



REPORT

+ ISSUE 91 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1972 +
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AD HOC LAND COMMITTEE IN MIDDLE OF PERMANENT MUSEUM SITE NEGOTIATIONS IN EAST COUNTY AREA

No, the Ad Hoc Land Committee has not gone underground. However, the members have been on pins and needles for the past eight weeks awaiting word from two separate parties concerning the acquisition of a PERMANENT MUSEUM SITE for PSRMA in the east county.

A suitable museum site has been located in Campo Valley, east of the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway depot, and south of and adjacent to the SD&AE right-of-way. The land owner is only interested in leasing, and about 20 to 25 acres of his ranch holdings are useful for museum purposes.

The proposed site is served by a paved county road (located just off state Highway 94), has electric power installed to the property, and has generous amounts of well water available. Adjacent land, suitable for future expansion, is at this time unused except for cattle grazing.

PSRMA has extended an offer to lease the land for twenty years with the lease fee being initially small and increasing over the years as the Museum becomes financially secure.

Concurrently with the offer to lease the land, the SD&AE received a proposal expressing PSRMA's need for a switch and lead track access to the site. The requested connection would originate near the Campo depot off an existing siding and would require a $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile lead track to reach the proposed Museum site.

PSRMA's propositions are currently under study by both the land owner and the railroad, and have been for a number of weeks. We can only assume at this point that no news is good news, and will have more details in future REPORTS as they become available.

UNITED STATES NAVY DONATES FIRST-GENERATION DIESEL - ELECTRIC SWITCHER AFTER A LITTLE BIT OF PSRMA PAPERWORK

The United States Navy has donated to PSRMA a World War II era 45-ton diesel - electric switch engine. However, the details behind the actual acquisition offer an interesting insight into the complex maneuverings often required in obtaining some of our donations.

The story goes back to December of 1971 when PSRMA President "Chop" Kerr became aware of the fact the United States Army had several ex-World War II switchers in storage. After numerous letters to the Army, and with some key help from San Diego Congressman Bob Wilson, the status of the switchers was determined.

The locomotives were 45-ton General Electric center cab units mothballed in operational condition. A number of similar units have worked on various Navy installations in the San Diego area over the years.

Unfortunately, the U. S. Army is prohibited by U. S. Code from donating railway equipment. But fortunately, the Navy is not affected by this regulation.

Once again Chop contacted Congressman Wilson, and he was able to work with an Assistant Secretary of Defense in having the Army survey one locomotive and then transfer ownership to the Navy.

The Navy was then able to donate the locomotive to PSRMA! A round-about method of doing things to be sure, but the end result is there.

But the story is not over yet! The donation must now obtain the approval of the United States Congress. If no objection is made during a 30-day waiting period while the proposed transfer is on the floor of Congress, PSRMA will own an operating diesel-electric switcher.

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By H. Chalmers Kerr, Jr.

The photo above shows the excellent condition PSRMA's French Railways #141R-1199 "Liberation Mikado" has been placed in by the work crews of the French Railways. A recent letter from Monsieur Robert Montarou, Master Line Mechanic based at the roundhouse and engine service terminal in Le Mans, France, reports the locomotive has been prepared for eventual shipment to San Diego. The locomotive has been completely repainted and all brass plates have been polished and painted and then removed for safe keeping.

The French National Railway is expending considerable time and money, even after being most generous with the donation in the first place, on this International Goodwill Gesture.

The ball has now been passed to PSRMA...let's pull this one out of the fire.

The French people played a considerable part in the early history of the United States; perhaps we can develop a plan to fit the Liberation Mikado into the 1976 Bi-centennial Celebration. If you have any ideas, let Chop Kerr know.

1973 OFFICERS ELECTED AT OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

Twenty members were present at the October 27th General Meeting to enjoy an interesting evening of entertainment and information and to perform the important task of electing PSRMA's 1973 slate of officers.

Returning as president will be H. Chalmers Kerr, Jr., who will be serving his third term. New to the Board of Directors will be Hugh T. Smith in the position of Vice-President - General Manager, while Dave Hobson and John Hathaway will return as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. George Geyer will serve as one of two Board Members-at-Large for the next two years. Eric Sanders and Stan Kerr will occupy two positions on the Review Committee for three-year terms.

A disappointing projector failure prevented the scheduled showing of the film "Ballad of the Iron Horse," but the most interesting presentation by Bryce Santry of the Carrizo Gorge Scenic Railway more than adequately rounded out the evening enjoyed by all present.

NARROW GAUGE 1972 - PART II
By John Hathaway

As the decline of the narrow gauge operations between Durango and Alamosa continued through the 1960s, railfans took heart in the continuing success of the Durango to Silverton passenger operations. Forced to remain running to serve otherwise inaccessible areas of civilization, the rustic charm of the Denver & Rio Grande's *Silverton* began to attract tourists and railfans alike.

It began to appear that the Durango to Silverton run would be the only example remaining of narrow gauge operations in the Rocky Mountains. In 1952 the Rio Grande Southern Railroad, which wound through the San Juan Mountains north of Silverton, had dismantled. And it was during this same period the operations of the D&RGW narrow gauge line out of Alamosa began its decline.

Strong efforts by local residents and railfans led to a refusal by the ICC to allow the D&RGW to abandon the Silverton branch.

And as the *Silverton* became a "one of a kind" operation its popularity continued to grow. By 1967 nearly 83,000 tourists and railfans traversed the 45 miles of narrow rails between Durango and Silverton during the three summer months of operation.

But even with this increased popularity, the existence of the line faced one more serious threat.

Over the Labor Day weekend of 1970 a total of over four inches of rain was dumped along the narrow Animas Canyon, the railroad's gateway to Silverton. The rapidly rising waters either badly damaged or completely washed away all trackage from Tacoma, 25 miles south of Silverton, northward to the end of the line. Old-timers claimed this was the worst flooding in the Animas Canyon since 1911.

Luckily no major bridges were destroyed in the flash flooding, although many were clogged with debris carried by the surging Animas River.

As a result of the severe damage to the line, the D&RGW was reportedly considering abandonment once again. Although passenger service in the summer months was at an all time high with a second section being utilized to carry the ex-

(continued on top of next column)

cess crowds, the parent company cited the high maintenance costs for the fragile line in its abandonment plans.

But repairs were begun, and by the time snow drove the repair crews out of the canyon speeder cars could travel the entire line. By opening day of 1971 the line was back in full service, although for some weeks there were a few areas requiring slow orders.

Today the trains are pulled by the K-28 class 2-8-2s, the heaviest engines permissible over the 65-pound rails. However, the rail is gradually being replaced with heavier 90-pound stock, and it is anticipated the more powerful k-36 and K-37 locomotives still owned by the railroad will be used when the line is completely upgraded. As it is now, one 470-series K-28 can handle only twelve loaded coaches without help. The 480 and 490-series engines would be able to improve upon this performance easily.

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For those of you who are considering a vacation trip in the Colorado-New Mexico area next summer, the narrow gauge operations are a must-see and must-ride experience for any railfan. For years now every train of the D&RGW's Silverton run has been sold out, and towards the end of last summer the trains of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway were beginning to fill up.

Writing in advance for reservations is not absolutely necessary as there are always cancellations, but it will guarantee you a seat and save waiting in line.

For reservations on the *Silverton*, write to TICKET AGENT, DENVER & RIO GRANDE WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY, FREIGHT AND PASSENGER DEPOT, 479 MAIN AVENUE, DURANGO, COLORADO. You need not send money with reservations requests, but can pay as you pick up your tickets in Durango.

Last summer the CATS Railroad featured only four trains a week between Antonito and Chama. Eastbound trains operated Saturdays and Mondays with westbound trains running Sundays and Tuesdays. Bus service was available for a one-day round trip. Complete information on next summer's schedules, and ticket information, can be obtained by writing THE CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC RAILWAY, POST OFFICE BOX 789, CHAMA, NEW MEXICO, 87520. Last year payment was required with reservations.

(more narrow gauge on next page)

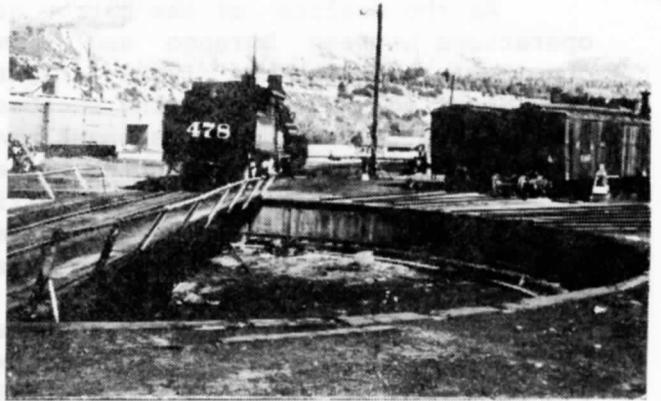
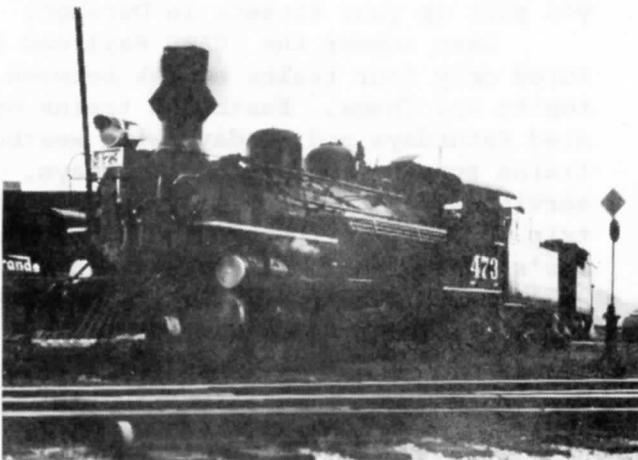


The Denver & Rio Grande Western has a total of three of the 470-series K-28 locomotives on hand in Durango to handle the *Silverton*. Two sections of the train are run each day and the three are each rotated for train assignments.

These three are the only survivors of an order of ten built by the American Locomotive Company in 1923.

ABOVE: #476 awaits the job ahead in this early morning scene. All the locomotives used at Durango are in excellent condition...

BELOW: ...and #473 is no exception.



In an effort to cut costs and streamline operations, the railroad has removed many of the standard accommodations of a steam locomotive facility.

In early 1967 the Durango yard wooden water tank was demolished. Today, in its place, a fire hose slakes the thirsts of the steam locomotives.

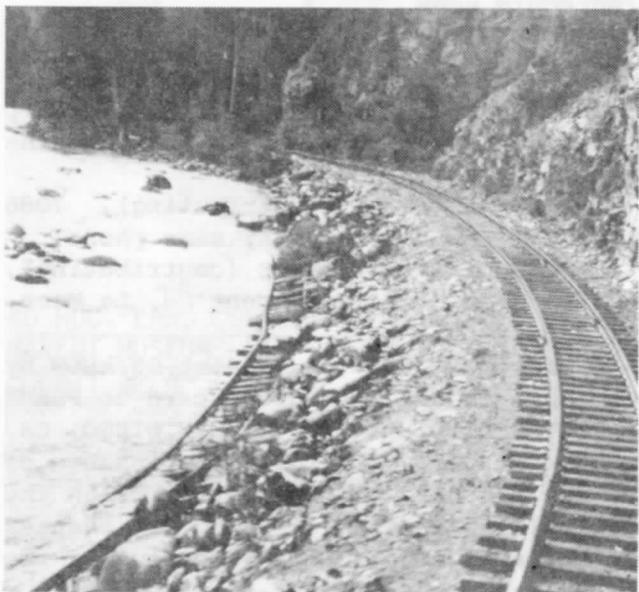
And just a year later the scene-dominating coaling tower was removed to make way for new highway construction. A bulldozer utilizing a concrete ramp has replaced this picturesque tower.

In spite of these "improvements" Durango still retains the aura of a bygone era to the hilt.

ABOVE: Locomotive #478 slowly trundles off the Durango turntable, an arm-strong-powered model that still serves a fully equipped roundhouse. Any and all repairs to locomotives are performed at the Durango facilities.

*BELOW: In the back corners of the Durango yards forgotten gems of past eras can be seen. Here teapot #464 rusts out her last days; she is too light to handle the heavy demands of the *Silverton*. Reportedly she is now owned by a private party, but here she now remains with a dubious future. A sister engine resides in restored static display at Alamosa.*





The canyon of the Animas River which the railroad travels through to reach Silverton has always been a hard master. The lay of the land required a 2½% grade in many areas plus the expected numerous extremely sharp curves.

UPPER LEFT: In spite of all of man's efforts, the whims of Mother Nature can undo years of toil virtually overnight. Two years later the devastating results of the 1970 flood can still be seen.

In many areas the roadbed shares the bottom of the canyon with the river, and when the water rises it often sweeps away rails, ties, and roadbed like they were so much debris. Scenes such as this are not all that uncommon along the 45 miles between Durango and Silverton.

LOWER LEFT: Where the Animas River dives into deep chasms the road's builders were forced to scratch out their right of way along the edges of the surrounding cliffs. In this shot the train is hundreds of feet above the roaring river... straight up. This area, located just a few miles north of Durango, offers some of the most stunning engineering marvels seen on the continent.

While safe from the surging river, the "high line" is still very susceptible to land slides. There is no area over the entire run that is not a maintenance man's nightmare.

BELOW LEFT: #473 emerges from the Animas Canyon as she approaches Silverton.

BELOW RIGHT: #476 basks in the cool midday sun as she waits in Silverton for that afternoon's return trip.

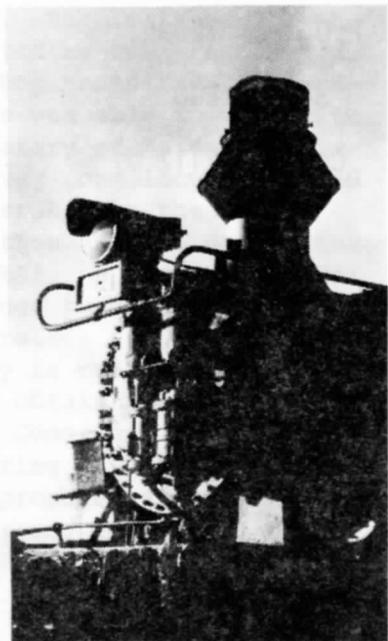


There are a couple of books which offer the railfan a complete up-to-date picture of narrow gauge in the Rockies.

For the CATS Railroad, may we refer you to *NARROW GAUGE TO CUMBRES* by Doris B. Osterwald. This soft-back book offers a brief historic look at the narrow gauge plus the full story of the emergence of the CATS.

Also by Mrs. Osterwald, *CINDERS & SMOKE* presents a mile by mile guide description of the Silverton run mixed with historical, geological, and natural background.

For the historian, the Lucious Beebe and Charles Clegg photo essays on Colorado railroading are in the library.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP-DECEMBER 9TH WORK PARTY TO CONSOLIDATE MUSEUM ITEMS AT NEW VALLEY CENTER STORAGE SITE

The United States Navy's Seabees are going to be giving PSRMA workers a big hand on Saturday, December 9th, in moving many of the smaller items in PSRMA's historic collection to the Valley Center Storage Site. However, as much help as possible is necessary from our members so all the equipment can be moved as quickly as possible.

As may be recalled, PSRMA is leasing a small section of the county's Valley Center service yard. This area will provide us with a single SECURE storage site for most of the smaller pieces of historical railroading owned by PSRMA. It is important that this property be transferred as soon as possible to prevent further loss from vandalism and exposure.

For the December 9th work party the ever-helpful Seabees will be there to do all the heavy lifting and hauling, so there won't be any really heavy work for members. All are invited to participate, including the women.

General Superintendent Dick Pennick is the one to call if you can possibly help out. Refreshments will be served to workers, and an optional side trip to the Bates Brothers Nut Farm in Valley Center is scheduled to round out the day.

Dick's phone number is 463-2276.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Again this month, just a couple of address changes to the full membership roster published in REPORT two months ago. They are:

RAYMOND WEEKS (contributing), 7086 Broadway, Lemon Grove, CA; same phone.

CAROLINE F. LANDE (contributing), 8633 La Mesa Blvd.-Apartment 88, La Mesa, CA, 92041.

If you move, please let us know by sending a change of address card to PSRMA at POST OFFICE BOX 12096, SAN DIEGO, CA, 92112. If we don't get your change of address and have to find out through the bulk mailing process of REPORT, chances are you are going to miss an issue or two before the post office forwards us your new address.

MEMBERSHIP BADGES ARE STILL AVAILABLE FOR ALL INTERESTED MEMBERS

Our General Superintendent reports the handsome blue PSRMA name badges are still available to all members.

These badges are required for members participating in such Museum activities as the annual Puerto Penasco trip and are a polite, convenient way to get to know your fellow members at other PSRMA functions. Contact Dick Pennick for obtaining your badge today.

PSRMA REPORT

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