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**Rules of the Month**

Rule 1:1 – Locomotives and equipment shall be unloaded and loaded only at the facilities provided for such unloading and loading. All vehicles shall be removed from the loading area as soon as possible after loading and unloading.

Rule 2:13 – When visibility is limited, and after sunset, all trains shall have a lighted (white) headlight showing to the front on the engine and a marker on the last car showing red to the rear of the train.

Rule 2:21 – No train hauling the public shall haul more than six (6) cars capable of carrying passengers in its consist of cars.

Rule 2:23 – All night run operations are to cease at 10:00 pm (operations are defined as any and all train operations, use of air compressors, engine blow downs, etc.)

**NEXT SOLS MEETING**

**Our next meeting will be on Monday, September 23<sup>th</sup> at 7:15 P.M. inside the model railroad clubhouse. Hope you can join your friends there.**

Meeting of August 26, 2013. Called to order at 7:15 P.M.  
Total passenger count: 26,231 riders to date.

Dale thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting and for everyone's hard work at the park. The Minutes from the last meeting were read and approved.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Dale read the Financial Report. The donations were way down this last Run Day because of heavy rain. The complete report is attached to these minutes. Mary Wooding moved to approve and David Turner second. Motion carried.

**TRACK SUPERINDENENT:** Tony and Bruce have been very busy doing the following repairs: Installed 90 feet of new outside curve rail on Mountain division, and installed 10 feet of outside curve on Black Widow Bridge. Trimmed selected rails to relieve pressure that may cause sun kinks. Ballasted and leveled about 30 feet of the Thomas and Friends loop. Inspected ties under the pedestrian crossing to garden railroad. All ties will be replaced after the season ends. Ballasted and leveled 50 feet of mainline on the Mountain Division. Readjusted three mainline switches and one Thomas switch. All the long 2 x 2 ties that attach to the stringers on black Widow Bridge also need to be replaced.

**ELECTRICAL REPORT:** Rocky said that because of the heavy rain all the signal lights stayed red. He and Phil will keep working to make improvements. He mentioned that the block wall coming out of tunnel #3 is a bit too tight for him to work on the light.

**ROUNDHOUSE REPORT:** Art stated that for now everything is in good repair and running smoothly.

**CONSTRUCTION REPORT:** Lee said a new counter was installed in the Beanery, thanks to himself, Dale and new member, Harold Hite. And he was happy to report that Elvin got the rest of his fence installed outside the beanery.

**LANSCAPE REPORT:** Elvin thanked Art for repairing the trailer. It works great! He is busy putting fill dirt behind the two new walls. He said that he will need more blocks costing around \$541.00, but because money is tight right now he can wait.

**BEANERY RFEPORT:** Because of the heavy rain sales in the Beanery were about half of what they usually are. Terri thanked Lee for the new counter he and Harold installed inside the Beanery. She said it will make clean-up so much easier, plus having the extra space.

**[Minutes continued]** Dale thanked George for his help building the big wall. He also reminded the members that we need to watch our spending because we need enough money to get us through the winter.

Dale reminded the engineers once again to SLOW DOWN when Tony puts out the "SLOW" sign and the red flag. Some engineers ignore this warning making the tracks dangerous by speeding on by.

We are sorry to hear that Donna Herzog had a stroke. She is home from the hospital and doing better.

We received two Applications for membership. One is from Harold Hite, for Associate Membership, and the other is from Dennis and Sharon Ediger. Both Applications were accepted. Welcome to Harold Hite, and Dennis and Sharon Ediger.

David Herzog presented commentary for acquiring artificial rock forms. The club would get two forms for \$500.00. A discussion followed. Loren moved to purchase the forms in a couple of months. Art second. There were 9 "Yes" votes and 12 "No" votes. Motion failed.

More volunteer help was discussed, Loren praised Mary and Laura for their time spent volunteering for the Birthday runs. Dale reminded everyone of the Pot Luck this coming Saturday. It is always a fun event.

Tony moved we adjourn, Lee second. We adjourned at 8 P.M.

**RAILROAD PARK DOINGS** With 10 of our 14 Sunday run days behind us, this year's operating season is not far from setting a new attendance and passenger record. Until our last run day on August 25<sup>th</sup>, we were slightly ahead of last year's pace for the same period. However, with the rainy weather hitting us that day, we have fallen behind last year's pace. (For the record last year we carried 37,335 passengers!)

While it's fun setting new passenger ridership records, we realize the real fun is seeing the public experiencing a great afternoon of seeing five railroad clubs operate their layouts, telegraphs, and riding our trains. We know we're appreciated when we hear many words of praise and "thank you's" from so many visitors.

As I write this newsletter I wonder what changes are in store for the park. Other than the extension of the motorcar-handcar track now underway for the Southern Oregon Chapter, NRHS, changes at the Railroad Park will more subtle except perhaps the entrance to the park. After 32 years the City of Medford is ready to upgrade the gazebo/pavilion-type structure outside the gate.

Around August 23<sup>rd</sup> City workers moved all the picnic tables from under the structure to the lawn areas. The next day a temporary "rent-a-fence" was erected around the pavilion and we were told the new lumber would be stored inside the park. We were told in the beginning this would be an entirely new structure, and the old (and incorrect) "National Historic Railroad Park" sign would be replaced with a more appropriate "Medford Railroad Park" sign. Now we've been told that on account of budget woes, the current structure will only be repaired where needed. As popular as our park is, this is not what we wanted to hear. Let's hope the situation changes for the better.

Being one of the two original clubs when the park opened in 1981, we've experienced more changes than the others. The most notable changes in recent years are our Thomas & Friends kiddies train loop, the completion of the Mountain Division, the concrete train platforms, the covered passenger waiting shelter, and, of course, the landscaping transformation of our layout grounds into a more park-like atmosphere.

Changes from now on will be more on the scale of small and barely noticeable by the public, but are nonetheless just as important. One of these changes is the replacement of the counter work area inside the beanery. The old counter consisted of a six-foot long Formica top with two folding tables next to it to hold the cash register, snacks, BBQ grill and other cooking pots. The new Formica counter is a solid 16-foot long affair with easier access to storage containers underneath, and it is a few inches narrower. The bonus extra floor space allows our beanery gals to move around more freely. If you've ever been there while they're working, you know what I mean.

Another minor change came from Skip Foley. Watching me doing track repairs one day he saw how crowded my tool car was and asked if I'd like a metal rack to hang shovels, rakes, track tamping bars, etc. on. I told him that I thought of building such a rack for years, but after eight or so years of track maintenance I hadn't got around to building one. Skip asked what I needed and a few days later delivered my tool rack. It is exactly what I needed. Thank you Skip!

Recent changes the public will notice are courtesy of Dave Herzog and Elvin Sinfield. Dave has brought many trailer loads of heavy moss rock from a site in Sam's Valley and muscle them to his Butte Creek Mill site. After creating a natural border around the mill Dave has added dirt, river rock, a maple tree; a kidney shaped pool for the stored water to drop down the mill flume, and a new pump, and assorted plumbing to make it all work. Look for this wonderful feature to be completed this month. Thank you to Bruce Kelly for helping Dave retrieve and move some seriously heavy moss rock from Sam's Valley to the mill site on our layout.

Most people have heard of the Great Pyramids of Giza and the Great Wall of China. Soon the world will know about the "Great Wall of Elvin". Okay, so that's a big bag of malarkey, but the Rogue Valley is learning about it. Last month we showed you two photos of his wall under construction. He is still working on it, but at the same time he has created another curved wall on the slope behind it. The result is a two-level terrain for Loren Synder's "Cat Country" and the ground between the walls will eventually be covered with grass. Those who can recall how this former weed-covered, rocky ground slope used to look can appreciate Elvin's hard work and creativity.

Under the routine maintenance stories I have been blessed by having new member Bruce Kelly helping me catch up with routine and emergency repairs. Bruce learns fast and isn't afraid of a little hard work. [He thinks track maintenance is fun. He'll learn. Ha! Ha!] We've worked hard to indentify and fix those locations where future sun kinks are a possibility.

Just recently we pulled off the rubber mats over the track leading to the garden railway for tie inspection and replacement. We replaced about 40% of the ties (which were original ties from 1981) and straightened the alignment. Nearby we found where a heavy piece of machinery (probably the lift crane used by the cell tower workers) missed the paved crossing and bent two parallel rails. We'll fix that at a later date.

We've already discussed a few projects we won't fix until after the season closes in October. One will be to replace all the original long ties on Black Widow Bridge. The second will be to completely pull out one of the switches in front of the Thomas & Friends car barn, remove the "noticeable dirt hump" and gopher wire underneath, and reinstall the switch on a level alignment.

Art Turner is keeping his "grease monkey" knuckles busy by making sure our club's fleet of locomotives are well tuned and regularly serviced. This also includes our two golf carts and riding lawn mowers. He even finds enough time to keep his locomotive and mine in great running order. Thank you, Art.

Rocky & His Friends sounds like a 1960s adult cartoon television show. We have our own cartoon show when our Signal Department is out and about. Rocky, his wonderful wife Billie, Dean Koepfer, and Phil Babcock are not people to take failure as an option when we depend so much on our block signal system. With an average of 1,000 train movements a month during our operating season, which has endured quite a long spell of very hot weather this year, problems with insulated rail joints being bridged on account of rail expansion is a real problem. Fixing broken or missing bond wires and short circuits is a normal day's work for them. They often shrug off my suggestions for solutions... as well as they should have. One time I fixed the button on the electric switch and soon thereafter the garage doors in the fire station next door would go up and down each time the button was pushed.

**POTLUCK PICNIC PIG-OUT** No one went home hungry after eating dinner at our Aug. 31<sup>st</sup> annual Railroad Park Potluck Picnic. An estimated crowd of around 100 members and guests from all five Park clubs came ready to eat when we saw all the wide variety of great delicacies they brought with them. As host for the event our club provided 100 pieces of fried chicken, all the soft drinks and bottled water, and paper plates and plastic ware for guests that didn't bring their own.

I knew we were going to be blessed when I saw SOLS member Laura Turner bring a small truckload of her yummy deviled eggs. She prepared all the filling at home and stuffed the eggs at our beanery. (She didn't trust her goofy "lead foot" husband David with delivering trays of prepared eggs without spilling them). Laura also brought her famous "Friday night slide-video night" homemade cookies.

There was ham, Bavarian roast beef, scalloped potatoes, numerous salad and desert dishes and so much more. Even Art Turner brought two gallons of his famous baked beans. (He toned down the spicy sauce for this dinner because he wanted to have friends be able to talk to him afterwards.) Yes, we had a spread that couldn't be beat.

During and after dinner the Live Steamers provide train rides, and the Medford Garden Club had their layout in full operation. Riding the trains after the sun went down and seeing our trackside signal lights breaking the darkness is a great experience. The garden railroad looked special as the setting sun highlighted their bridges and waterfalls.

Thank you to all who sacrificed their time by helping to set up the tables and clean up afterward. Special thanks go to George & Terri Schroeder, Mary Wooding, Art, Mary, David & Laura Turner. I'm sorry if I left out anyone. It was a long night.

**ON THE MEND** We're happy to report that Donna Herzog is doing very well after suffering a small stroke. If having a stroke wasn't bad enough, she was also going through a bout of the shingles when the stroke hit her. But Donna is a tough 'ol gal and she'll get through it all. She thanks you for all your prayers. They meant a lot!

**ODDS AND ENDS** Besides helping me with track maintenance, and being the president of the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club, Bruce Kelly is exploring new ways to make our club more interesting. The first thing he did was take his “walk behind measuring wheel” and correctly measure our track layout footage. About six years ago I did the same thing, but since that time we have added new routes and removed unneeded trackage. Bruce’s measurement will be more up to date and accurate.

For maintenance and identification purposes Bruce has assigned numbers to the many switches we have. The numbers would be shown in a future layout map and/or timetable, plus it would aide is correctly telling us exactly which switch needs mechanical attention. We’re trying to find a good method where each switch will have an identifying number stamped or tagged on it that will hold up in our weather extremes.

Another of his projects is creating an actual SOLS Timetable, complete with station names, mileage, routes, signal and switch locations, and much more. Using desk top publishing this could be assembled and printed into a pocket-friendly “employees timetable”, perhaps complete with a revised rule book. It’s an interesting idea.

Bruce and I discussed another idea we both think would be fun. That is having a replica of a Train Order Board like was used at thousands of railroad stations. It would be posted at a prominent place at our station for the public to see. Once the design is made we could have small plastic signs with names and locomotive numbers used as train numbers made to hang inside. Or we could use the old blackboard chalk as railroads did. It might look like this.

<b>SOLS RAILROAD</b>			
<b>Date: <i>April 28, 2013</i></b>			
<b>Train No.</b>	<b>Engineer</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
#256	<i>Colclasure</i>	<i>Layout Round Trip</i>	<i>On Time</i>
#805	<i>Turner</i>	<i>Layout Round Trip</i>	<i>On Time</i>
#3725	<i>Johnson</i>	<i>Layout Round Trip</i>	<i>Late As Usual</i>
#8192	<i>Nix</i>	<i>Layout Round Trip</i>	<i>On Time</i>
#255	<i>---</i>	<i>Cancelled</i>	

All these ideas are to make our little train operation a bit more like that of a real railroad. We’d like to hear from you if you have an idea that may be another added little detail to make our operation just a little more fun for us and the public.



This may not look like very much, but it’s a great improvement for the gals in the beanery. Now we have a complete countertop for holding all cooking pots, BBQ grill, bun warmers, cash register, cabinets holding pins and patches, and so on, with additional storage space underneath.

**ANNUAL RAILROAD PARK POTLUCK PICNIC OF AUGUST 31, 2013**



**1 - Lee Parrish and his purple locomotive.**



**2 - Dave Herzog take a spin around the layout.**



**3 - Time to dish up the grub.**



**4 - The chow line is long, but there's plenty of food.**



**5 - Ralph Hutchens is one of the first in line.**



**6 - Stephanie Hellinga is waiting patiently.**