

# The

October 2010



# Trainmaster

The Official Publication of the  
Pacific Northwest Chapter  
National Railway Historical Society  
Portland, Oregon



## Glacier Park Centennial Excursion by Jim Long

Photos by Jim Long, Ron McCoy, Trent Stetz,  
Arlen Sheldrake and Jim Hokinson

*On Wednesday, July 28, 22 passengers and staff of the Chapter's Glacier Park Centennial excursion gathered in the Metropolitan Lounge at Portland Union Station in preparation for boarding Amtrak train 28, the westbound Empire Builder. As passengers arrived, they picked up their tickets, along with a trip guide, itinerary, a Glacier National Park map, and some other interesting and informative handouts.*

Most everyone arrived early, and enjoyed the first-class amenities while meeting new friends, or getting re-acquainted with old ones. About 4:15, the lounge attendant announced that the train was ready for boarding, and our journey began. We picked up two more riders in Vancouver, and set off up the Columbia River Gorge.

Traveling up the Gorge from Vancouver to Pasco, the Sightseer Lounge car is the place to be. With nearly floor-to-ceiling windows, there's no better way to take in the vast and changing scenery that has made the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area famous. The *Empire Builder* is a well-known part of the landscape itself, and boaters and other water enthusiasts turned and waved when the train passed by. Numerous pelicans were seen in the upper reaches of the Columbia above Boardman, and deer were sighted foraging near the tracks, unconcerned by travelers passing through their habitat.

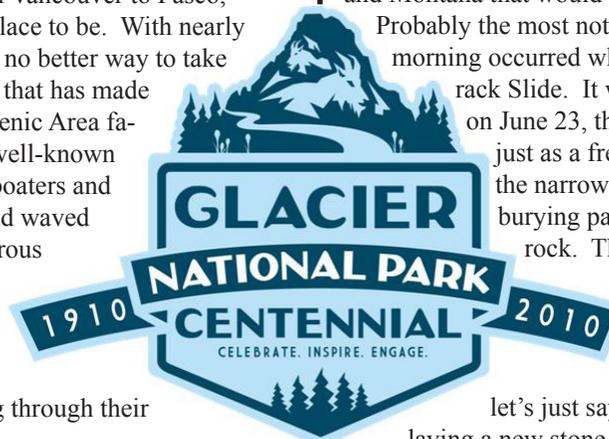
Our train passed SP&S Junction and crossed the Columbia River just before arriving at Pasco, pretty much on time. But elsewhere, the Seattle section of the *Empire Builder* was not faring as well. Mechanical issues with on-board systems prevented Train 8 from making an on-time departure, resulting in the Seattle section arriving about two hours late at Spokane. With most passengers asleep in the 2830 sleeping car on the rear of the Portland section, few noticed that our train was held at Spokane except for the

PNWC Excursions staff, who had roomettes booked on the Seattle sleepers from Spokane east! Fortunately, our itinerary had ample time to accommodate a late arrival, so the delay was inconsequential in all respects except the amount of sleep that staff got. In fact, the delay worked in our favor by giving us morning daylight through parts of Idaho and Montana that would not otherwise be seen.

Probably the most notable and timely sight on Thursday morning occurred when we passed through the Tamarack Slide. It was here, barely one month earlier on June 23, that a massive cliff face gave way just as a freight train was passing through the narrow cut below, derailling 16 cars, and burying part of the train under 20 to 40 feet of rock. That no injuries resulted is amazing, considering what could have happened had the tons of rock fallen only seconds earlier. Although the clean-up was well under way,

let's just say that if you've been thinking about laying a new stone walkway in your garden patio, I know where they've got some extra.

Mid-way between Libby and Whitefish, Montana, we also had a rare opportunity to pass through the 7.01-mile Flathead Tunnel in daylight! Sadly, only the most discerning passengers could appreciate the difference. Soon we were approaching Whitefish, traveling along the edge of Whitefish lake. Slightly before pulling into the station, the train paused for a bit, giving us a good look at the turntable and the west end of the yard. Whitefish is a service stop for



the *Empire Builder*. Conductors work through from Spokane back to their crew base at Shelby, Montana, but engineers change at Whitefish, and the station stop is a popular time for travelers to step off the train and stretch their legs after an overnight trip.

I took advantage of the cellular phone coverage at Whitefish to phone ahead to the tour bus operator to let them know of our adjusted schedule. From the hotel's standpoint, however, no change was needed, since we had planned our itinerary to allow extra time. Everything was in good order, so I re-boarded the train and found a seat in the Sightseer Lounge. Whitefish has the most passenger boardings of any station in Montana. The train was quite full when we highballed, and the lounge car was buzzing with passengers waiting for the curtain to go up on some of the most spectacular scenery on any rail journey in the United States.

After passing the town of Columbia Falls and the shuttered aluminum smelter, the *Empire Builder* crosses the South Fork of the Flathead River, snakes through a narrow pass into the Bad Rock Canyon near Coram, and follows the southern boundary of Glacier National Park for nearly 70 miles. Glacier National Park was established by Congress with President Taft's signature in 1910 and was the premier tourist destination along the Great Northern Railway. West Glacier, or Belton as it was originally known, was the original gateway to Glacier Park, and it is no coincidence the Great Northern completed the Belton Chalets in 1910, the same year Glacier became a national park. The Belton



One of only two ever produced, this 1930s treasure has accumulated hundreds of thousands of miles in over seventy years of travelling throughout the US. And despite being taken out of service by some major frame damage a couple years ago, this Depression-era classic is once again travelling the highways and back roads, including Glacier National Park. But hey, enough about Mom. The bus is pretty neat, too!

Chalets still stand today as the oldest of the Great Northern Railway lodges in Glacier.

In its infancy, Glacier Park was wilderness bordered by railroad tracks, with few significant roads as we would think of them today. Transportation grew up around the railway and the waterways of the park. The proximity of Belton to Lake McDonald meant that passengers could alight from the train, stay overnight at the Belton Chalets, and then travel by stagecoach to the steamboat launch at the village of Apgar on the south shore of Lake McDonald. From there, visitors enjoyed a scenic lake cruise to Lake McDonald Lodge near the mouth of Snyder Creek, where they could either stay at the Lodge, or travel further into the back country via horseback. You can still travel by horseback from Lake McDonald to Sperry Chalet to enjoy the Glacier back country experience.

Departing eastward from Belton Station at West Glacier, the train traveled along the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, occasionally passing through short tunnels. A keen-eyed observer can still spot some remaining signs placed by the Great Northern which point out the names and elevations of distant peaks, though vegetation is close to overrunning most of the signs. On our trip, we saw several rafting parties who appeared to be enjoying themselves as they floated down the gentle whitewater of the Flathead. The line climbs gradually higher in the river valley as it works its way eastward, deeper into the Rocky Mountains.

Not long after we reached Essex, near the southern tip of the Park, we were traveling over trestles more than



Passengers gather in the Metropolitan Lounge at Portland Union Station before departure.



Above: A statue of "Rocky" greets passengers outside the Whitefish, Montana station. Right: The Great Northern "Bruck" at Whitefish. Front half bus, back half truck, hence "Bruck." Used to carry passengers, baggage and express between depots and towns not on a railway line. Below: The last of only seven NW3 diesels constructed, the 1942-vintage #181, has been beautifully restored for display at Whitefish.



of the park, we were traveling over trestles more than a hundred feet above the river, and through snowsheds cut into the sides of steep valley walls.

The trestle crossings and the classic horseshoe curve at Blacktail gave folks a good photo opportunity to take pictures, or just appreciate the beauty of the scenery and terrain. Just east of the summit at Marias Pass, two moose were sighted wading in a shallow marsh on the south side of the tracks. Soon we arrived in East Glacier, Montana, and received a good Montana welcome in the form of a brief but marvelous thundershower. We took shelter inside the depot, and enjoyed the downpour while we collected our things

and loaded everyone and their luggage into two waiting vehicles. Soon we found ourselves westbound on US Highway 2, paralleling the track we had just traveled by train, which gave us an even greater appreciation of the trestles and snowsheds. The Izaak Walton Inn is probably without peer for any fan of railroads in general, let alone a Great Northern Railway historian. Other than the archives of the Great Northern Railway Historical Society, few collections can rival the variety of advertising, memorabilia, photographs and other artifacts of the Great Northern and Rocky Mountain railroading in general that can be found there. The Izaak Walton Inn has four floors of paintings, photographs, advertising calendars, photographic prints, and posters depicting everything from Great Northern steam to an SP&S 4-6-6-4 to

GN diesels and speeders to the classic Native American portraiture of Weinhold Reiss. I recommend that anyone staying there give themselves at least a half-day just to explore the Inn and grounds, which include five caboose suites plus the new and exceedingly popular GN 441 locomotive suite. After we enjoyed lunch with a trackside view in the Izaak Walton's restaurant, we adjourned to the hotel's conference room to listen to a historical presentation by lifelong Montana resident John Chase and author Carol Guthrie. John spent many summers in Glacier Park as a boy, working or taking pictures, some taken with his old Kodak Brownie. His presentation on the early construction of the original Great Northern alignment through Kalispell and over Haskell Pass showed not only why the line was chosen, but also why it was abandoned in favor of the later alignment through Whitefish and Troy, Montana.

Carol Guthrie, author of "All Aboard For Glacier: The Great Northern Railway and Glacier National Park," gave us a glimpse of the splendor of Glacier National Park through a photo presentation that included both modern and historical photography of the Park's natural beauty. Especially fascinating were the 1930s-era photographs showing the proposed route of Going-to-the-Sun Road, and the monumental engineering obstacles which the rugged terrain presented.

On Friday, we got a first-hand look at Going-to-the-Sun Road, thanks to Sun Tours and our excellent guide, Jeremi-



Left: A tour bus full of happy travelers! Below: Dick and Corli McGrath at the Garden Wall Overlook, just west of Logan Pass.



ah. We left the Izaak Walton Inn early in the morning and traveled west from Essex on US Highway 2 to the West Glacier entrance to Glacier National Park and the little village of Apgar.

In the early 1890s, pioneer Milo Apgar built rental cabins on the shore of Lake McDonald to cater to the Great Northern passenger trade, and the village still bears his name. Folks like to stop at Apgar for an ice cream or a cup of coffee and maybe a Park map from the National Park Service information center. Apgar also has a campground nearby, a couple restaurants and a motel, along with outfitters and other small shops. Mostly, Apgar has a great lakefront view!

Our next stop was Lake McDonald Lodge, the only lodge in Glacier Park that was not built by the Great Northern. George Snyder built the original Glacier Hotel, which was a humble structure with a few outlying cottages. Around 1914, a new owner built a larger structure on the site, which operates today as Lake McDonald Lodge. The lobby features a high ceiling with windows to create a light, open space, and many game trophies lend a distinctly Western feel. Because the lodge originally welcomed guests arriving by steamboat, the lodge's street side of today is historically the back side of the hotel, and the front faces the Lake.

Leaving Lake McDonald Lodge, we traveled along Avalanche Creek and into the heart of Glacier Park and Going-to-the-Sun Road. The scenery from this road is simply amazing. Heaven's Peak, Bird Woman Falls, Mt. Gould, Mt. Clements and Mt. Reynolds are just some of the awesome sights that loom closer and closer as the road ascends toward Logan Pass, 6,646 feet above sea level. Just prior to the Pass, we saw two mountain goats: a nanny and her kid.

At Logan Pass, we stopped to enjoy a morning snack and toured the National Park Service visitor center. On display were recent photos of the snow removal work that must be done every summer to open the road for the public. The one that caught my eye showed a heavy shovel with not a bucket but a claw. The machine appeared to be used for knocking huge accumulations of ice and snow off of the

cliffs above the road, so that the material wouldn't fall off its own weight as it melted. That photo, showing the road clearly impassible at the time, was dated June 11, a scant six weeks prior to our visit.

Descending from Logan Pass into the eastern side of Glacier Park, we made two more scenic stops, the first of which was Sun Point, at the upper end of Saint Mary Lake. This was the site of one of the Great Northern's back country chalets, which was known as Going-to-the-Sun Chalet. One story I heard said that after it passed into private hands, the new caretaker found it too troublesome to restore and maintain against the Montana elements, and he bulldozed it off the rock outcrop on which it stood and into the lake below. The site still offers a commanding if somewhat windy view of the glacial Saint Mary valley.

A few miles down the shore of the Lake, everyone got to take their best shot at capturing one of the Park's classic postcard views: Wild Goose Island on Saint Mary Lake with the mountains of the Continental Divide in the distance. Once the shutters stopped snapping, we climbed back aboard the tour van and headed straight for lunch!

St. Mary, Montana is a small but well-visited town at



The game room at the Izaak Walton Inn.

the eastern entrance to Glacier National Park. It was apparent from the RVs, motorcycles, cars and even bicycles here that St. Mary is a popular food, gas and rest stop. After a tasty lunch and even tastier dessert of either pie or ice cream, we departed for our next stop of Many Glacier Hotel.

At the time of its completion, Many Glacier Hotel was the largest hotel anywhere in Montana. With its spectacular alpine view of Mt. Gould, Swiftcurrent Lake and Grinnell Peak jutting skyward on the opposite shore, Many Glacier is the spot that earned Glacier Park the nickname of "The American Alps." Many Great Northern advertisements used photos of Many Glacier Hotel, Swiftcurrent Lake and Swiftcurrent Falls.

One of John Chase's greatest contributions to visitors of Glacier National Park is the series of over 40 interpretive historical displays which John maintains at the East Glacier train depot, the Glacier Park Lodge in East Glacier, and in the lobby of the Many Glacier Hotel. Since our brief stop here would be our only visit to Many Glacier, everyone made sure to view John's excellent exhibits. John's displays were placed near the lakeside picture windows, and the view of the lake and Grinnell Peak was irresistible. Even though the weather was a tad blustery, just about everyone had to go outside onto the hotel's deck for a first-hand look at the Lake and the mountains. Finally, after a long day of sightseeing, we returned to Essex and our cozy accommodations at the Izaak Walton Inn.

From the start of our tour, we knew we wouldn't be able to see all of Glacier National Park's one million acres in a single tour, even a 10-hour tour. But even though we still had a day on our own in East Glacier and a marvelous train ride home to look forward to, at the end of our Grand Tour of Glacier National Park, as we enjoyed a hearty dinner in the Dining Car Restaurant, we were absolutely certain of two things: that there was no other place like Glacier National Park; and we knew we'd be back.



Railroad photos and memorabilia festoon the walls and surfaces of the Izaak Walton Inn. The proximity of the BNSF mainline makes the site a railfan's nirvana.



# Glacier Excursion Potpourri



# ConnectOregon III Projects Approved

The Oregon Transportation Commission has approved 41 multimodal projects totaling \$97,138,844 as recommended by the Final Review Committee who submitted a prioritized list from the 81 submissions. ConnectOregon is aimed at improving the state's multimodal connections by funding non-highway projects (rail, marine/ports, aviation and public transit).

Eighty-one applications requesting a total of \$201,462,646 were first reviewed by their respective advisory committees as well as the regional Area Commissions on Transportation and a specially created Portland area committee. The final Review Committee, made up of 26 volunteers from each of the modal and regional committees, industry groups, and other stakeholders, met for two days to evaluate the modal and review committee recommendations.

ConnectOregon I and II, passed in 2005 and 2007, each authorized \$100 million in lottery-backed bonds for multimodal projects. The 2009 Oregon Legislature authorized \$95 million for the ConnectOregon III program and \$5 million for rural airports.



The following are the 17 rail related approved projects with their ranking and funding:

RANK	APPLICANT	PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT
2	Union Pacific RR	Barnes Yard Bypass	\$5,070,186.00
3	Port of Coos Bay	Railroad Rehabilitation	\$7,799,976.00
6	Portland & Western RR	Columbia River Corridor Upgrade (Phase 2)	\$4,769,592.00
8	Union Pacific RR	Albany Central Traffic Control	\$5,190,024.00
10	Prineville Railway	Freight Depot & Intermodal Facility	\$2,124,808.00
12	Albany & Eastern RR	Lebanon M-Line Rehabilitation	\$2,593,947.00
13	City of Portland & PDC	Portland Streetcar Relocation	\$1,958,651.00
14	Cross Creek Trucking	CCT Rail Hub (Rogue Valley area)	\$ 361,512.00
19	Teevin Bros Land & Tbr	Rail-to-Barge Facility (Rainier)	\$3,680,533.00
20	Port of Portland	Terminal 4 Rail Upgrade	\$1,047,083.00
22	Portland & Western RR	Banks Rail Connection	\$2,281,785.00
26	Willamette Valley RR	Bridge Repair: Pudding River & Zoliner Creek	\$ 640,000.00
31	P C Energy	Recondition Rail Siding for Biodiesel Facility	\$ 434,700.00
32	Wyoming Colorado RR	Malheur Jct Wye Upgrade	\$ 27,100.00
35	Albany & Eastern RR	Sweet Home Branch Tie Rehabilitation	\$2,675,489.00
40	Wallowa Union Rail & Sumpter Vly Machine Works	Transportation Hub & Park and Ride Lot	\$1,000,000.00
41	Gilliam County	Shutler Rail Siding	\$ 624,800.00

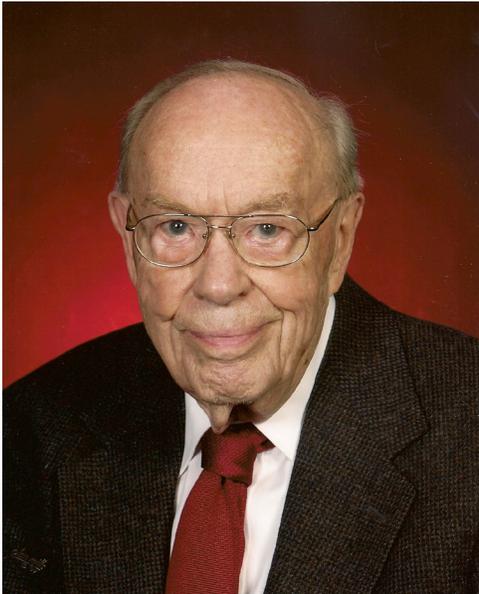
(Source: [www.oregon.gov/odot](http://www.oregon.gov/odot); August 25, 2010)

## New Oregon Pacific Railroad Power

Photographed on August 25 on the way to the Oregon Pacific Railroad in Milwaukie, the OPR #1413 stopped by the Brooklyn Roundhouse for a ride on the turntable to get it faced in the right direction for OPR operations. The #1413 started life in 1959 as a GMD-1 built by GMD in London, Ontario, Canada, for Canadian National as CN #1045. More information about the #1413 can be obtained from: [www.oregonpacificrr.com](http://www.oregonpacificrr.com). OPR sent EMD SW-8 #602 (former OP&E #602) and OPR #803 (former T&NO #13) to Western Rail in Washington State as part of this acquisition.



# The Man Who Helped Transform Spokane and Railroading...



## Robert Woodling Downing

*Rest In Peace*

September 18, 1913 – August 2, 2010

Robert W. Downing, “Bob,” “Grampy,” died August 2, 2010 from complications following surgery. He lived 96 years, a long and fruitful life, having devoted himself to his family, his work, his church and his community. He is survived by: his three children, Nancy, Robert and Susan; their spouses; five grandchildren and spouses; and five great-grandchildren. His Spokane family includes Richard and Susan Mathews and sons, and Virginia Harger.

Born in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, Bob graduated from Mercersburg Academy and Yale University. He married Mary Mathews in 1935. At his retirement in 1976, Bob was the Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer of the Burlington Northern Railway.

Bob and Mary moved to Spokane upon his retirement which was filled with great service to Mary in her illness, as well as to the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Rockwood Retirement Community, the Lilac Society for the Blind, the Alzheimer’s Association, the Great

Northern Historical Society, and the Northwest Museum of American Arts and Culture. He is remembered for his modest good nature, fine mind, and willingness to give financial expertise, but especially for his friendship. As father, grandfather, uncle, mentor, advisor, friend, Bob will be treasured in grateful memories.

Bob was instrumental in the 1970 merger of the Great Northern; Northern Pacific; Chicago, Burlington & Quincy; and the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway that created BN, a predecessor of BNSF. Many historians have suggested that without his diplomatic skills, the merger might never have come to fruition. In 2004, Bob reflected on the merger: “We went out of our way to ensure everybody in our companies understood that this was not a takeover, it was a merger of equals, that everybody would be treated equally, and that we respected the way they were doing things.”

His railroad career began in 1935 on the Pennsylvania Railroad after graduating from Yale University with a civil engineering degree. He went to work for the GN in 1938 as assistant to the superintendent at Whitefish, Montana, and worked his way up, with time out for military service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, eventually retiring from BN. He served as president and chief operating officer from 1971 to 1973, and as vice chairman and chief operating officer from 1973 to 1976.

As chief operating officer, Bob suggested to the BN board of directors that a line be built between Gillette, Wyoming, and Orin Junction in the Powder River Basin to serve the proposed low-sulfur coal mines. In an interview with Larry Kaufman, author of “Leaders Count: The Story of BNSF Railway,” Bob recalled that meeting with the board: “Some of those board members asked some pretty pointed questions, but in the end they approved....After the meeting Lou (Lou Menk, CEO and chairman) and I were breathing our sighs of relief. He said, “You know Bob, I hope this works, because if it doesn’t you and I are both going to be looking for a job.”

Last September, he visited the Joint Line to view the fourth mainline track at Logan Hill. In an interview with “Trains Magazine” he said, “I didn’t have the slightest idea in 1974 that it would be so busy. I figured that ultimately we would have a double-track railroad from Gillette to Orin Junction.”

Though Bob stepped down from the board of directors in 1979, he continued to be active in rail historical societies and would frequently advise BNSF executives. Said BNSF Chairman, President and CEO Matt Rose: “I was honored to have called Bob a friend, and on numerous occasions I sought his counsel. Bob’s contributions to our railroad and the industry are immeasurable. He truly had a hand in shaping our company as we know it today. He was a great leader and a wonderful mentor, and we will miss him.” A road on the BNSF campus in Fort Worth is named in his honor.

Bob helped broker the railroad land trade in downtown Spokane that made Expo ’74 a reality. On the Expo land deal, he related: “A delegation of four Spokane people had an appointment with John Budd, chairman and chief executive of Burlington Northern. Budd said, ‘Bob, these people have a project going. You take care of them.’ We had plans to move the old Great Northern operation off Havermale Island (in downtown Spokane). They asked for the land. The land would have sold for a lot of money, but the railroad thought this was something we could encourage, so we did a trade. The piers for the new bridge over Latah Creek had to be in High Bridge Park, and we also needed some land near Greenwood Cemetery. This trade enabled (Expo President) King Cole to go to the International Expositions people and say, “We have the space for Expo.”

Spokane's Riverfront Park occupies 100 acres of land and water with a rich and varied history. Spokane Falls and the surrounding land has long been a gathering place for people. Native Americans gathered and fished at the falls. In the late 1800's, pioneers settled here and started the city of Spokane. The railroad industry fueled the city's growth and rail yards covered Havermale Island, the present site of Riverfront Park. In 1974, Spokane hosted Exposition '74, "The World's Fair." In preparation for Expo '74, the Spokane River was cleaned up, the rail yards were removed, and the Great Northern Railroad Depot on Havermale Island was demolished. The clock tower is all that remains of the 1902 depot.

Ed Berntsen recalls: "I had the privilege of both working indirectly for Bob Downing during the early years of BN from 1970 onward, and of awarding him his NRHS 25-year pin as a member of the Inland Empire Chapter NRHS in Spokane, Washington while on layover in July 2009 at Whitefish, Montana on the eastbound leg of SP 4449's trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota and Owosso, Michigan."

A memorial service was held on August 23 at St. Stephens's Episcopal Church. Donations may be made to St. Stephen's, the Rockwood Residents' Foundation, the Northwest Museum of American Arts and Culture or a charity of your choice.

[This obituary was compiled from the following sources: *Spokesman-Review* August 15-16, 2010; *BNSF News* August 5, 2010; *Spokesman-Review* October 2008; Riverfront Park, History, Arts & Culture, [www.spokaneriverfrontpark.com](http://www.spokaneriverfrontpark.com). Photo provided by Bruce Butler from the Heritage Funeral Home, Spokane.]



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## NOTES FROM A MEETING

Keith Fleschner, President

Pacific Northwest Chapter does many things very well. Here are just a few...

- Excursions. If you weren't able to participate, you have the opportunity to read about a very successful Chapter excursion to Glacier National Park. Jim Long and his team did a wonderful job. By all reports, the people who attended had a great time, and the Chapter realized some much-needed profit.
- Programs and Publications. We documented the excursion story (thanks again, Jim Long, for going the extra mile) not just in print as the lead story in this *Trainmaster*, but also in a membership meeting program given by Ron McCoy in September. I have the opportunity to read what many other rail organizations publish and our members do a great job of producing interesting, professional content, month after month, in the newsletter, membership programs, and our website.

To use a business phrase, these are some of our core competencies and we do them well, thanks to many hard-working members. As with all organizations, we can use more help because there are worthy projects that go undone every month. If you'd like to help, give me a call.

And speaking of help needed...

- Holiday Express is rapidly approaching. Set for December 3-5 and 10-12, the operation will be much as in the past. We need lots of car hosts and ORHF needs many volunteers for non-train duties. Please mark your calendars. Details will appear in next month's newsletter.
- Also, next year's NRHS Convention, *Cascade Rails 2011*, is coming to Tacoma and PNWC is lending a hand. We'll need car hosts and other volunteers for the Convention which runs from June 20-26, 2011.

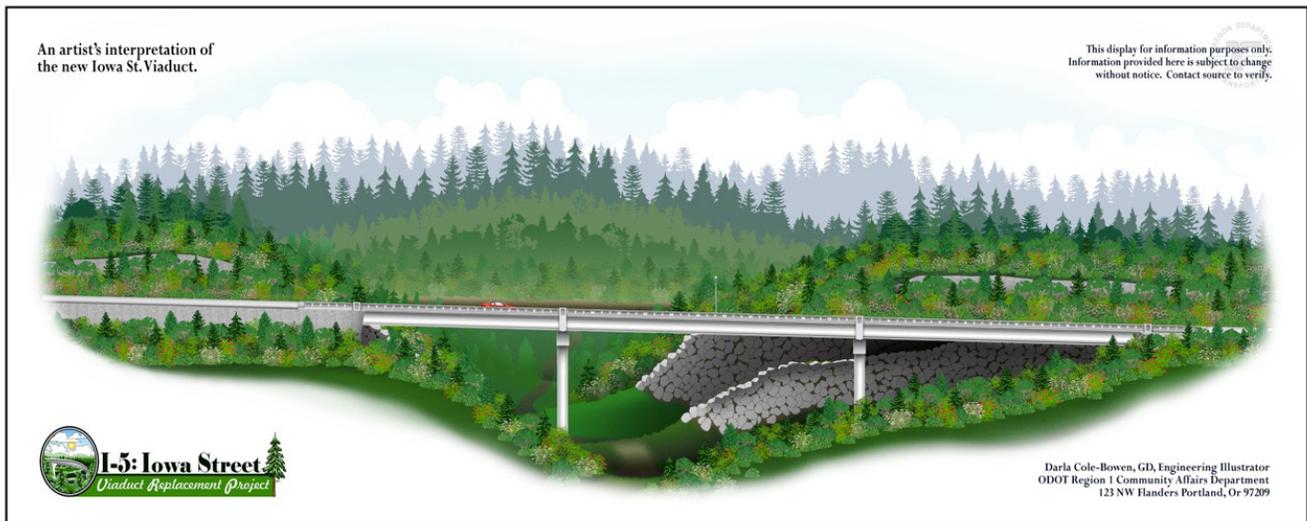
The end of the year is fast approaching and it will soon be time for elections and the annual Train Toys for Tots campaign.

# Relic of Oregon Electric Railway to be Destroyed

By Ron McCoy, Director-at-Large

If you've traveled on I-5 in southwest Portland, then you've passed a large concrete wall built by the Oregon Electric Railway. For many years, the wall was hidden behind a curtain of ivy and moss. Now the wall has been exposed, but its days are numbered. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is preparing to replace a large bridge on Interstate 5 in southwest Portland, known as the Iowa Street Viaduct. The viaduct is obsolete and was not designed to withstand the major earthquakes we now know can occur. To make way for the new bridge, portions of I-5 will be detoured over a temporary bridge, and it is the approaches to this bridge that will necessitate the removal of the wall built by the OE.

The OE chose this route into Portland partly because it was able to acquire the right-of-way from a former streetcar line,



the Metropolitan Railway Company, built in 1889. By February 1890, the steep hillside had slid over the tracks, blocking service until late March. This slide was a harbinger of many more earth movements to follow in the next 120 years. The streetcar line was abandoned by the time the Oregon Electric incorporated in 1906, but the unstable hillside continued to pose problems.

This surviving wall was built in 1913 to protect the newly double-tracked mainline of the OE as it descended the grade into Portland. As passenger service was reduced in the 1920s, the second mainline track was scrapped to save costs. When passenger service on the OE came to an end in May 1933, the OE became a freight-only operation. For the next decade, the route directly from Garden Home into Portland was used only to move the powerful electric freight locomotives to and from the OE electric shops, which were located just north of the west end of the Ross Island Bridge, in an area also now occupied by I-5. With a new electrical shop added in NW Portland, the remaining track from Portland to Garden Home was abandoned on March 22, 1944. By 1948 the tracks and trestles were gone, and a route that once handled 46 trains per day again fell silent, but not for long.

By the early 1950's, the demand on the publicly subsidized roadways was exceeding the capacity of Barbur Boulevard, built in 1935 on the former route



of the Southern Pacific's Red Electric line, just uphill from OE. Funded with federal interstate highway dollars, the Baldock Freeway (which would become Interstate 5) was constructed in 1957, following the exact route of the Oregon Electric as far as the Capitol Hill neighborhood in southwest Portland. The new freeway was built as fast and cheaply as possible, and within a year of opening, new landslides were affecting the freeway. More retaining walls were built, although none quite as imposing as the old OE wall.

Over the past two decades, ODOT has struggled to maintain the Iowa Street Viaduct, resorting to lashing steel I-beams to some of the supports, and constantly working to repair the expansion joints and deck of the towering bridge. (The OE trestle at this site was quite impressive too.) As ODOT began to plan the viaduct's replacement, they began a careful study of the geology and physical challenges they would face.

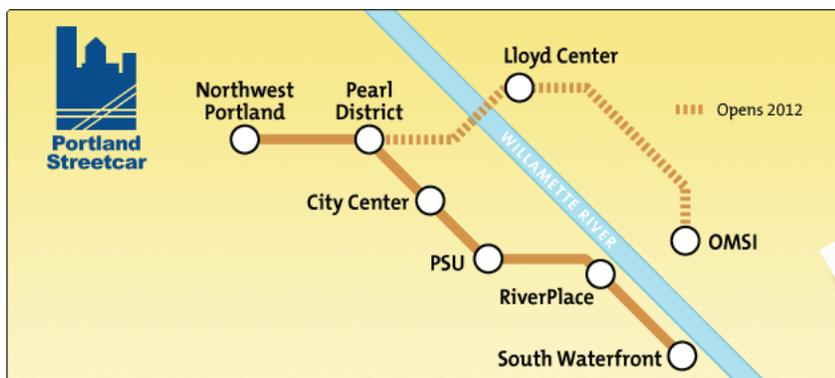
When pre-construction work began, I made contact with ODOT to determine the fate of the wall. It is to the great credit of ODOT that their staff recognized the historic nature of the wall, and had already written a condition into the project's contract that the 1913 date blocks, cast in each upper corner as part of the wall, would be salvaged. Acting on behalf of the Pacific NW Chapter of the NRHS, I set a time to meet with two ODOT employees working on the project. Mike W. Mason is the Community Affairs Coordinator, and Ron H. Kroop is the District Manager with responsibility over this huge project. Mr. Kroop was instrumental in seeing that the two date blocks would be preserved. ODOT first planned to keep both, mostly just to ensure they were saved, but after I met with them, they offered one of the date blocks to the Chapter. Now I must say, I like to see things preserved, but this was 'way outside the ability of the Chapter to store. We had a very difficult time dealing with some old marble slabs in our archives room at Union Station, can you imagine moving a possibly 900-plus pound block of concrete four feet long and 18 inches high?!

I've always found the history of the OE to be fascinating and can see its legacy throughout the Willamette and Tualatin Valleys today, but the general public knows little to nothing about it. It would be gratifying to see the date blocks preserved in a way that fosters learning about the OE.

With the permission of the Chapter's Board, I set about finding a proper organization to receive the date block, and the most obvious to me was the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, located at Antique Powerland. I suggested that the object might make a suitable cornerstone for a new building they are preparing to build, and I'm happy to report that the OERHS is interested in receiving the date block. We'll be sure to provide you with updates.

ODOT anticipated that the old OE wall would be demolished by the end of August, but at the last week of August the wall was still standing. After that, the hillside will be cut back to make way for the temporary move of the freeway lanes. Learning from the past, the slope will be held with substantial new retaining walls. After the new viaduct opens, the retaining walls will be partly buried with the expectation that the freeway could be widened at some future date. Then again, the era of artificially low fuel costs and lopsided public transportation funding can't go on forever. Good ideas have a way of coming around again so who knows, maybe that future expansion might be two sets of rails.

All images courtesy of Oregon Department of Transportation



# PNW SHORT LINES

by Arlen L. Sheldrake

On July 11, the Oregon Department of Transportation, the City of Salem, and Oregon State Parks received a 2010 Transportation Planning Excellence Award in the Livability/Sustainability category from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration for the Union Street Railroad Bridge conversion project. Since reopening May 15, the 100-year-old former railroad bridge over the Willamette River provides a half-mile link for bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems for the community of West Salem. The five-span, riveted-steel, Pratt through truss bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 11, 2006.

Progressive Railroading reports that *Alaska Railroad* has contracted with Kiewit Pacific for the first phase of the 80-mile northern extension between North Pole and Delta Junction. The first phase will include construction of the Tanana River Bridge and a levee near Saicha. Funding includes \$104 million from the U.S. Department of Defense and \$40 million from the state of Alaska. More information: [www.northernrailextension.com](http://www.northernrailextension.com).

One of the projects that the *Port of Tillamook Bay* is proposing for funding from the FEMA disaster declaration from the December 2007 flood that took out their railroad is a grain/lumber rail transload facility on Port property at Buxton. The location is adjacent to Oregon Highway 47 just north of US Route 26. Pending FEMA approval, construction bids will go out in late 2010.

The *Journal of Commerce* on August 25 reported that railcar and barge builder Greenbrier Companies took orders to build new railcars and modify older ones, mostly to meet still-growing demand for high capacity, domestic, intermodal equipment (53-ft double stack well cars). To meet the demand, Greenbrier will add 260 workers at its Gunderson rail plant in Portland, to bring the total employment there to 900, and will shift another 175 out of its sluggish barge business to railcar production. The orders from five separate customers include 1,000 new double-stack cars and refurbishment of 1,100 older and smaller well cars to expand them for 53-ft service. The nearly obsolete 48-ft domestic intermodal cars are being refurbished. Greenbrier has already completed 3,000 upgrades over the last three years.

A *Sound Transit* August 26 news release announced the award of the contract to extend *Sounder* service from East D to South M Streets in Tacoma to MidMountain Contractors, Inc. of Kirkland, Washington for \$40,823,190. This extension of the *Sounder Commuter Rail* service will open in 2012.

The *Port of Coos Bay* is receiving \$7.8 million in ConnectOregon III funds with half going to upgrade railroad swing-span bridges at Cushman on the Siuslaw River near Florence and on the Umpqua River at Reedsport. Much of the rest of the grant will fund repairs to railroad trestles according to the August 25 *Oregonian* article. The article also says that the railroad is scheduled to re-open in spring 2011 after being closed September 2007 due to tunnel issues.

The *Port of Tillamook Bay* Commission on July 26 heard a proposal from Scott Wickert of the *Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad* (OCSR) to partner with the Port for an Oregon Department of Transportation Enhancement Grant. The grant requires a government entity as a sponsor. The proposed grant would be for \$39,500 to move the Tillamook Depot from the current Third Street site to the Port's Industrial Park (former blimp base) for OCSR's use and \$500,000 for structural improvements, including the reconstruction of a portion of the building previously lost to fire. The consensus of the Commission was to not participate in the grant proposal with OCSR. Also noted in the minutes: "The Port cannot run manned trains across the Trask River trestle because it has been deemed unsound." This is in reference to OCSR running passenger trains from the proposed site for the Tillamook Depot on the blimp base north to Garibaldi. (From the August 17-approved minutes of the July 26 Board of Commissioners Special Meeting.)

On August 27, KAST News reported that the long-awaited repairs to the breach near Knappa on the *Portland & Western Railroad* Astoria line are underway. Contractors for the project are Vinson Brothers Construction of Knappa and Nehalem Marine Manufacturing of Nehalem. The repair is expected to be completed the week of August 30. The repair includes a 6-foot wide culvert with a fish-friendly tidegate under the railroad berm in order to allow passage of juvenile salmon that have appeared in the flooded pasture land in the wake of the breach. The berm was breached in a storm during November 2006. This repair is strongly supported by the Port of Astoria as it will return rail service opportunities to their newly acquired industrial space at Tongue Point near Astoria. A September 8 visit confirmed the project is completed and was awaiting the re-installation of rails. (Photos follow this article)

Some interesting information can be obtained from the Association of American Railroads website: [www.aar.org](http://www.aar.org). For instance, click on Railroads and States which brings up a map, click on a state and you get a Railroad Industry Snapshot for that state including car loadings and un-loadings total tons by commodity.

The Oregon Department of Transportation Rail Division released in August their 2010 Oregon Rail Study, 179 pages, 21.38MB: [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/RAIL/Forms\\_Publications.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/RAIL/Forms_Publications.shtml). The Oregon Rail Study is a summary, prepared by David Evans and Associates, Inc., of 13 rail-related technical studies, which were prepared by three independent teams led by David Evans and Associates, Inc., Parsons Brinckerhoff, and Shannon and Wilson, Inc. The technical studies include one on the condition of Oregon's railroad tunnels and one on the railroad bridges.

Oregon's first quiet zone highway rail crossing at NW 9th near Naito Parkway (first crossing north of Union Station) in Portland's Pearl District became operational in July. Two more in the same area at 15th and 17th became operational in August. A fourth in Tualatin will begin construction this fall. (Photo below.)

*Interface, The Journal of Wheel/Rail Interaction*: "This new electronically delivered quarterly journal is devoted to examining the issues associated with wheel/rail interaction and ways in which technology is being used to resolve them on railroads and transit systems around the world." [www.interfacejournal.com](http://www.interfacejournal.com)

On September 2, the Washington State Department of Transportation signed a Memorandum of Agreement with BNSF Railway that sets the framework for the two organizations to deliver rail improvement projects funded by 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) high-speed rail grants. This agreement facilitates moving ahead with \$590 million awarded in High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail improvements to the 466-mile high speed rail corridor in the State of Washington. Among the eleven projects are the Tacoma-Point Defiance Bypass project and a new *Amtrak Cascades* train set.

For those interested in Oregon railroad locations, the Association of Oregon Counties has an interesting County Surveyors section that includes Railroad Maps: [www.aocweb.org/surveyors/default.htm](http://www.aocweb.org/surveyors/default.htm).

Todd Schannuth, developer of the [www.ThemeTrains.com](http://www.ThemeTrains.com) website, reported September 10 that he has expanded the *American Freedom Train* section to over 500 pages. Each of the 138 train display cities now has its own page and he is soliciting pictures to post on these pages. Send to: [TSchannuth@aol.com](mailto:TSchannuth@aol.com).

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## Knappa Breech Roadbed Repaired



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## Oregon's First Hornless Crossing

This photo shows Oregon's first *No Train Horn* grade crossing, located on NW 9th Street near Naito Parkway (first crossing north of Portland's Union Station) which became operational in late July of this year. Two additional similar crossings near this Pearl District location are also being constructed. Notice high rise condos in the background. Presumably, these are the reason for the horn abatement. Crossing changes were funded by the developer and the Portland Development Commission. Only time and experience will determine whether this was a wise decision. Fortunately, train speeds at this crossing are generally modest. We've come a long way from the days when a man on horseback preceded urban trains at crossings to ensure that the buggies would stay off of the track.



# Bragdon Bids Adieu

Metro Council president David Bragdon, who is term-limited, has accepted a position with Mayor Michael Bloomberg in New York City as the director of long-term planning and sustainability. David is a long-time supporter of the Washington Park & Zoo Railway at the Oregon Zoo and is also a long-time railfan.

When asked what he wanted to accomplish before leaving Metro and Portland, David said he'd like to operate the zoo train one last time. On August 31, the Oregon Zoo (with help from Jeff Honeyman) gave David that opportunity as he ran the steamer *Oregon* with invited guests around the Rose Garden loop on a special 4:15 PM run.

David's last day on the Metro Council is September 7, having served in the position of Council President during two terms since 2002. The Oregon Zoo is governed by Metro.

David, in proper attire, is pictured in the cab of the Oregon before the 4:15 departure.



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## AUGUST MINUTES

### Pacific Northwest Chapter – National Railway Historical Society Membership Meeting – August 20, 2010

Meeting called to order at 7:30pm.

Guests – Welcome to two new members, Brian and Lori Hester, who went that went to the 2nd Glacier Park Centennial trip & had fun. Mark Moore brought his mom Elizabeth and his dad Verlen from Meridian, Idaho, Mark's brother Mike from Mulino, Oregon, Richard Thompson, Tracy Brown and Joe McDonald.

Minutes from June 2010. Motion to approved minutes by Ken Vannice. Motion 2nd by Mark Reynolds. Approved by membership present.

Treasurer's report – A new account was opened for a New Home Committee checking account. Last month this was approved by the membership to reauthorize \$10,000 for the 2010 budget, to be overseen by the Executive Committee and to move forward with the New Home Committee project. All accounts balanced to the bank statement last month. Our 990 taxes and Oregon State forms have been mailed/completed.

Glacier Park Excursion Report – Jim Long / George Hickok – We ran two sections for the Glacier Park Centennial Excursion - July 28-August 1, 2010 and August 4-8, 2010. George reported on the expenses and income for both sessions. Jim Long, Ron McCoy, Christopher Bowers, Jim Hokinson and George Hickok helped Jim make these excursions happen. Feedback from some of the participants has said that their experience was the best that they've ever had in all the years of trips that they have taken.

S2 Restoration – Ron McCoy - \$19,132.00 balance currently toward our \$40,000 goal. We are almost to the half way mark for our goal. It is even more important to reach our goal. We have a bid by an Arkansas company that specializes in painting rail equipment that we've been working with for the last year. They are working on other jobs across the country and will be working our request in with their schedule to help reduce the cost. We also got a bid from another local company which was ~\$60K. The plan is when this project would be initiated, if we have not reached our goal, then we would have to tap into the Chapter's reserves to cover the difference between monies raised and cost to paint the locomotive. We are obligated to paint this locomotive and any ideas anyone has to help raise funds, then contact Keith.

Steam-Up – Al Hall – July 24, 25, 31, August 1, 2010, Antique Powerland Museum Association (APMA) attendance this year was 22,304. The Chapter received funds of just over \$300 at this event for the S2 restoration fund.

Jim Hokinson – Please send in your volunteer hours to Jim. This would include helping for the Tacoma Chapter Convention, Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation, etc.

Ron McCoy – Activities – there's an effort to do a second open house for ORHF (Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation), but it wouldn't be at the Brooklyn Roundhouse. The date, time and location are yet to be determined. The thought is to do the open house in the morning and then afterwards do a picnic. More information to come for this event to happen possibly in the next few months. Timing may not allow for inclusion in The Trainmaster so an idea is to possibly do a special mailing or phone blitz to inform the membership. Stay tuned.

Holiday Express 2010 – tickets will go on sale starting October 15, 2010 via TicketsWest. We had approximately 9200 attendees last year and 85% of riders who submitted surveys said they were new riders to this event. December 3, 4, 5, 2010 and December 10, 11, 12, 2010. Ticket prices this year will be slightly higher due to higher operating costs.

Program this evening is the Oregon Electric Railway presented by Mark Moore.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jean Hickok, Secretary.



If you'd like to help restore the Chapter's S-2, make a donation to the restoration fund.

Add your support to this worthwhile project.

Make a gift to the Pacific Northwest Chapter. Then make a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust and claim 100% tax credit. It's that simple. Learn more or donate online at: [www.culturaltrust.org](http://www.culturaltrust.org)

**Oregon  
Cultural  
Trust**

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 200  
Salem, OR 97301  
(503) 986-0088  
CULTURAL.TRUST@STATE.OR.US

## S2 #36 Restoration Fund

**DONORS** **GOAL \$40,000**  
**Golden Spike level: \$1000 and up**

John & Lois Sheldrake♥, James & Valinda Hokinson,  
Autzen Foundation, George & Jean Hickok,  
Arlen & Rita Sheldrake, Gordon Zimmerman,  
Tom Steeves, Misc. Anonymous

**Rail level: \$500 to \$999**

Al & Judy Hall, Darel & Diana Mack,  
Steve & Mimi Cogswell,  
Mark & Carolyn Reynolds

**Cross-Tie level: \$100 to \$499**

Friends of SP 4449, Todd Landwehr, Al Baker,  
Thomas Barrett, Ron McCoy & Christopher Bowers,  
Kent Hutchens, Bill & Teresa Hyde, Roberta Ballard,  
Michael Bryans, Chuck McGaffey, Kenneth Vannice

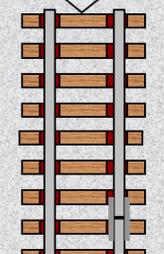
**Tie Plate level: \$50 to \$99**

Doug & Tammy Auburg, Robert Wenzel, Mark Whitson,  
Phil Barney

**Steel spike: \$1 to \$49** Monica Winkley, Thomas Vandegrift,  
Gerald & Olive Schuler, Trent Stetz, Ted Ahlberg♥, Jim Long, Dennis Seacat

♥= In Memoriam

**\$20,342**  
**raised!**  
as of 9-7-2010



### Chapter Officers

President	Keith Fleschner	503.516.9272
Vice President	Mark Reynolds	503.638.7411
Treasurer	George Hickok	503.649.5762
Secretary	Jean Hickok	503.649.5762
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Al Baker	2010-2012	503.645.9079
Ron McCoy	2009-2011	503.310.4811
Christopher Bowers	2009-2011	503.577.0063
Eileen Brazil	2008-2010	503.647.5667
Jim Hokinson	2008-2010	503.635.4826

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# **PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHAPTER TIMETABLE #579**

Board of Director's meetings: October 7 and November 11, Thursdays, 9320 SW Barbur Blvd Suite 200, 7:30 pm (Note address for Board meetings; follow instructions posted on the door for entry.)

Membership Meetings: St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5415 SE Powell Blvd:

**October 15 – 7:30 pm – Program:** *American Streamliner*, video

**November 19 – 7:30 pm – Program:** *Urban Trains*, video

**December 3-5:** Holiday Express, Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation, [www.orhf.org](http://www.orhf.org)

**December 10-12:** Holiday Express, Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation, [www.orhf.org](http://www.orhf.org)

Forward program ideas to Al Baker, 503.645.9079 or [albaker33@comcast.net](mailto:albaker33@comcast.net).

## **NOTABLE NON-CHAPTER EVENTS:**

May 31-October *Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad*, Thursday = diesel, Friday-Saturday-Sunday = steam, [www.mrsr.com](http://www.mrsr.com)

September 30-October 2 *SP Historical & Technical Society* Convention, Sacramento, California, [www.sphts.org](http://www.sphts.org)

October 2 *Train to Trek*, Tacoma Freighthouse Square to Northwest Trek, [www.nwtrek.org](http://www.nwtrek.org)

October 2 *Train Shed Exhibit Building Dedication*, 9:30-11:30 am, Northwest Rail Museum, [www.trainmuseum.org](http://www.trainmuseum.org)

October 16-17 *Fall Foliage & Photographers Weekend*, Sumpter Valley Railroad, [www.svry.com](http://www.svry.com)

October 19-21 *Rail-Volution 2010*, Portland, Oregon, [www.railvolution.com](http://www.railvolution.com)

January 2011 Brooklyn Roundhouse, yard vacated

May 7, 2011 *Amtrak's National Train Day*, Portland, Oregon, stay tuned

June 9-13, 2011 *White Pass Railfan Week*, White Pass & Yukon Railroad, Skagway, Alaska, [www.extra2200south.com](http://www.extra2200south.com)

June 20-26, 2011 *Cascade Rails 2011*, NRHS Convention, Tacoma, Washington, [www.cascaderails2011.com](http://www.cascaderails2011.com)

January 2012 Brooklyn Roundhouse, vacated and steam locomotives moved

## **Pacific Northwest Chapter - Lending Library**

### **OPEN**

**October 16 & 23 (Saturdays); 1 to 4 pm & Mondays 10 am to 12 Noon**

**Union Station Annex, 503 NW Irving**

**[library@pnwc-nrhs.org](mailto:library@pnwc-nrhs.org)**

**503-226-NRHS**

## **MEETING SNACK SIGN-UPS**

All months are available. This is one area where the Chapter really needs your help. To volunteer, please contact Keith at 503.516.9272 or email to: [keithfleschner@msn.com](mailto:keithfleschner@msn.com).

### **PNWC – NRHS MISSION**

To preserve and interpret Pacific Northwest railroad history and historical artifacts for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.

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