



The Columbia Gorge Gazette

For the Members and friends of
The Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club

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IN THIS ISSUE

Eric Bleak, Editor-in-Chief

As this issue of the Gazette goes to press and the Web, our Northwest is finally getting some much-needed rain. Rain! That means it's time to stay inside and work on the model railroad. Mike Durr has been doing just that. We'll have more information on this in our next issue.

Meanwhile, with that special Show coming up in June, I'm reminding us all of an old tune: maybe it's a good time to get trained on that particular part of the layout that you didn't know so well. Or time to learn about something on the layout that wasn't so familiar. Have you ever dropped in at Albina during a session, just to watch? Something like the Albina yard is challenging and busy. Another great way to practice is to show up for the periodic weekend Prototype Operations Sessions. These are a lot of fun, especially if you're thinking of applying prototypical standards to your home layout. We all learn by doing. Think about it, anyway.

The Cab projects have progressed phenomenally. Both Tim and Ken have an update for us, and two well-done articles are here for you. The concepts they are putting forth are fascinating, and these articles make a tantalizing look into the future for cab control for the Club.

Steven Watkins has weighed in with some interesting thoughts, and we've put those right up front here for you. Steven also reports later about the Porsche Club that came to visit.

The Valentine's party was in the most spectacular of venues, a very nice and refreshing change of place. And I'm glad to hear that we're going back to the same place next year. A great thanks to Denny and Jeff Pape for getting this set up. Both Denny, our 3rd VP, and Jeff Pape have some interesting observations on the venue, and on some of the history associated with the place. Photos here are from George Schneider, a member of the Yacht Club. The best news of all is that we didn't lose anyone who is mobility-limited off the end of the ramp.

Remember to get some time off in June to help with our Rose festival Show. And in the meantime: *Enjoy the issue.*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Steven Watkins

Your New Club President



I have sat and pondered what I want to write about. I have yet to really come up with much. I am very pleased to see all the work that is going on. I urge all to get involved and find a project. The public does notice changes because I have talked to several once they know

where I am from. Remarks generally indicate the awe that we inspire when they walk in. People look to see what has been added or changed or improved. Our work is noticed!

It is important to remember that this is a club with many different personal characters. What is good for one may not be in the best interest of all. The constitution and bylaws are there for the betterment of the club as a whole. They may seem unfair to some and a hindrance to others. They do serve a purpose though. I have heard from a few that changes need to be made and the club rules be brought up to 2005 needs. I say go for it, discuss it and bring recommendations to the board. Denny Thompson has some good ideas. See him if you have sugges-

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tions. We can always change if that is what people want. Do not be afraid to make suggestions, just remember that you may not get your way, but at least try.

Steven

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

Sandra Lusk

February 22, 2005: CTO by Steve Watkins at 7:00 PM

Minutes – It was *moved* by Clint Bishop and *seconded* by Steve Eichman to accept the minutes as posted. Passed.

Treasurer's Report

Tammy presented the treasurer's report.

The Treasurer's Report is available at the Club, usually posted in the Club Room - Ed.

It was *moved* by Bill Morse and *seconded* by Gary Milsten to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Passed.

2005 Budget

Tammy presented the budget figures. Due to the low turnout to show last year, our income is reduced. Tammy has cashed in the CD and transferred the funds to the Money Market Account so that it will be available if needed for this year's operating expenses.

A discussion of the budget items followed. The Training & Qualifications Committee was asked to explain their budget request. Sandra indicated that there were plans to update the training manual, look into providing trainer headsets and provide lunch for the training sessions just before show. It is hoped that the cost of the lunch will be offset by free will donations by the people present.

It was *moved* by Tim Anderson and *seconded* by Doug Auburg to accept the budget as presented. *Passed*.

1st VP – Russ Lusk

The drill press has been fixed.

Work is progressing on electrical outlets under the layout. Plug-ins have been installed that are on a timer so soldering irons, etc. cannot be accidentally left on.

Work is also progressing on receptacles for power packs. The power packs will automatically turn off when the layout is turned off.

Dumpster has been emptied.

2nd VP – Gene Nedrow

Lights continue to be added to buildings.

Troutdale and NW Industrial area scenery being upgraded
Electronics continues to work on the Dalles where yard tracks still need to be split so that there will be an east and west end to each.

There was a discussion on turnouts. Any problems need to be reported to Electronics otherwise we don't have an accurate picture of which areas are having regular problems.

3rd VP – Denny Thompson

Thanks to Russ and Jeff for setting up the Valentine's Party at the Scappoose Yacht Club.

Discussion on whether we should have a pop machine during the Rose Festival show. Decision was to get one machine.

4th VP – Don Riss

Bill Greene is working on setting up the Show Flier.

Member at Large

Town Hall will be scheduled in the next few weeks.

Electronics Committee – Tim Anderson

Web camera software is being written by the consultant

He and Bruce Jones are rewriting club software

DCC and DC dual system will still operate okay with the new video cabs.

Hope to set the Oregon Trunk up as a beta test site of the new computer system this summer.

Oregon Trunk Dispatch Board will be operational under the new system. The Cab #'s will also be visible.

Library Committee – Keith Ansell

30% of the books now have dust jackets

Need a couple more people to help, especially need people to do a summary of the books

Gazette Committee – Jeff Pape

Gazette went out two weeks prior to this GBM.

61 copies were emailed and 61 mailed resulting in a substantial saving in postage.

Looking at using some software which will allow you to click on thumbnail size pictures and increase the size.

Deadline for the April edition is March 15.

The membership gave Eric and Jeff a vote of thanks for their hard work and the great format of the newsletter.

Ops Committee – Don Riss

There will be a Saturday ops session run by Roland on Feb 26.

Membership – Bill Morse

Anyone needing a badge needs to let him know.

Don Gibson is doing well. Bill has visited him several times and encourages others to do so.

If there are other members that are sick, let Bill know.

Steve Eichman announced that there will be a z-scale meet here on Sunday, March 13 at the Club.

Bill Morse announced that the Catlin Gable School needs help on their layout. This is a group of volunteers building a layout for educational purposes.

President's Report – Steve Watkins

Bill Chapman and friend, Joel, who visited from Idaho are putting DCC in their engines. They were very impressed with the work that has gone on at the club. They also took away a copy of the Operating Handbook and were looking at using it as an example for their own.

Please clean up after working on the layout so that it can be used without problems or equipment being damaged by tools and debris left on the tracks.

Just a reminder that the club has a computer in the library that is dual-purpose. It is being used by the library staff to store information but it is also available to members for personal use. However, the bylaws state that on Tuesday nights from 7 pm to 9:45 pm, the library staff have priority to use it. At other times, if one of the library staff should make a special trip to the club to work on it, you must step aside and allow them to use it, especially if you are not using it for club business.

The Board Room computer is dedicated to the Treasurer and the one in Standards is used for the layout. Please do not use these for playing games, etc.

At this point all non-key carrying members were asked to leave the room.

There was a short demonstration of how to set and turn off the alarm including the password required should it go off accidentally and the alarm company calls.

If it doesn't arm right away, check that one of the other doors is not open.

If you arm the alarm and the door doesn't get opened, then the motion sensors are disabled and the alarm is still armed.

Please make sure that all fire doors are closed before leaving the building.

We are allowed one false alarm per year. Otherwise we are charged at an increasing rate for each false alarm after that. If there are three false alarms in a one-year contract period, the alarm company can refuse to monitor the building for the rest of that period.

It was *moved by* Russ and *seconded by* Bill Morse that \$50 be charged to anyone accidentally setting off the alarm. *Passed.*

Non-key carrying members were asked to return to the meeting.

Old Business

It was *moved by* Doug Auburg and *seconded by* Clint Bishop that the traditional 4-week show schedule may be reduced to three weeks with the last weekend being the Thanksgiving weekend. This would be provisional on the outcome of the June show and subject to approval of the Board. *Passed.*

New Business

It was *moved by* Gene Nedrow and *seconded by* Clint Bishop that Section 10 of the bylaws move to Section 11. Section 10 wording to be as follows:

"In consideration of their low dues rate, Associate/Supporting members are limited to attending no more than 25% of the regular Tuesday night work nights. Parties, picnics, business meetings, and special work parties are excluded from this limitation."

Passed.

Mike Durr, 2005 Show Chair, announced the appointment of Doug Auburg as the Assistant Show Chair.

Gene Nedrow announced that the most active member for 2004 was Tom Treanor and the most active officer for 2004 was Steve Watkins.

Stock Certificates are not ready but will be distributed soon.

It was *moved by* Doug Auburg and *seconded by* Russ Lusk that we charge an appropriate amount to cover the cost of any request for a paper copy of the directory. *Passed.*

It was noted that the membership list is available to members only.

It was *moved by* Mike Durr and *seconded by* Keith Ansell that the meeting be adjourned. *Passed.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

BOOMER BOOK REVIEW

Jeff Pape

Linda Niemann is a woman who went railroading for twenty years or so, starting in the 1970s. She came to the job of brakeman as a complete outsider to the industry, her background was as a PhD in English Literature. She has since authored two books about her experiences: *Boomer* was the first book, published in 1990 and *Railroad Voices* was published in 1998.

Both books detail Linda's experiences as a brakeman and conductor while in the employ of the Southern Pacific Railroad. *Boomer* has lots of first person narrative describing the work, events in her life and the toil and fatigue common to railroading. *Railroad Voices* is primarily interviews with other railroaders and photos of railroad scenes and employees. 'Voices seems to be an interview situation where the interviewer asks one question and then lets the subject speak until the thoughts are exhausted. Collectively the two books inform the reader very well about railroad life in the past thirty years. If one were thinking about taking a job in train service today these books tell the person what to expect.

Boomer was widely hailed when published as a significant book about women's issues, specifically cracking into a formerly all male world. It is certainly all of that. In addition it is a very good look into the railroad life in the 1970s and 1980s, a period when the character of railroad work was changing rapidly. The full crews, engineer, fireman, a couple of brakeman and a conductor were being replaced by crews of an engineer and a conductor sometimes assisted by a lone brakeman. The usual expectations of mobility upward through seniority rosters were not being met. To further save labor costs the railroads were using every hour of service that could be legally assigned. There were no days off for seasons at a time, no regular sleep hours and working and resting conditions were very poor.

When first published *Boomer* was favorably reviewed as a work of literature. I wondered about a non fiction book by a living author being considered as literature. I thought that the test of time was part of the evaluation for that status. I think I understand why now. It deals with social struggles, both Linda's

efforts to work her way into acceptance as a railroad employee as well as the social struggle for a good life that the brakemen and conductors were losing. In addition it deals with Linda's internal struggles with identity, longing for that university job to use her PhD, trying to put being raised in a drug affected culture behind her and an indifferent sexual identity. Along the way is a description of surviving breast cancer. The book deals with very personal issues as well as railroading. Even though it is non fiction it is considered literature. Having the author's union card as a PhD in Lit. helps assure this acceptance.

Boomer has a geographic sweep from Klamath Falls to Houston. For junior trainmen life meant following the seasonal rush of traffic on the railroad. Her first experience was in the Salinas Valley participating in the shipment of winter vegetables to the eastern U. S. Work was intense and around the clock. Suddenly the produce rush was over and her position on the extra board was cut off. Out of work. She was advised to travel to work and wound up in Texas as a yard called Strang near Houston. Surrounded by refineries and chemical plants the air was foul and it was never dark because of the lights in the refineries. She likened it to Hell. Other assignments included being loaned out to Amtrak, often working from California to Klamath Falls. The commute trains on the San Francisco Peninsula were another assignment.

Railroad Voices is a compilation of interviews with railroad workers talking about their jobs or other railroad workers. Each interview is prefaced by Linda's writing. Collectively the content gives a vivid look at the working lives of railroaders. The photographic content is by a photographer named Lina Bertucci. The photos are in black and white and are of people and subjects on the Milwaukee Railroad in the Midwest. Rick Koehler could probably identify many of the places shown. There is a disconnect between Linda's narrative and the interviews she presents - all are former Southern Pacific employees, predominantly in California and the photos which are from another railroad many states distant. The photos are great images, interesting and they show the grittiness of the work environment. Different rail cars come and go, employees go on and off duty, time passes and yet there is a constant sameness to the places shown. Change is very slow. When change occurs it is a shock to the employees, usually negative in character.

Content is varied: here's what it is like to be sitting in a siding on your engine in the New Mexico desert and be victimized by a sneak attack of water balloons thrown by the crew of a passing train. How to get boxcars back onto the track without the officials finding out about the derailment. Many off the record skills are explained. For example how to put a drunk, combative passenger off of a train at a remote town.

Each book contains a good glossary at the end.

Both books are very readable; anyone wanting to know 'how it is out there' would do well to read these books. Younger members of the club thinking about railroad work should read these books. Both are available at the Multnomah County Library. They are also recommended for general interest reading.

VALENTINE'S PARTY

Denny Thompson

Your 3rd VP



The CGMRR Club had their Valentines Party at a beautiful setting on the Columbia River. It was held at a private yacht club on the West side of the Columbia down Highway 30. The meal was cooked right on site and was

very delicious and the dessert was fantastic. A very well-staffed crew served us, plus they had a bar that we could order different drinks from. A big thanks to my wife who had all the flowers for the ladies made up at her high school. Thanks- Lorrie

The biggest thanks goes to Jeff Pape for setting this dinner up. Also like to thank Russ Lusk for assisting Jeff in getting the year off to a great start for the club.

The 2006 Valentine's Party will be held at the same location next year.

Notes from Jeff Pape:

The club held its annual dinner at a new place this year. Through the good offices of a friend of Jeff Pape, George Schneider, we were able to use the dining room at the Multnomah Channel Yacht Club in Scappoose. George is a member of the club and acted as our host and barkeeper.

About thirty members and guests gathered at around 6 PM on Feb. 12 in the yacht club's floating meeting room for a social hour. Dinner was served at around 7 PM. The dinner was prepared by a caterer who is also a member of the yacht club.



Among the guests were Bill Morse's two daughters and their guys. Clint Bishop escorted Glenda Bockel who is a former member of our club.

Our host, George Schneider, is Port Captain for the yacht club. His duties loosely follow the responsibilities of our First V.P. He is the contact point for the yacht club for matters pertaining to mooring boats, planning for visits by groups of boats from other clubs and for coordinating storm responses by the yacht club.

PORSCHE CLUB VISIT

Steven Watkins

On Feb. 12th the club put on a large special VIP tour for a local Car club. They were doing a Trains, Planes, and automobile tour. We were their first stop, the trains portion if you don't get it! Just kidding! Twenty-seven members and family of a Porsche club got a VIP tour under the layout and a detailed tour of the aisle for their money. That is right, they did pay. Bob Falleur was the contact and put the full together.

Everyone was quite impressed with the club and the enthusiasm we all showed. We got in an op. session and made some money for the club. What else could one ask for? Thanks to Rob and Clint for doing the tours. Thanks to Bob McRae for providing the detail in the Electronics and to Jeff Pape for the spiel in the Dispatch.

BREAKING HISTORICAL NEWS

Compiled by Tim Anderson



Passed in Congress:
July 1, 1862
CHAP. CXX. -- AN ACT TO AID IN THE
CONSTRUCTION OF A RAILROAD AND
TELEGRAPH LINE FROM THE MISSOURI
RIVER TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN, AND
TO SECURE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE USE OF THE SAME FOR POSTAL,
MILITARY, AND OTHER PURPOSES.

Sec. 12. . . .” The track upon the entire line of railroad and branches shall be of uniform width, to be determined by the President of the United States, so that, when completed, cars can be run from the Missouri River to the Pacific Coast; the grades and curves shall not exceed the maximum grades and curves of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; the whole line of said railroad and braches and telegraph shall be operated and used for all purposes of communication, travel and transportation, so far as the public and government are concerned; “. . .

Executive Order: January 21, 1863

President Lincoln signs Executive Order setting the track gauge at 5 feet.

Senate Bill 483: March 3, 1863 (In the House of Representatives) “Pacific Railroad. The next bill taken from the Speaker’s table was bill of the Senate (No. 483) to establish the gauge of the Pacific railroad and its branches; which was read a first and second time.

Mr. CAMPBELL demanded the previous question.

The previous question was seconded, and the main question ordered; and under the operaton thereof the bill was ordered to a third reading, and it was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. CAMPBELL moved to reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed; and also moved that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The latter motion passed.

Chap. CXII. An Act to establish the Gauge of the Pacific Railroad and its Branches.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the gauge of the Pacific Railroad and its branches throughout their whole extent, from the Pacific coast to the Missouri River, shall be, and hereby is, established at four feet eight and one half inches. APPROVED, March 3, 1863.

REFERENCES:

THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE (THE EARLY NAME OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD)

LISTS OF REFERENCES OF THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD

STATUTES AT LARGE, TREATIES AND PROCLAMATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, DECEMBER 5, 1859 TO MARCH 3, 1863

Author’s Comments: The Executive Order is somewhat difficult to track down. It was not until 1936 that a formal format of Executive Orders was established. Naturally, the format of the Orders was established by an Executive Order.

A major difficulty in doing research is the many sidetracks that become very tempting. After the House dealt with SB. 483, the House passed over a bill about Line Offices of the Navy “An Act to establish and equalize the grade of line officers of the United States Navy”. The next bill established the Circuit Courts in California and Oregon, otherwise, known as SB.548. Note that this all happened during the Civil War. In reading the Congressional Globe, there are many pages recording the actions of Congress in regards to the war. There was also several pages making allocations in some detail to the Indian Tribes across the US. The tribes were listed by name.

ENGINEER CAB PROJECT

Tim Anderson

A couple of months ago I published a concept document about the new Engineer Cabs. The document gave an overview of the cabs and the items that would be shown on the monitor. The project has moved from concept through hardware design and into prototype construction. In order for the cab project to happen several other projects are underway at the same time. First is the software that must be handled in the RRIO computer. This is the computer that "runs" the railroad. Secondly, the circuit boards which are need to do all the monitoring and switching. Third is the web camera's. Forth, the Engineer Cab which consists of three parts: the cab computer, the physical cab itself, and software.

The prototype physical cab is being constructed between the dispatcher room and the electronics room. I would be extremely surprised if the prototype is the final design. There has got to be a better idea that will show itself after the engineer cab is up and running. The computer for the engineer cab has been selected

along with operating software. The cab application has been in the design phase for some time and has seen many changes.

I have asked Sandra Lusk to help design the initial screen for the engineer cabs. The screen will provide some how-to information on connecting the cab, keypad input codes, etc. I'm confident that there will be many engineering cab training sessions. One of the big items will be the elimination of operators dealing with the reversing and train direction in Block 14 and other reverse blocks. One item an operator can forget! However, the prototype cab will not implement this feature. I think that the second prototype cab will implement this feature.

The Engineer Cab display consists of web camera windows, track configuration windows, signal windows, and information window. Each window will have other items associated with it. One could argue that this is the most important part of the cab software as nothing on the display will happen without information from the RRIO computer.

With the implementation of the Engineer Cabs, there will be some changes. Some of the changes are block numbering (don't worry – you probably will not care), connecting to train, releasing a train, actually using signals, and "viewing" a train at hidden turnouts via web cameras. Perhaps, some day with advances in miniaturization, the web camera can move into the engineer position inside the locomotive.

Keep the steam up so the dynamo will get the electrons to the headlight.

THE QUEST FOR A BETTER TRAIN CONTROL SYSTEM

Ken Young

The history of train control systems on the Columbia Gorge Model Railroad has been a long series of incremental improvements, spread over fifty-some years. This article will attempt to show where we've come from, where we are now, and where we (hopefully) are headed for the future.

The layout in our old building originally used a control system that was, at least by today's standards, very crude. Power for the trains was originally furnished by automotive batteries, passed thru relay contact stacks taken from old pinball machines activated by pushing down wooden dowels on the cab panels, and connected to the tracks blocks by light weight telephone wire salvaged from building construction projects. Everything had been done as cheaply as possible.

By the time I arrived at the club in 1961, giant transformers from the pinball machines, had replaced the car batteries, and selenium plate rectifiers were used to convert the AC voltage to DC, for the trains. (Modern diode rectifiers had only just been invented, and were mostly just a curiosity.) After a day of operation for our annual shows, the rectifiers would be too hot to touch, and because of this, could only produce a maximum of



about 10 volts, when loaded down with several trains. That 10 volts would be reduced to perhaps 7 volts at the top of our main line grade, when a heavy train was pulling up the hill, because of the resistance of the light weight telephone wire, and the brass rail, and the lack of feeder wires under the track.

After some lengthy and sometimes agitated discussions, I was able to get the club to replace the 5 main line cabs, with their wooden dowels and relay contact stacks, with new ones using lever-type switches. As new high-current diode rectifiers became available on the market, we replaced the old selenium plate rectifiers with diodes. We also installed heavier gauge feeder wires to the worst of the problem blocks, to boost the voltage available at the track. That was the extent of power and control upgrades for the rest of the years in the old building.

When it became apparent that we would be selling the old building, and having a new building custom built for our model railroad, Tim Anderson and I started making plans for train control and other systems for use in the new building. Our first task was to identify all of the shortcomings and problems at the old building, and make sure we didn't have the same problems in our new building. We set up standards and objectives for wiring and control in the building, and then started dreaming about future control systems. Out of this came standards for wire size, terminal strips, track wiring practices, switch motor control, power supply meters and circuit breakers, wire pathways (think plastic rain gutters) and a whole lot more.

We had been experimenting with state of the art train detection systems, which would be a great improvement over the Twin-T detection system pioneered by Linn Wescott, which had been installed at the old layout. The first thing we tried out was a new circuit published in *Model Railroader*, utilizing an electronic device called an Op Amp. This little gizmo was capable of sensing and multiplying extremely small amounts of current flowing in a circuit, and the circuit was so sensitive that the author had included a negative feedback feature, whereby you could adjust the sensitivity up or down. I built up a trial circuit, and installed it on my basement railroad at home, but I foolishly thought that the more sensitivity the better, so I left out the adjustment portion of the circuit. I quickly discovered that the device was so sensitive that it could sense my presence in the room! It was always detecting, until I left the room! (Yes, really.) So I desensitized it some, and built up quite a few units for use on my railroad. But I never could solve the problem of interference from nearby radio station transmitters, which would sometimes light up the whole system.

Then, about the time that we moved into our new empty building, *Model Railroader* published a circuit design by Bruce Chubb, called the Optimized Detector. It utilized a voltage comparator chip, which was a refined version of the old Op Amp, and we decided to test it. We also made a few important modifications, which improved its suitability for our club. These mods included removing the heavy-duty rectifiers from the circuit card, and placing them at strategically located terminal boards under the layout, and addition of computer-readable output circuits. We also added optoisolators, a brand new invention

at the time, to the output circuits, so that any of the circuit cards could be used on common rail blocks or reverse blocks. We designed a printed circuit card with four of the detectors on each card, and had the cards professionally etched and drilled. Then we stuffed the components, soldered them, tested them, and installed the cards. These are the detection circuits that we use today, to display train locations on cab panels and dispatcher panels wherever they are needed.

When construction of the railroad was finally begun, we realized that we had to get some type of control panels built, so as to be able to run trains. We planned to use miniature toggle switches to connect the throttle output to the various track blocks. We also wanted to show which blocks a cab had turned on, by lighting a green LED (light emitting diode, modern replacement for miniature lamps) on the track diagram, and lighting a red LED on all the other cabs. These cabs, which were thought to be only a temporary expedient, were quickly built, using a Masonite face with colored tape showing the trackage. The green LEDs were powered by 5 volts connected thru a second set of contacts on the toggle switch, which also powered a diode matrix which in turn provides power to the red LEDs on all cabs except the one that turned the block on. That cab and matrix design has turned out to be one of the major obstacles to any new cab designs.

The diode matrix, which resides between and underneath two of the mainline cabs, has about 700 wires providing input to and output from the diode matrix circuit cards. This amounts to a cable about the size of an elephant's hind leg. Any changes to the cabs, which result in additional block toggles, must have additional wiring connected between each cab and the matrix. Any additional cabs would require the modification of all of the matrix card circuits, to increase the number of input and output circuits.

Another shortcoming of the existing cab design is that it provides no positive protection against interties, where two cabs each turn on the same block and connect both throttles and both trains together. Also, the miniature toggle switches are very difficult to solder large wires to, without melting the plastic case of the switch, and their mortality rate is fairly high, especially as they get older.

Now, we finally get to the point of this whole article. We have been searching, since before we built the "temporary" cabs, for the "perfect" cab system. That turns out to be a something like searching for the Holy Grail. What we really want is a system in which the operator can concentrate on running his/her train, and not have to worry about such non-railroad things as block toggles, interties, reversing blocks, and the distraction of relating the physical location of the train to a specific location on the cab panel. Just watch the train, obey the trackside or cab signals, and drive it safely.

A computerized cab system has long been our ultimate goal, the Holy Grail. But it seemed like it might take forever to build all of the parts of the system that are required. Therefore, for several years, we have been designing and experimenting with

alternative systems, which could be built in the interim until a fully computerized cab system could be built.

Ideally, it should be modular, so additional cabs can be added as needed. It should be more durable than the old system. It needs to provide some positive method of preventing interties, or at least of pointing out their existence and location. And, it must be compatible with the old system, or else we will have to replace all of the cabs at once.

Every interim system that we investigated had one or more fatal flaws. Many of the potential systems we looked at foundered on compatibility with the existing diode matrix. Another system eliminated the matrix, but substituted so much electronic circuitry beneath every cab that we would probably take years to get it built, and violated our rule of keeping all electronics hardware centralized in the electronics room. Still another, the very simplest from a wiring standpoint, required major computer interfacing and programming efforts.

All of this brings us to the present time, 2005. We now feel that we are ready and able to build a computer based system with even more features than our old plans called for, in less time than any of the flawed hardware systems that we have been looking at. Since our 2005 project budget is practically nil, it is a happy coincidence that the computer cab solution is largely a programming effort, with only modest hardware effort and expense required to get a prototype test system running on the Oregon Trunk line.

OUR CLUB HOSTS THE NMRA PNR 2ND DIVISION

Jeff Pape

On Saturday, March 5, 2005 the 2nd Division held their regular meeting in our club room. Then our members hosted the guests at an operating session on the layout.

There were about fifteen of our members and there were about 15 guests.

2nd Div. Superintendent Ken Lass led his group in a brief business meeting and then there was a speaker. Mr. Bill Chown, a 2nd Div. member gave a presentation on practical DCC (Digital Carrier Control). He showed off several decoder installations in N scale engines as well as showing off the types of controllers that are available. He did a terrific job of clarifying and simplifying the topic.

Following the meeting we paired those guests who wanted to run trains with members to act as coaches. We had four mainline operators, and operators in logging, Wishram and Portland. The session lasted a little over two hours. It must have been fun because no one wanted to leave early. After a few minutes getting things going the operation went smoothly.

Sandra Lusk did the coordinating and planning for the joint meet.

COMMITTEES

Club Officers

President: Steven Watkins
1st VP: Russ Lusk
2nd VP: Gene Nedrow
3rd VP: Dennis Thompson
4th VP: Don Riss
Secretary: Sandra Lusk
Treasurer: Tammy Auburg
Ass't Treas.: Mark Hynson

Board of Directors

Chairman: Ken Shipman
Members At Large:
Rick Koehler, David Holden

Members: Ken Shipman, Russ Lusk,
Gene Nedrow, Steven Watkins, Tammy
Auburg

Admin. Committee Chairs

Gazette: *Eric Bleak, Editor-In-Chief;
Jeff Pape, Editor-At-Large
Security: Doug Auburg
Swap Meet: Doug Auburg
Membership: Bill Morse
Member Handbook Project: Open
Curator of Collections: Jeff Pape
Public Relations: Don Riss
Show: Gene Nedrow
Building Management: Russ Lusk
Equipment Roster: Mike Durr
Kitchen Commissary: Dennis Thompson
Library: Keith and Ursula Ansell

* = Committee Chair

Layout Committee Chairs

General Chairman: Gene Nedrow
PDX Yard-Upper: Keith Loose
PDX Yard-Lower: *Rolland Rodway,
Sig Lamplighter
City Streetcar Line: *Corey Piazzese
ML W. to M. Falls: Bill Morse
Logging & Hood River: *Tom Treanor, Don
Paulson, Sam Slivers
ML East/Home Valley to Avery:
Bill Morse
Ore. Trunk-Lower: Mike Durr
Ore. Trunk-Upper: Mike Durr
Underground-East Spiral: Mike Durr,
Lionel Loop
Underground-Seattle: Mike Durr
Wishram/Block 15: Mike Durr
Control: Tim Anderson
Communications: Ed Foley

M of W Dept.:

Steel Gang: *Open
Switch Gang: *Open
Motor Gang: Open
Bridges: Steven Watkins, Bob Bascule
Buildings: *Jim Whaley, Shorty Tubafore
Signal Dept.: *Don Gibson, Hi Green
Scenery: *Mark Hynson, John Bush
Theatrical and Scenic Lighting, Animation:
Tim Anderson
Car Department: *Mike Durr
Engineering Dept.: Gene Nedrow
Operations: Rolland Rodway
Training: Bill Morse
Stores Department: *Steven Watkins
Electronics: *Tim Anderson, Ken Young,
Reddy Kilowatt

RULE OF THE DAY

Eric Bleak, Editor
Rules 201 – 204:

(201) For movements not provided for by time-table, train orders will be issued by authority and over the signature of the superintendent and contain only information or instructions essential to such movements. They must be brief and clear; in the prescribed forms when applicable, and without erasure, alteration or interlineation. Figures in train orders must not be surrounded by brackets, circles, or other characters.

(202) Each train order must be given in the same words to all employees or trains addressed.

(203) Train orders must be numbered consecutively each day, beginning at midnight.

(204) Train orders must be addressed to those who are to execute them, naming the place at which each is to receive his copy. Those for a train must be addressed to the conductor and engineer, and also to anyone who acts as its pilot.

The Consolidated Code of Operating Rules and General Instructions, 1948 Edition, Northern Pacific Railway Company

