

World's Greatest Hobby Train Show

Our RCGRS participated in the train show on February 17-18 and built an operating layout. Many of our members helped set up the modules and volunteered to operate the trains during the show. Several of the members became ill during the show (something they ate?), but the members and helpers kept the trains running.

Editor's Note: The pictures of the layout and show promised the Newsletter editor were never sent in time for this publication. The following pictures were supplied by Christina Brittain.

The large double-track and operating bascule bridge built by Dr. John Stiger was a huge hit with adults and kids alike.



It's all in the alignment... no derailments are going to happen on John Stiger's watch.



Jerry Clark cheers another successful bridge lift.



Dave and Margaret Kookan and Barb Clark share good memories of all the visitors to our membership table and railroad while spectators marvel at bridge lift in background.



The end of the day brings a smile to the face of this dedicated engineer.



Gordon Pisle perked up by afternoon and was back enjoying the trains.



Bud Quinn had a hard time convincing Gordie that there really was a family of mice living in his building.

The Origin of the Caboose

The origins of both the car and the word are surrounded as much by legend as by fact. One popular version dates the word back to a derivation of the Dutch word “kabuis,” which referred to a ship’s galley. Use of cabooses began in the 1830s, when railroads housed trainmen in shanties built onto boxcars or flatcars.

[Editor’s Note: On the CB&Q, the official name for the caboose was “waycar”.]

The Cupola

The addition of the cupola—the lookout post atop the car—is attributed to a conductor who discovered in 1863 that he could see his train much better if he sat atop boxes and peered through the hole in the roof of his boxcar.



Uses for the Caboose

The caboose served several functions, one of which was as an office for the conductor. A printed “waybill” followed every freight car from its origin to destination. The conductor kept the paperwork in the caboose (waycar).



The caboose also carried a brakeman and a flagman. In the days before automatic air brakes the engineer signaled the caboose with his whistle when he wanted to slow down or stop. The brakeman would then climb out and make his way forward, twisting the brake wheels atop the cars with a stout club. Another brakeman riding the engine would work his way toward the rear. Once the train was stopped, the flagman would descend from the caboose and walk back to a safe distance with lanterns, flags, and other warning devices to stop any approaching trains.

Once underway, the trainmen would sit up in the cupola and watch for smoke from overheated wheel journals (called hotboxes) or other signs of trouble.

The Conductor's Home Away From Home

It was common for railroads to assign a caboose to a conductor for his exclusive use. Conductors took great pride in their cars, despite the cabooses many derogatory nicknames, including "crummy," "dog-house," "bone-breaker," "snake wagon," and "hearse." The men decorated their car interiors with many homey touches, including curtains and family photos. Some of the most important additions were ingredients for cooking meals that became a part of American folklore. Augmented with such comforting features, the cabooses served as a home away from the trainmen's home terminals.



Interior View

The brakeman often was the cook for the simple meals that could be prepared on the small pot-bellied stove. If a conductor found a brakeman who could actually cook, the conductor often went to some lengths to keep this man on his crew.

Technology Overtakes the Cabooses

The Beginning of Obsolescence

Cabooses became a uniquely American tradition. Overseas, their use has always been rare, or were eliminated many years ago. Even in the United States, technological change began eliminating the need for cabooses before 2000.



The spread in the 1880s of the automatic air brake system invented by George Westinghouse eliminated the need for brakemen to manually set brakes. The air brakes were soon followed by the use of electric track circuits to activate signals, providing protection for trains and eliminating the need for flagmen. Friction bearings were replaced by roller bearings, reducing overheated journals and making visual detection by smoke an unlikely event.

Trains became longer, making it difficult for the conductor to see the entire train from the cabooses, and freight cars became so high that they blocked the view from the traditional cupola. The increasing heaviness and speed of the trains made on-board cooking hazardous and unnecessary. New labor agreements reduced the hours of service required for train crews and eliminated the need for cabooses as lodging. Cabooses, when used at all, were drawn from "pools" and no longer assigned to individual conductors.

Eventually, electronic "hotbox" and dragging equipment detectors, which would check moving trains more efficiently and reliably than men in cabooses, were installed along main lines, and computers eliminated the conductors' need to store and track paperwork.

The Cabooses' Replacement

Today, the ends of freight trains are monitored by remote radio devices called "End of Train" devices, or EOTs. The small boxes fit over the rear coupler and are coupled into the train's air brake line.



FRED

The EOT radios information to the engineer regarding the brake pressure at the rear of the train, whether or not the last car is moving, and whether or not the flashing red light is working (activated at night by a sensor). The EOT also allows the engineer to set the air brakes from the rear of the train in case the train breaks in two, thus, in an emergency, setting brakes on both halves of the train. Union Pacific RR began using EOT devices in 1984. One of the EOTs is called FRED (Flashing Rear End Device). Some rail crews assign different words to describe FRED which are outside the bounds of this newsletter.

My, How Times And Technology Has Changed The RR!

Up until the mid '60s, the Aurora, IL Division pool crews still had their own assigned waycars. These crews were the last division on the CB&Q with assigned waycars in pool service. They voted pool waycars down a couple times in special votes at the lodge meetings. (For you non-CB&Q fans, the CB&Q railroad had "waycars" instead of cabooses.)

What this means is that when a Conductor won the bids on a pool turn, a waycar was assigned to his use

on that turn. It was exclusively his until he vacated that turn or was bumped. This system meant that for the C&I pool when the turn was "in" at Cicero the waycar laid around the yard and on the caboose track until the turn was called for an outbound trip and the waycar was placed onto that train. In the by-gone eras, the crew could, if they chose, stay in the waycar while in Cicero. Crews would often sleep in their waycar until the first dinkie (commuter train) arrived, for example.

Upon arrival at Savanna, the waycar would be pulled off by the Savanna switch engine and the outbound one tacked on. The inbound Aurora waycar and crew would get a gentle "kick" down to the waycar tracks which were near the rip track and Roundhouse. Remember Savanna was the ideal yard to kick cars in as it had the most perfect gentle westward grade. You could switch for hours and not run by the switch.

Just the opposite of Eola. There were three waycar tracks, one for each division operating out of there. Imagine trying to sleep in a waycar with engines passing to and from the Roundhouse, other waycars leaving and arriving and the general crashing of cars being switched in the yard. Not to mention the oppressive cold or heat, humidity and bugs (shad flies) that Savanna was infamous for.

One recurring complaint in the BRT files was the practice of spotting cars for the rip track so that they blocked the breezes from blowing across the waycar tracks in summer. Don't recall any complaints in the file about this in the winter months. Another complaint was rough switching of the cars and unannounced switches. Just think about the amount of time one of the yard jobs at Savanna spent each shift shuffling around waycars, and multiply that by each home and away terminal on the system to understand why management wanted to go to pool waycars that went on at the trains origin and came off at the final terminal. How much easier it was at Cicero to just grab a track full of clean, serviced waycars and tack one on each outbound train rather than making sure each one went on the right track.

Locals had assigned waycars until the waycars totally disappeared. It was a convenience to be able to leave your grip, rain coat, lantern, etc. in the way-

car rather than drag it back and forth each trip. But this also led to many claims for missing items, especially when “your” waycar got used in a crisis to fill in for someone else’s that went for service, etc. By the time “your” waycar showed back up at home, you often didn’t recognize it. Also, when this happened, the entire train crew was entitled (under the schedule) to an arbitrary time slip of 2 hours for switching between waycars.

Assigned waycars often had their job name, number or some nickname chalked on them to aid in identifying them. Look at the photos in the CB&Q picture books of the waycars closely and you can pick this out.

Today the FRED gets tied on the rear end and away you go.

Leo, Member, Burlington Route Historical Society

New Train Ride

The Chelatchie Prairie Railroad in Yacolt, WA began running a restored 1929 ALCO 2-8-2T steam locomotive in January 2007 as part their tour operations. This locomotive operates on special weekend days during the year, such as; Valentine’s Day, ST. Patrick’s Day, and other scheduled events.

The 8 mile round trip, from Yacolt to Lucia, is through beautiful North Clark County, and stops at Moulton Falls County Park: along the way to Moulton Falls you will see the Lewis River from a cliff side vantage point and experience the darkness of a 330 foot tunnel carved out of solid rock.

This steam locomotive is in addition to their diesel locomotive roster. While their restored ALCO S2 is their main operational locomotive, there are other diesels in various stages of restoration. Fares, schedules, and reservations can be found at www.byxc.com or call 360-686-3559.

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Schedules & Timetables

Make sure you check the calendar on our Website at <http://www.rcgrs.com/> for the most up-to-date schedules and timetables.

Anyone interested in having an Open House or sponsoring an event, please contact **Christina Brittain**. The following events so far for 2007 are listed below.

March 10, 2007, Saturday, 11:00 a.m.: Tour 700 Steam Engine. The Roundhouse is located behind Tri-Met office at 17th & Holgate in Portland.

Contact Person: RCGRS member Bob Beveridge
Cell phone: 503-260-9958

Time: Train leaves at 11:00 AM sharp. Come early so you won’t get left behind.

Cost: \$10 per person payable as you board the train, which covers your lunch and donation for fuel to run the train. (Only previous RSVP recipients have lunch ordered.)

Cost without lunch, ride only: \$5.00 payable (adults and children pay same price) when you board the train

Friends, family, and children: You are welcome to bring all your friends and family. Costs and RSVP requirements apply to everyone. CHILDREN MUST BE AGE 6 OR OLDER TO RIDE THE TRAIN.

Trip details: Train will go by Oaks Park to OMSI on the river and return. Trip time is about 2 hours.

Other activities on that day: Everyone who rides the train can tour the Train Yard / Round House and board the great 4449, too. Other engines may also be available for touring that day.

Place: Meet at OPR Shops, Portland OR just off Ochoco Street. To get there, go south on McLoughlin Blvd. toward Milwaukie. Watch for new bright orange bicycle overpass just past Tacoma Street where you will see a sign for Ochoco Street. Turn down Ochoco Street to McBrod Street where you will see the train cars and engine waiting for you. No physical address available. Call Bob Beveridge if you are still unsure how to find it. He should have his cell phone with him that day if you get lost. (Or Google 4400 SE 17th)

After trip, to get from train to Roundhouse, go east on McLoughlin Blvd. to 17th, right on 17th to Center St., right on Center St. through trackyard, and you will see it.

March 25, 2007, Sunday, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.: Open House at the Larry Staver large indoor layout. Member Penny Walker is coordinating this event and will confirm details in mid-February. Not a potluck; beverages and light snacks provided. Penny can be reached at 503-646-6671 or pennelifer@hotmail.com

April 15, 2007, Sunday: Open house at Dave and Margaret Kookan's, 7542 Carolina Lane, Vancouver, WA 98664; 360-695-0389 or dmkkookan@pacifier.com. More details later.

May 12, 2007, Saturday: Open house at Ron and Marlene Bacon's, 31262 SW Laurelview Road, Hillsboro, OR 97123; 503-628-2300 or mbacon@centrificata.com. A Board meeting is scheduled before the open house time and a quarterly meeting is scheduled after the meal.

May 26, 2007, Saturday: Open house at Dennis and Carolyn Rose's, 18325 SW Jaylee St., Hillsboro, OR 97007; 503-649-4904. Hot dishes or salads are welcome. Dessert will be supplied.

11:00 a.m. – Alaska Group update

Noon – Social time

1:00 p.m. – Lunch

June 16-17, 2007: “Railroads In The Garden” RCGRS Summer Tours.

July 15, 2007, Sunday: Open house at Gary & Jonette Lee's. 34140 SE Hurlburt Road; Corbett, OR 97019; 503-695-2550 or gary@constructavision.com.

August 4, 2007, Saturday, 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.: Open house at Ron Dunham, 5044 NE Alberta Court, Portland, OR 97218, 503-287-9803. Hamburgers and hotdogs supplied. Beverages and side dishes appreciated.

August 12, 2007, Sunday: Open house at Quinn Mountain (Bud Quinn & Christina Brittain), 812 Canyon Creek Road, Washougal, WA 98671; 360-837-3711. Main meat dish and beverages supplied. A-C Bread; D-H Side Dish; I-O Salad, P-Z Dessert. A Board meeting is scheduled before the open house time and a quarterly meeting is scheduled after the meal.

September 8, 2007, Saturday: Open house at Mike and Terri Greenwood's. 7007 N. Borthwick; Portland, OR 97219; 503-225-9373.

October 2007: Open (Halloween theme)

November 2007: Annual RCGRS Banquet

December 2007: Tentatively Jan and Rae Zweerts.

Editor's Note: The deadline for the April 2007 newsletter is March 25th, 2007.