850 in 1950 to about 650 in 1975. Compared to the 1950’s, half the number of railroad workers were employed in 1987. And most significant of all, Wishram is no longer an all-railroad town. People working at The Dalles or the aluminum plant have moved in. Klickitat County sends some of its non-working families to this town of very low rents. Transient families pay the first month’s rent and then stay until they are forced out.

And the town’s appearance has gradually changed, too. That cool, green block of a park has gradually deteriorated, particularly after the merger of the SP&S into the Burlington Northern Railroad system in 1970. And with the loss of being part of the “SP&S Family,” the town’s appearance now is spotty—neat and trim in some places, neglected in others. The Wishram families’ ol’ swimming hole—the Columbia River—is blocked off from them, its cascades quieted into a lake by The Dalles Dam.

One could tick off the numerous

other changes which have befallen Wishram. The drug store and barber shop have long been empty. The dance hall was torn down in the late 1950’s. The roundhouse, that heart of any railroad town, was demolished in 1985. The Beanery, in existence since before World War I, was torn down in 1987, the depot in 1988.

Yet, despite these changes, some remnants remain. The Pastime Tavern and pool hall where ol’ Kate presided is still there. George Bunn’s grocery and variety store is still functioning in a small way under its new name, Black Market. Jim Delaney’s tiny store is still operating for a few hours a day. The grade and high school with less than a hundred students does a great job, and still hangs in there!

And most important of all, today’s younger generation, along with some “pioneers,” are grabbing onto the past in their own way. Long-time residents have been asked to spin their stories of early days to today’s school children. Brand new street signs—named after the Bunn, Delaneys, Edith Horne, Johnson, and others—mark the street corners of the town. There is talk of having a museum there.

The “Golden Age” of Wishram and the SP&S Family is long past, but it has left a legacy of loyalty and caring for this Fallbridge/Wishram railtown. May the people be successful in their endeavors!

—Clytis Belloit

Some things never seem to change. Others are never satisfied.

PRISON WARDEN; “You say you have a complaint to make? Well, what is it?”

CONVICT; “There ain’t enough exits, sir.”

In this next one, you might say the lost is found.

“That boy has his father’s honesty.”

“Well, I always thought somebody had it.”

Do you suppose that Joe’s rehearsing (above) came true?

POLICEMAN: “How did the accident happen?”

MOTORIST: “My wife fell asleep in the back seat.”

And our Editor may feel this way about the above:

Asked the contributor: “What will you give me for these jokes?”

EDITOR: “A ten yard start!”

I’m running...

—Jerry Webb

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