



President's Letter

The last two months have been a real mixed bag of positive and negative happenings. So, to review them we will start with our attempts to save the Castle Rock Santa Fe Depot. It was almost déjà vu as we encountered the same exact stance we went through in 2014. The Town of Castle Rock had no idea what they wanted to see happen to the depot. The only difference then was they wanted to save the depot. Now it seems like they have little if any desire to preserve and restore the depot. Sad because it could be a beautiful restoration project. But we are moving on.

Castle Rock was a negative but was balanced by two positives. First: Bruce Yelen had a rough go with a surgery he had to have, but I am happy to report he has recuperated with flying colors and is back with a vengeance.

Second: The speeder was moved up to Al Rodis in Ft. Lupton for a repair and upgrade to meet NARCO standards so we can utilize it on future rail excursions. Al did a great job in bringing it up to the requirements which that organization sets.

So after the new track is laid, we will begin classes on its operation. If you wish to use the speeder down the road we still need some of the members to donate to the refurbishing of the speeder. The suggested donation rates are \$150, \$100, and \$50. The amount you donate will determine when you may use the speeder. For example, anyone donating \$150 will get first choice, if there are two or more then there shall be drawing who is first. Then it will be the \$100 person(s), then the \$50 people. This surcharge is a one-time event, as we need to replenish the treasury after the vandalism and speeder costs. Remember that several members agreed to donate funds to upgrade the speeder, so far only two have done so.

The speeder needs to be moved back to Calhan prior to July 1st; Al needs his work area back. I am hoping that we can do this as it is important we keep it at Calhan to use for teaching purposes.

Another positive happening is the great posters of the Pueblo Depot which Chris Fox did for us. I feel that these will sell well at the WMMI open house in July. Speaking of Chris Fox, he is the President of the Hugo, Colorado, Round House group. We have been trying to locate an 80-foot turntable for them. We did locate a 130-foot turntable, but it is 50 feet too long for their pit. Hmm, I wonder if we... Naw, guess it wouldn't.

Now to the painful news! We had some very, very unwelcome jerks who vandalized our coach and steel caboose. They did over \$4,000 damage. Primarily broken windows.

The Calhan Police are investigating this wanton destruction by these vandals, who left their fingerprints on soda cans. We will prosecute if there is an arrest! We are thankful to Dave Naples who generously donated \$2,000 to help with the repair of the damage which these vandals did. We will have pictures of the damage in this newsletter.

As I said at the beginning of my missive there has been both great news and happenings, along with not-so-great events. It seems that the good and bad are balancing out somewhat!

A definite positive is a generous donation by a great friend to our society, Larry Santucci, President of Railroad Track Contractors of Colorado. Larry sent his fabulous track crew down to our project this past week. They did a fantastic job of laying 120 feet of rail. Both Greg Roberts and John Emmot took some fantastic pictures which will be on our photograph page! Bob Schope, the ramrod at Como, will be bringing his



Boreal Pass, photo by Jim Jordan

Castle Rock's Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Depot

Following the RMRHS Board meeting in Castle Rock in January, several attendees visited the Castle Rock Historical Society and Museum which is housed in the old D&RG depot built in 1875. More pics: <https://toshinyrails.com/?p=1733>



Continued from President's Letter on page 1:

track crew down to lay the remaining rail we have on hand connecting to the rail laid by Larry's crew.

Finally, we have a new member who lives in Calhan and has agreed to mow our alien life form weeds. Remember we used four gallons of Roundup, and they grew taller. Then we put over two pounds of salt and vinegar and that made them grow even taller yet. Sticky Nicky's Mowing Service will be kindly donating his time and equipment to help keep those weeds trimmed down. In addition, he has an interest in trains and will help anyway he can.

So, this our 10-year anniversary appears to have more ups than downs so far, if we can get the roof on the depot then our main goal for that building has been reached.

I wish to thank all of you for your participation and encouragement to save the depot and create a railroad heritage park and museum. Without your, and many others who are no longer members, help, this project would have died a number of years back.

Thank each one of you very much! God Bless all of you. Jim Jordan



This Wasatch engine is no longer in business, but Como is. Dr. Brannigan is the owner of Kate.



Vandalism at Calhan

As mentioned in the President's Letter, significant vandalism was done at the Calhan Depot around late May. These photos will give you some idea.



SPECIAL TO COLORADO COMMUNITY MEDIA

BY FRANK ALVORADO

The summer of '51 was not much different than any other time in the small town of Fort Lupton. The majority of the local folks were preparing the festivities to celebrate America's Independence, which would be the following day.

Fort Lupton, like most small towns along the Platte River Valley, depended mostly on agriculture for survival. The five thousand or so residents' income came from the canning factory, sugar factory, pickle docks and the Columbine milk factory. The labor force in the factories consisted mainly of the majority, being white people at the time.

Around one third of the inhabitants were Hispanic (Mexican Americans) who did the back-breaking farm labor to supply the mentioned factories. This labor force presided mainly in Pacific Ave. and Harrison St. There was one also the labor composed of 100% Hispanics, but wait, there was one white resident, the labor camp administrator. However, his home was away from where the laborers lived. The administrator lived in a mansion surrounded by a seven-foot fence with greens all around it.

Once a year, the town changed from a quiet little town and raised a little noise celebrating Tomato Day, which Fort Lupton claimed as tomato capital of the nation. With the exception of the sugar factory, most of the labor force became unemployed or migrated to other areas in the southwest to harvest other crops. Some managed to find work in nearby Denver or other cities.

One more celebration besides Tomato Day was Raft River Race, which took place on July 4th. The rafts were to be constructed any with homemade materials, nothing purchased at the hardware store. The race was held in the Platte River, starting in Brighton and ending in Fort Lupton and of course one of the very strict rules was the two managers of the raft must drink at least a six pack of beer during the competition. Most of the competitors overindulged and had a difficult time maneuvering around obstacles in the water, some fell overboard and struggled climbing back in and fell back before climbing back in and there were some who never finished the race due to impairment. The winners of the race were pretty well shot and presented third, second and first place.

On July 3, 1951, Santa Claus came five months early for a lot of people on the other side of the tracks, never in anyone's mind expected what was to happen. Very few people owned vehicles back then and walked to town to take care of business. A sidewalk made of brick existed from Harrison Street to town, which was frequently used by the neighborhood, Suddenly, the rumbling and honking of the St. Louis streamliner interrupted the peaceful and lazy afternoon.

In matter of minutes, the train flashed by on its daily schedule. However, this time something occurred drastically out of the ordinary. The train continued on, leaving behind a whirlwind loaded with green objects scattering throughout the five

acres between the train depot and Pacific Avenue.

Alex Rivas decided to stroll over to the Silver Moon Bar and join his senior comrades for a glass of Coors. He had enough for two glasses, fifty cents. Mr. Rivas was waiting for the train to pass but never, never expected the green bucks flying around him. Money. This was impossible to be true, money does not grow on trees and most certainly does not fly.

Nevertheless, he began gathering bills - dollars, fives, twenties and fifties and some hundreds. This paid a lot more than picking green beans, which paid about 2% cents a pound. All at once, there was a very loud scream, "Money, money, dinero!" And before the blink of an eye, the empty field turned into a human beehive, pushing, shoving and at times different hands grabbing the same bill, causing a push and a smack. It became an Olympic gold competition.

Mrs. Rojo, a 90-year-old citizen, always wore an apron as part of her daily dress code and she found it to be just what the doctor ordered for a very unique occasion and used it to deposit her precious paperwork. She used a can to assist her to get around. Well, as soon as she had enough paper, she forgot about her cane and raced home with an apron full, stopping only when she dropped some of the loot. Suddenly, the local police arrived, one cop who would easily compete with Barney from the TV show Andy Griffith. He challenged the money-pickers, reminding them that what was being done was a federal offense and jail would be for certain. He ran around desperately demanding they obey his commands. However, his efforts fell on deaf ears.

The officer's weapon was most likely borrowed from the local museum, a replica of what Clint Eastwood used in the Westerns. Heavy and so huge that Barney had to keep switching hands while pointing the cannon at the money harvesters.

In a matter of minutes, the field was looted where even some of the weeds had been pulled up to search for treasure.

Late that afternoon, local stores experienced more sales from the folks on the east side of town, seems as if they discovered gold.

Mr. Rivas was drinking a bottle of beer instead of one or two glasses. The Silver Moon, the Monterrey and The Town Tavern sold an unusual amount of booze that night, celebrating an early Christmas thanks to the Union Pacific and the Fort Lupton State Bank.

There are conflicting stories on the incident. The Greeley news media stated that a bunch of money was dropped and sucked under the wheels, tearing the bag in all the excitement. Another story is that the money bag hanging for the train to hook as it passed by encountered problems with the release mechanism and caused the bag to burst open.

Continued on page 5...

GJ Union Depot History

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO, USA

by Bennett Boeschstein

Since Grand Junction was founded, railroads have been an integral part of this community's history. As the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad was snaking its way across the Rocky Mountains from Denver, the company eyed the Grand Valley as an ideal point west to Salt Lake. In anticipation of the railroad's arrival, George Crawford incorporated the town of Grand Junction in 1881. His efforts proved worthwhile as Grand Junction quickly became part of railroad baron Jay Gould's transcontinental system. Because of growing demand, Grand Junction's Union Depot opened to the public on April 17, 1906, as a station shared between the Denver & Rio Grande, Rio Grande Western, and Colorado Midland railroads. The Union Depot was one of the most impressive structures in the West. Designed by Chicago church architect Henry J. Schlacks, the Depot was constructed at a cost of \$60,000. For many years, the Rio Grande operated several luxurious passenger trains, the penultimate of which was the California Zephyr. Amtrak has operated a new version of the Zephyr since 1983. In 1992, the Union Depot was left vacant when Amtrak moved to its current station next door.

The significance of the Union Depot did not go unrecognized. Since the Depot opened, it has served as a refugee camp, witnessed visiting presidents and royalty, and survived exploding World War II ammunition. The Union Depot was added to the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural and historical value in 1992.

We would like to thank the volunteers, organizations and sponsors who made this event possible:

Volunteers

Territorial Daughters of Colorado

Mesa County Historical Society

Friends of GJ Union Depot

Brian & Dylan Rytting

Participants

GJ Union Depot

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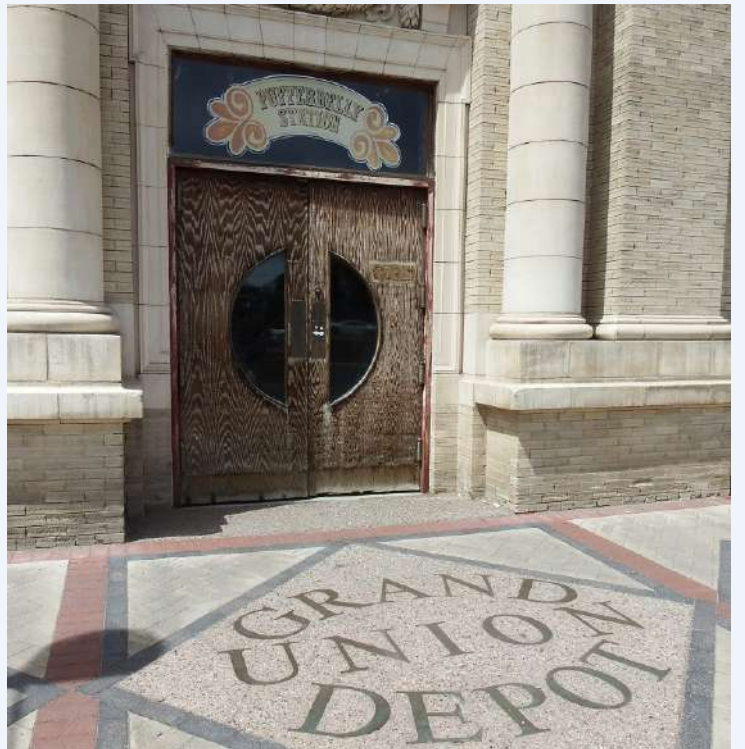
Grand Valley Concrete

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ANB Bank

...and for individual support from many local organizations and institutions.



(continued from page 4...)

The poor people on the east side of the tracks didn't argue the case, they were happy that Santa came five months early.

No one was arrested and the money pickers kept silent, hiding the loot in their personal secret compartments. Decades later, some of the stories were told, however there were countless stories made up by local gossipers. That train had been held up by bandits; the money safe was pushed out from the mail car or the railroad manager had planned it all.

The Union Pacific and the beneficiaries knew the absolute truth, with one exception: the amount lost. The railroad people claimed that \$24,000 was in the bag, however, the old timers years later claimed it to be much more than that.

Happy Independence Day!

Midland Depot in Divide, CO

The Teller Historic and Environmental Coalition is working to restore and open this piece of history. The depot is next door to the new police station which is about 1500 feet from the signaled intersection in Divide back toward Woodland Park on Highway 24. From the Coalition's website: "The Colorado Midland Railway built the first standard gauge line into the Colorado Rockies in 1886. The first Midland Depot in Divide, constructed in 1887, burned and was replaced by the existing structure built in 1903." Your webmaster, Jamie Foster, learned about the existence of this depot from all the framed artwork hanging on the walls at the John Wesley Ranch (located a few miles south of Highway 7 from Divide). The Coalition usually has a Midland Days event in early September (this year set for September 9th). For more info about the depot: <http://www.thecoalitionco.org/midland-depot-at-divide.html>



Ghost Rider of the Denver Pacific Railway

By Steve Wadle

Conductor W. H. Smith watched as his freight train was leaving Cheyenne that late April evening. All was well with a clear sky and a bright moon. Their destination was Denver, something he had done numerous times. But there was still one danger on the route at which the crew needed to be extra careful. Namely, the hill by Big Springs (Athol). If a train approached it too fast rounding the curve, they could lose control and fly off the mountainside. For such had happened four years earlier when a train hit a broken track and derailed. One person was killed – the brakeman.

So, watching lookout from the caboose as the train neared the hill, the conductor felt that the train was moving too fast. He gave the signal to the engineer to whistle for brakes. The front and rear brakemen sprang into action, climbing to the top of the train cars and turning the brake wheels, slowing the train. However, the middle brakeman appeared to be just sitting on the brake wheel.

After a while the conductor caught the attention of the rear brakeman and together they walked to confront the idle employee. But within a car and a half, the middle brakeman stood up and nonchalantly stepped off the side of the car. Horrified, they rushed to the scene hoping to catch a glimpse of the suicidal man on the ground. But there was nothing to behold. He had simply vanished.

Bewildered, the railroad men began talking among themselves, and it was learned that other trains had previously encountered such a fellow at that location: a brakeman who sat on the wheel and when approached by others, stood up and stepped off the train.

Needless to say, railroad legends of phantom brakemen persist. For it was indeed a dangerous job trying to slow down a moving train while operating hand brakes on top of the cars going down a steep grade. However, this story is quite different because of the number of eyewitnesses who testified of the event. Plus, these eyewitnesses had solid reputations in the industry. Neither of these railroad men were superstitious or drunk. It took place in 1888 several miles south of Cheyenne, Wyoming, near the state line with Colorado. Sadly, it's just remembered as a small newspaper article appearing in a forgotten eastern publication.

Final Spike Steam Tour Route



Upcoming Events

September 9, 2023 Midland Days (Divide, CO)

September 30, 2023 TECO Outdoor Swap Meet

October 14-15, 2023 TECO Pueblo Railfair

February 3-4, 2024 TECO Model Train Expo

Pueblo UNION DEPOT

1889

2023

Pueblo, Colorado



Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society © 2023

This new poster is available through the website.

Roof Work at Calhan

July 6-8, 2023

Re-roofing of the Calhan Depot is progressing well. For 10 years we've been hoping and waiting for a new roof. So, give thanks to Mike Maline, John Emmot, Greg Roberts, and Wayne Kemp for their great help in the last two days. And a special thanks to Mike Wilson; he was called last night and was quick to agree to join the crew today to complete the installation of the fascia. He knew exactly what was required to complete the job. This work replaces the 1934 roof on this 1905 building.



Photos by Wayne Kemp.



Membership Application

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Birth Month _____

Organization (Associates Only)

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Interested in serving on a committee: Y / N

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Track Laying at Calhan

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TCA Show April 2023

The Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society had a table at the Train Collectors Association's (TCA) Rocky Mountain Train Show this weekend held in the National Western Complex in Denver, CO.



TECO Show February 2023

The Rocky Mountain Railroad Heritage Society had a table at the TECO Train Show this weekend held in the Colorado Springs Events Center. The layouts were quite impressive and there were plenty of vendors with something for everyone. And the Boxcar Race was quite a hit.



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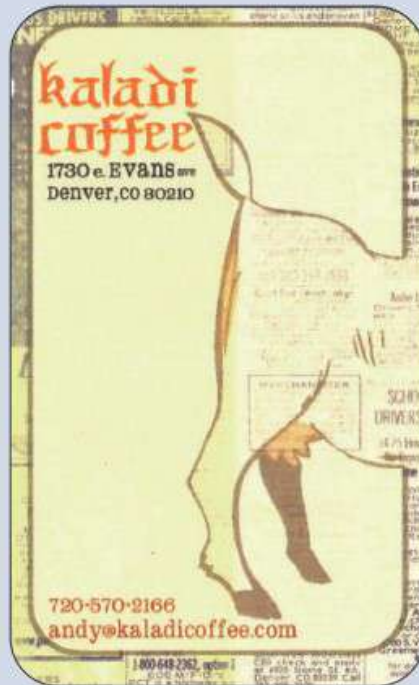
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