

SOUTHERN OREGON LIVE STEAMERS

P.O. Box 1443 Medford, Oregon, 97501

THE MANIFEST

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Southern Oregon Live Steamers Business Meeting

May 27, 2013

Minutes from the Monday, May 27, 2013 SOLS Membership Meeting

Meeting called to order at 7:15 with 22 Members present

Passenger Count for May— Regular Mainline 4546; Thomas 837

The April minutes were read and approved with one correction: Elvin cut 1,200 ties; not 800 ties. (But whose counting? Apparently Elvin is!)

The Treasurers Report was read by Paul. They are attached to these minutes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Track Supervisors Report: The sun kink near SP caboose was eliminated. Tony resurfaced two 150-ft. long tangents on Mountain Division, and made repairs to the switch track leading to the propane spur-balloon loop.

Reinstalled 20 feet of track behind the Beanery which was removed so the cement truck could have access to recent pour site. Also repaired roadbed damage made by cement truck. Replaced 60 bad ties on bypass track and parking track in front of the station.

Repairs were made to the rails leading to the spur on the summit. In the future more ballast will be added under the diamond across Siburg Siding.

Electrical Report: Rocky came during the week and fixed signals on Mountain Division. Dennis worked on signals all Run Day, May 26. When the new power supply is installed the SP wigwag will then work properly without interfering with the other signals.

Roundhouse Report: Drive shaft reinstalled in club locomotive No. 255. Engine 8182 will be serviced before the next Run Day. Oil changed in No. 255.

Construction Report: Concrete was poured by the Beanery. Dale thanked Elvin, Tony and Lee for their help. Paul will touch-up the paint on Car Barn #4 & No. 5.

Landscape Report: Elvin thanked Loren for helping with the yard work. Dirt has been filled in around the new slabs. Parking in front of Propane tank is okay, as long as there is not parking by curb or posts. He said there is room for 6 or 7 vehicles.

He asked for approval for blocks and shrubs on the big bank. It will be done in different levels. The cost will be between \$300.00 and \$500.00. Rick moved to approve and Loren second. The motion carried.

The small dirt trailer Elvin uses everyday is worn out, therefore Art will repair it using angle iron stored in Car Barn. Also a night light bulb above the pump house door needs to be installed for a cost of approximately \$25.00

A big Thank You to Elvin and Carol and Dick Stark for their work in the Parking Lot.

Rules of the Month

Rule 5-1 Engineers... Any member of SOLS who demonstrates that he has the knowledge, judgment, and ability to operate a locomotive, can be qualified to operate as an engineer for the type of locomotive for which he has applied. (steam, electric, etc.)

Rule 5-2 No one under the age of sixteen (16) years of age will act as an engineer on any train pulling the public. If qualified they may use Club locomotives to make up trains.

Rule 5-3 Persons between the ages of 12 and 15 years of age may operate as an engineer of a locomotive only with permission of the owner. They must have demonstrated with proficiency, and will not carry passengers public or private, except for a qualified conductor

NEXT SOLS MEETING

Monday, June 24th at 7:15 P.M. Hope to see everyone there.

[Minutes continued] **Beanery Report:** Mothers Day was a big day in the Beanery. Terri said that about 300 Hot Dogs were sold last run day. This includes regular Hot Dogs, Sausage Dogs and Chili Dogs. Tony brought over a microwave oven equipped with a turntable provided by Art & Mary Turner for the Beanery. The freezer in the beanery does not seem to be freezing properly, but past experience shows it will work properly after being used more often during the season.

Loren said the Loading Dock Canopy needs to be anchored down, as a gust of wind moves it. (Done]

NEW BUSINESS

New members are needed, but they would have to understand that they would need to be a conductor for a few months in order to learn where the signals are, learn the layout of the Main Line, and the rules and regulations before they can drive a loaded train.

More volunteers are needed for Birthday Runs so that Members don't get burned out and then not show up for Run Day. It was suggested that maybe the Birthdays Runs need to be cut down to no more than two bookings per day at a time. Volunteers are needed to help mow the grass.

Members were reminded that those coming from Grants Pass and beyond to volunteer for a Birthday Run may receive \$10.00 to help with gas.

The Open House hours for June 2nd have changed to 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. Robby and Don will have free popcorn for visitors. There will be no train rides. A couple of trains will be on display, with owners permission. All sensitive areas will be roped off.

Charlie moved we adjourn at 8 P.M.

LOSS IN OUR RANKS It is with great sadness I report the passing of SOLS member Steve Bruff on May 27th. Steve had been in poor health for the last year, but he still planned on returning to work on small projects at Railroad Park. Besides he and his wife Karen being SOLS members, Steve was also a member of two other Railroad Park clubs: the Southern Oregon Chapter-NRHS, and the Morse Telegraph Club.

Steve and this editor worked on numerous SOLS and SOC-NRHS projects together during the twelve years I knew him. His sense of humor and stories of past experiences of working as a mining genealogist often kept us laughing out loud. Steve and I often shared funny stories. Some of them true!

A few of Steve's recent accomplishments as a SOLS member was designing and the overseeing the completion of our station's covered loading platform, Car Barn No. 4, and the surveying and construction of our important new alignment between Tunnel No. 3 and Johnson Jct. His vision for a solution to the operating difficulties we had with the steep grade and curve coming out of the tunnel is probably the most appreciated by our members.

His major accomplishments with the SOC-NRHS Railroad Park projects was working on the restoration of the CB&Q and SP cabooses, the Southern Pacific flanger, the Pacific & Eastern Ry. hopper car, and the former SP Section Tool Shed that once stood in Ashland. There were many more smaller projects as well.

It's unfortunate for us that God took him home after only 68 years of life. His first love was for his wife Karen, his son Matt and daughter-in-law Kim, and the joy of his life, grandson Jacob. (Matt, Kim and Jacob are also SOLS members.) Our prayers and best wishes go to the Bruff family during this time of great loss. As Steve and I would always say to each other, "See you later, Pard".

RAILROAD PARK NEWS After our hugely popular April "run days", we have (so far) returned to our normal park visitor attendance numbers. We are still ahead of last year's numbers for the same date, but 31 years of past experience has taught us that one or two days of extreme weather can greatly affect the numbers.

While "numbers" are important, it's far more important to see that our visitors (and our members, too) enjoy their time at the park. Quality time is what we should strive for, and I believe we generally exceed in this area. When receiving numerous thank you's and seeing lots and lots of smiles, we know we're succeeding.

To keep on succeeding we need the continuing help from our membership. As stated in the April minutes we

are depending on our regular “special party” volunteers to the point where “burning out” is a real possibility. Last year we booked a record 130 parties between March and October, and at the rate of booking this year, we could surpass this number. However, in order to prevent using our volunteers to the point of burning out, we have instituted a few policy changes.

From now on we will no longer book special parties on any of our non-operating Sundays. This will guarantee that for at least a few days of the month we won’t be running trains. The other change is that we will no longer book three parties on the same day. Most of the time we booked three parties on Saturdays from 10:00-12:00, 1:00-3:00, and 4:00-6:00—the most requested day of the week. While this was the most popular day, for some train crews without extra help it meant a 10-hour day of work. From now on we will book only two parties on Saturdays (10:00-12:00 and 1:00-3:00 P.M.). We will honor those Sunday and three-party Saturdays already booked. If we get more regular volunteers, then we will reconsider adding more scheduling options.

We will repeat this appeal again. If you’re not a regular volunteer that helps with special runs, please consider helping us out. You don’t have to put in a full day’s work. If you only volunteer to operate trains or help in the beanery for one two-hour party, it will allow the regulars to take a break. It will also boost their energy when it comes to running trains during our regular run days. We could also use additional help during run days. Quite often we are operating 6 to 8 or more trains at a time in order to satisfy the large number of passengers that come to the park. Try it and you’ll agree it’s a lot of fun.

RAILROAD PARK NEWS Our club is in the envious position of not having any large and expensive projects this year. In the face of operating an average of 1,000 train movements per month during the operating season, our track, facilities and rolling stock is in excellent condition, so we are looking at other ways to improve.

One of these improvements was the expansion of the concrete flooring at both ends of the beanery. When the station beanery was originally constructed, it didn’t have today’s employee restroom and store room, which were added on in the 1990s. As a result we ended up with two sloping areas of dirt and grass that was unattractive and unusable.

A few months ago Elvin proposed to the membership the filling of these areas with a concrete flooring the same height as the existing concrete floor. After the estimated cost of around \$400 was approved Elvin dug and leveled the area, and Lee Parrish constructed the forms. Last month, Dale, Lee, Elvin and myself poured the concrete using a cement truck that accessed the two sites from behind the beanery. It all went as planned and was finished in less than two hours.

A benefit I didn’t envision was having these two new areas allowed us to move several tables from in front of the beanery to the new areas. The benefit of this is much less congestion during the very busy run days when long lines of people are waiting for trains and/or food service. Right away Terri, Robby and Carol noticed that the people waiting for food service didn’t have to fight for space with people waiting to ride the trains, or with people eating at our picnic tables. Out of chaos comes order.

TRACK DEPT. REPORT We had a few track problems to deal with in May. A sun kink popped up near the SP caboose—a place we’ve never experienced a sun kink before. That was quickly repaired. The day before the May 12 run day I straightened and leveled the 150 downhill tangent leading to the tall “Rollie Wilburn” trestle. I didn’t have enough time to use the ballast tamper so I quickly did it by hand. Big mistake. By the end of the May 12 run day that section of track looked like cooked spaghetti after seeing so many trains braking prior to the curve under the trestle. Now both the uphill and downhill sections are in proper alignment.

One unexpected problem arose during the last hour on the May 27th run day. A train derailed on the Summit Siding switch, and cars from a few more trains following also derailed some cars. An inspection revealed a few of the holes in the long switch ties had rotted and allowed the rails to spread. I closed the Mountain Division and temporarily rerouted the trains via Siburg Siding and Johnson Junction until temporary repairs were made. Total line closure was only about 15 minutes, and the riders got to ride a portion of our layout not normally used.

Other small projects involved correcting the narrow gauge to the switch track leading to the propane spur-balloon loop, and replacing about 100 ties—both switch ties and standard ties—in front and behind the station and in the yard. To be done is to slightly raise the diamond across Siburg Siding as it has settled down somewhat after thousand of trains crossing over it. More ties and screws will be replaced in the yard near the car barns. In some places the rails are barely anchored with very old Phillips screws used years ago.

LANDSCAPING DEPT. This is one of the best times of the years to experience our park. The weeds are under control. The grass is lush and green. The flowers and trees are blooming with new life as Elvin continues to construct new retaining walls and terraces. With membership approval Elvin will soon work on the ugliest remaining undeveloped spot around our layout. I'm referring to the steep slope that occupies the west side of the Rollie Wilburn trestle. Of all the areas requiring weeding, this is the worst. The slope is so steep that a person has to very extremely careful not to slip and fall. For the past two years Loren Snyder has been the person cutting this area. I was going to say "fall guy" but that doesn't sound good!

Elvin's order of pallets of new stone blocks was delivered June 3rd. He plans to turn this slope into several levels of block terraces, filled with low maintenance shrubbery for beautification. It is not known how long this job will take as Elvin has the other projects to complete, besides keeping up with his regular maintenance duties. If you think you could help Elvin in any way, give him a call at 541-301-5924. I want to add my thank you's to John Polacek for hauling away several large trailer loads of trimmed branches from the park, and Loren Snyder for weed elimination and grass cutting.

Terri says our sales at the beanery continue to grow. This year she introduced chicken nuggets into our menu. At 5 pieces for 99 cents it has proven to be very popular. Best of all is it hasn't affected the sale of hot dogs and sausage dogs. Dave Herzog spotted a Formica countertop for sale locally that could replace what the gals use not inside the beanery. Currently the front counter is part countertop and part folding table. George Schroeder and Dave will measure the countertop and beanery to see if this would be a positive benefit for the gal's operation.

Just recently Loren Snyder repainted the silhouette bears in Bear Country. They were repainted about two years ago, but the weather, quite naturally, made the painted wood cutouts fade to the point where they looked a bit shabby again. Loren also made a new bear and added it to Bear Country. He is also soliciting donations of plywood to build more small animal silhouette for different areas around our layout. It may sound a little hokey, but the public loves it.

OPEN HOUSE REPORT Our first-ever Open House went well on the morning of June 2nd. Dave Herzog planned the event, and even went on three radio stations to promote it. Every person we asked how they found out about this event said they heard it on the radio.

Not knowing how many people might show up, we displayed all club locomotives, and a few private locomotives. One car was flipped on its side to show the trucks and undercarriage, and a track panel was on display on the track assembly jig. Free popcorn was handed to the visitors along with SOLS and Railroad Park information sheets and brochures.

We estimate that perhaps one hundred visitors showed up for the three-hour event. Docents took small groups of three to six or so people for tours around our area which are normally off limits. We know these people were very interested in the "behind the scenes" activities because they asked us lots of questions, plus they left donations.

We had plenty of volunteers to greet the public and act as tour guides. On account of this we never felt rushed to speed up the pace so we could get the next tour going. It was very informal. We can't think of anything that we missed or should have done better. Dave planned it well. Good job Dave!



The latest change around our area of Railroad Park is Elvin's idea of pouring of concrete into the vacant area that before only grew some grass and weeds, but was mostly dirt on a slope. This was one of those obvious solutions to not only making the station area look better, it also allowed us to greatly reduce the congestion we always get on run days, and during very large parties. These two images show both areas now occupied by large picnic tables that before were under the station roof in front of the beanery.



These three children were part of a "special needs" Birthday Private Party SOLS hosted. There were 14 special needs children and their parents, three were dependant upon their wheel chairs or "wheelchair bound"

Lu Lu in the upper left is blind, deaf, and has Muscular Dystrophy. As you can see she had a blast!

Stephanie in the upper right has Multiple Sclerosis and had never been on a train, she did not want to get off the train.

Mikey on the lower left also has Multiple Sclerosis and is a little more abled than the girls as he scoots his own chair around.

The party had no clue we had a wheel chair car and thanked the SOLS crew for making everyone feel like normal kids and parents with normal kids. They told us they will tell everyone they know with disabilities of the great service our chair car provides and encouraged us not to stop but, to think about adding a second wheel chair car to our fleet.



A Steamer train full of passengers along the backside on Memorial Day Weekend's Run Day

Skip running Thomas on a recent Run Day



Car Barn #4 full with it's trains! Our newest Car barn at the park.