

SOUTHERN OREGON LIVE STEAMERS

P.O. Box 1443 Medford, Oregon, 97501

THE MANIFEST

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Southern Oregon Live Steamers Business Meeting

April 29, 2013

Minutes from the Monday, April 29, 2013 SOLS Membership Meeting

Meeting called to order at 7:15—18 members present.

Dale thanked all those present for coming to the meeting. He thanked everyone for doing such a fantastic job on our busy Run Day. Everything ran smoothly and we gave rides to 3,029 plus 582 rides on Thomas. It seems there were many first timers, proving "word of mouth" is the best advertisement. It was a real team effort!!

The minutes were read, George moved to approve, Charlie second, minutes approved as read.

OLD BUSINESS:

Track Superintendents Report- Tony reported that 50 standard sized ties around the mainline and in the yard were replaced. Also replaced were 15 of the longer switch ties. Elvin cut 800 new ties. Tony reworked the incline track leading to the transfer table used at the steaming bays.

He leveled and added ballast to part of the balloon look next to the rose garden .He plans to add more shoulder ballast to several critical areas on the Mountain Division. Ballast added last year eliminated all sun kinks. Adjustments were made to several switches for smoother operation. Members are asked to make sure all mainline switches are set for mainline traffic at all times. There is one mainline switch that is broken because people wouldn't stop and realign it for faster, more frequent mainline traffic. Broken switches cause derailments.

Before the next run day he will replace thirty feet of worn curved rail on the downhill track under the tall trestle. With an average of 1,000 train movements a month he needs to stay ahead of mainline maintenance. The windmill that was located in the rose garden has been moved to the Cedar Flats fuel facility, it has been made to look like an oil derrick. Elvin and Tony have been weeding and cutting grass on a regular schedule. The park looks great. On that note Tony could really use help with the mowing. If you can come out to help give him a call, it would really be appreciated.

Electrical Report — In the absence of Rocky, Dale reported that it is critical to STOP at the light by the garden railway pedestrian gate. Skip plans to put another, more efficient "STOP" light in.

Roundhouse Report —In the absence of Art, Tony reported that Club locomotive #255 has been repainted and looks great. A motion was made by Jerry to paint locomotive #256 the same color it is now. Lee second and the motion carried.

Construction Report—Because of Steve Bruff's serious illness, Lee Parrish has been made Construction Superintendent. Elvin will get the ground ready and put in the forms for cement to be poured behind the Beanery. In order to relieve some of the traffic in front of the Beanery, a few of the picnic tables will be placed beside the beanery and on the grassy area by the little Playground Train.

Beanery Report -- Terri was absent so George gave her report. Sales for the April 28 Run Day included 147 bags of Popcorn, 250 Hot Dogs, 60 Sausage Dogs, 75 orders of Chicken Nuggets, and LOTS of Pop. Around \$900.00 in food and merchandise. What a day!

Rules of the Month

Rule 1-2: All Club-owned material and equipment is for the use of members and guests at the Club facility ONLY, and shall not be removed from the Club facility without specific permission from the Board of Directors. This includes fuel, cars, locomotives, tools, materials, etc.

Rule 1-4: Club locomotives may be used to pull steam locomotives to and from the barn, to and from the steaming bays and fueling spurs, and used to pull a work train. Other uses will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Rule 1-6: Any Club member may request the use of a Club locomotive for a special family birthday or picnic.

NEXT SOLS MEETING

Monday, May 27th at 7:15 P.M. Hope to see everyone there.

Minutes continued) Everyone should have a bathroom key because it is too hard for the Beanery staff to stop work and get the key during the busy run days.

Merry Tompkins train is still outside and something needs to be done with it. Dale has tried on many occasions to talk to her but she does not return any of his calls or answer any of the letters written to her. Is it abandoned property. Is she just going to just leave it? Ron Butler said he would try to contact her. It is suggested that it be put behind the No. 4 car barn and stored there. It cannot be moved back inside the Car Barn because she would have to be an active member. Refer to By-Laws. A decision will be made at the next meeting. [Update: Merry contacted us and will move her equipment off the property within two weeks.]

Our Insurance was doubled this year. Due to rising expenses Dale has suggested that we raise the Birthday Parties to \$100.00. No action was taken at this time.

Twelve two-way radios were donated to the club by Dennis Brigante, so Dale had a radio give-a-way. Six Radios were raffled off, but those winning the raffle did not need or want the radios, therefore members decided to give the radios to those who did not have a radio or could use an extra radio. David and Laura Turner each get a radio, and Mary Turner, Ron Butler and George Schroeder each get a radio. It has been decided that for all runs, the radios will be left on Channel 4.

Odds and Ends A new canvas top has been ordered for the canopy located at the loading dock. Tony asked for one more garbage can for the playground locomotive area. Also, for safety reasons, he wants to install a little decorative fence around the faucet in the playground. The annual rent of \$150.00 for use of the model railroad clubhouse for meeting is now due and payable. The R.S.V.P supplement program used by some of our members has been canceled by the government. The next Run Day (May 12) falls on Mothers Day.

At 8 o'clock Charlie moved we adjourn, Rick second. We adjourned at 8 P.M.

EVERYONE IN THE COUNTY WAS HERE! After only two run days we're scratching our heads and wondering what else can we do in the face of huge crowds. Weather was cool, but mostly sunny on our April 14 run day. We carried 2,307 passengers (1,915 on the mainline trains, 392 kiddies on our Thomas train), beating last year's opening day record by about 380 passengers. That was very encouraging, but the following run day was one we'll talk about for many years.

The weather forecast for our April 28th run day was for a perfect sunny 77-degree day. Expecting a large crowd we had our five large capacity trains ready, plus a number of smaller trains. Our normal procedure is for Mary Worthing and I to head to the gate about five minutes before opening, where we unlock the gate and I welcome the visitors and give a short lecture about the railroad park. From there I open the gate and lead the visitors to our loading platform.

When we reached the gate there were at least 125 people waiting outside, with the line going into the parking lot. I always ask a show of hands of those who are first time visitors. I'd guess about 40% of the crowd raised their hands. Quite surprising! My train was the fourth train departing the station and the waiting line already filled the platform and extending into the beanery area.

As my train reached the summit on the tall trestle I could see the overflow parking lot was about half full. When I reached the station, the line stretched all the way through the beanery and nearly reached the pedestrian crossing. We have seen that before, but not 15 minutes after opening. The waiting line filled the platform waiting area and beyond all day long. At around noon the line of people waiting to buy food at the beanery was about 30 people long! More about the beanery business a little later.

The total capacity for our five large trains is in the neighborhood of 130 to 140 people. Supplemented by several smaller capacity trains, we had as many as ten trains running at a time during the day. I checked the passenger count several times as I'd enter the station. Each time I was ready to load about 200-225 people had ridden by the time I made one trip around the layout. This is nuts! Mercifully there were no problems operating all those trains worth mentioning.

Another way to look at how busy the Railroad Park was that day is by the number of automobiles. There have been times in the past when the overflow parking lot was filled, and cars were backed up to Table Rock Road waiting to get a parking space. This time, not only did the cars back up to Table Rock Road, they backed up to Highway 99, and the one block between Highway 99 and Highway 62• and were backed up on Highway 62 to the first stoplight! Some people told us they waited 45 minutes to get into the park! The parking lot crew told

us they parked over 540 cars that day, plus there were a lot more people walking to the park than usual. The crew received many, many "thank you's" from visitors in how well they handled the parking situation. Without their help the day would have been a disaster.

The gals working the beanery didn't fall down on the job. Terri, Carol Butler, and Robby Miller miraculously pushed the food, drinks and souvenir sales like a fast food restaurant. Outside the beanery Don Miller's popcorn machine was on overdrive, selling 147 bags of popcorn. These people are terrific. They don't cook 5 or 10 hot dogs and sausage dogs at a time. They cook 30 or so at a time because they get many single orders of 5, 6 and even 10 hot dogs, plus beverages and snacks.

Stationmaster George Schroeder kept loading the trains as fast as possible. Normally he'll take a 20 minute lunch break during the day after being relieved by Loren Snyder, but after seeing Loren loading trains for over an hour I asked him where George was. He said George was commandeered by his wife Terri to restock the refrigerator with cold pop and bottled water from another fridge in another room. George restocked the beverages four times that day!

When the day was over we all congratulated each other for an outstanding effort in making so many people happy. We set a new record by carrying 3,029 passengers on the mainline trains, and 582 little kids on our Thomas train. The new record is now 3,611 passengers, which translates to an average of 903 passengers an hour!!! That's a lot of people!

While this is an impressive total that all parks like us would love to reach, we could have done a little better. We were short at least four of our regular engineers and conductors. The Thomas train crew had to stop running their train for a while so they could take a lunch break. A few of the engineers rode their trains for all four hours because there was no one to relieve them. What I'm trying to say is that we could sure use more help with operating trains. I'm sure some of our members would love to be conductors and engineers, but never have tried. Operating our trains safely isn't rocket science. We will show you the ropes and soon you'll be part of the best non-paying organization in southern Oregon. The best time to learn the ropes is during one of our many special parties when train traffic is down to one or two trains. Please consider being part of our operating department. If interested, please contact any of our officers.

TRACK TALK With an average of 1,000 train movements a month during the operating season, I need to stay ahead on mainline maintenance. During April and the beginning of May I replaced approximately 50 standard sized ties around the mainline and in the yard. Also replaced in the yard were about 15 of the longer switch ties. What began as a small project to replace a single 10-foot section of rail under the tall trestle ended up stretching to replace 60 feet of curved rail. Doing it this way made the entire curve smooth and uniform, plus it gives me a supply of good used rail to be used elsewhere.

The incline track leading to the transfer table and the steaming bays was leveled and re-ballasted This also included replacing five ties on the trestle leading up to the transfer table. I also leveled and added ballast to part of the balloon look next to the rose garden. I plan to add more shoulder ballast to several critical areas on the Mountain Division. The additional ballast I added last year eliminated all sun kinks.

Adjustments were made to several switches for smoother operation. One thing I'd want all members to do from now on is to make sure the mainline switches are always set for use by mainline trains. That is, if you operate a train from a yard track to a mainline track, it is okay to run through to the main if it is a spring switch and set for the main. However, if it is set for the yard, please realign it behind you for mainline traffic. I have one mainline switch that is broken because people wouldn't stop and realign it for the faster, heavier, and more frequent mainline traffic. Broken switches cause derailments.

I checked the mainline diamond over Siburg siding after hearing there was a bit of a jolt to one side when trains crossed over on the way to Johnson Jct. An inspection revealed the diamond in perfect alignment, however, the gauge is exactly 7.5 inches and the flange guards are close. What you might be feeling is where the wheels are being drawn inward from the slightly wider gauge elsewhere, to the perfect gauge on the diamond. I did file the steel rail a bit to allow a little more freedom when crossing.

The windmill that was located in the rose garden has been moved. After being blown over at least three times, with the last incident actually bending the support legs ninety degrees, I thought of another use for it. With the blades and weathervane removed it resembled an oil derrick, so I relocated it to the mock fueling

facility at Cedar Flats. I found a section of ground wire pipe, painted it black to look like oil drill pipes, and placed it in the center of the oil derrick. Now as the public passes over the Cedar Flats diamond they will see the oil derrick. Oh, what do I call this derrick? A sign on it reads, "Olay Oil Company".

Recently Elvin cut about 800 new ties, including longer switch ties, and had them pressure treated. They are now stored under cover in the large A-frame structure. Unless there is a huge unforeseen tie replacement project in the future, this supply should last a couple of years.

LANDCAPING DEPT. On your next visit to the park you'll see another section of "Elvin's Great Wall of Medford" being laid down. Since the last run day he's extended a two-block high wall west from the west portal of tunnel No. 2. This creates a finished corridor look for the two mainlines as they head to and from under the tall trestle. He also trimmed the shrubbery between the two tracks. It looks great.

Next on Elvin's projects is the building of similar low profile block walls along the hills inside the tall trestle loop. Anyone who has ever mowed the grass in this area knows the slope at some spots is a challenge to reach with the riding lawn mower. Just like other walls in the area Elvin has built, it will be backfilled with dirt to create a level profile that is easier to mow, and it looks better.

Speaking of cutting the grass, Elvin and I have been weeding and cutting the grass on a regular schedule. We could use additional help from anyone who wouldn't mind a few hours of cutting grass. Generally we try to cut all the grass about three to four days before the next run day. If you could help, contact me (Tony) or Elvin and we'll show you what needs to be mowed.

CONSTRUCTION REPORT Another of Elvin's ideas is to level and pour a concrete slab for two small areas on both sides of the beanery. These two undeveloped areas will soon allow us to relocate two of the picnic tables in front of the beanery to outside on the new slabs. This should greatly reduce the congestion in front of the beanery that we see each run day. Elvin leveled the area and Lee Parrish built the forms. We expect to pour the concrete on May 7th so the new area can be used on the May 12th Run Day.

We could also use the help from one or two members with a little painting project. The new "Thomas & Friends" car barn needs a little trim on the ends, and so does the ten-foot extension to Car Barn #4. The Thomas barn should be easy to do since it is only five feet high. The other car barn will require using a small step ladder, but the area is only ten feet long. Elvin and I have our hands full with track and landscaping duties and can't take the time to paint too. Please give us a little of your time.

ROUNDHOUSE REPORT Veteran club locomotive No. 255 has a new paint scheme. The old C&BQ red paint scheme was cracked, faded, and the shell was in poor shape. With approval of the membership Art painted it in a nice light blue and gray paint scheme with "S.O.L.S. RR" letters on the hood. During the off season No. 255 was overhauled by Dale and Mike Butler, leaving us with essentially a better looking and more reliable club locomotive. At the April 29 membership meeting it was decided to also repaint club locomotive No. 256, only it was retain its original CB&Q "Chinese Red" paint scheme and lettering.

After two run days and many special parties we are happy to report that the rebuilt passenger cars, and the new cars are performing flawlessly. The public is giving our cars two "thumbs up" now that all the cars are equipped with padded seats. Thank you Dale and Mike Butler for producing fine passenger cars that will last a long time in busy passenger service.

SPECIAL PARTIES GALORE Last year we set another record by booking 130 parties between March and October. Most of the parties are for birthdays. School groups is the next largest group. As this goes to press we have over seventy parties booked so far, and new reservations are being made almost daily. For those who haven't operated trains in a while, this a great time to operate one. If you haven't operated one, this is the best time to learn.

BAD NEWS BUREAU As many of you already know, our friend Steve Bruff is having serious health problems that has kept him from working at the Railroad Park for nearly a year. Now we learn that Steve's wife Karen also has a serious health issue to deal with. Please keep them and his family (who are also SOLS members) in your prayers.



Animated Stationmaster George Schroeder gives the "all aboard" sign for Art Turner's train.



Princess Pat Butler is the conductor on her son Mike Butler's yellow Union Pacific train. She's the boss!



Signal Maintainer Rocky knows his signals. Here he shows us his "Thumb to Nose" signal. The man is amazing!



Engineer Mike Butler gets a lecture from his mom Pat Butler. She said he would go to bed without his supper if he wasn't good. Maybe she'll let him wear long pants.



Art blows the horn as his train enters Tunnels No. 2 & No. 3



Tony's train exits Tunnel No. 3 with a full load of passengers.



Our plan for having a car barn large enough to store four long trains and their locomotives is now a reality. Together these four trains can carry 100-120 passengers.



Our other new car barn project now holds our little engines and cars. From left: "Tinkerbelle", Lee Parrish's purple switcher, Percy, and Thomas.



The new look of SOLS locomotive #255. The body is painted two shades of blue with a black stripe separating them. The cab and nose is a light grey. The marker lights are green and "SOLS RR" is on the side.



The new playground locomotive is proving to be a kid magnet. The parents are enjoying the fun almost as much as the kids.



An eye catching addition to our park this year is Lee Parish's switcher locomotive. Painted in a light shade of purple and lettered for "Dogs For The Deaf", Lee uses it to haul wheelchair-bound passengers on our handicap car. Looks great, doesn't it?

