



# ARKANSAS RAILROADER



VOLUME 36 NUMBER 11 – NOVEMBER 2005



Valley & Siletz #5 and #7, a pair of 70-ton road switchers, in Kopplein, Oregon in September 1970. (*Jim Shaw photo, collection of Russell Tedder*)



### 2005 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

<b>PRESIDENT</b> - Robin Thomas, 10980 Rivercrest Dr #26, Little Rock AR 72212-1412 (501-225-1952)
<b>V-PRESIDENT</b> – Mark Silverberg, 10524 Helm Dr., Mabelvale AR 72103, (501-455-5050), onetrackmindtrains@hotmail.com
<b>TREASURER</b> - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826), wwalker@aristotle.net
<b>SECRETARY</b> - Jackie Roach, 4023 S Shackelford #142, Little Rock AR 72204 (501-225-6818)
<b>EDITOR</b> - Ken Ziegenbein, 1023 Claycut Cir, N Little Rock AR 72116-3728 (501-758-1340), ken@trainweather.com
<b>NRHS DIRECTOR</b> -Tom Shook, 1716 Alberta Dr, Little Rock AR 72227-3902 (501-225-8955)
<b>PHOTOGRAPHER</b> - John C. Jones, 117 Cottonwood, Sherwood AR 72120-4011 (501-835-3729), johnphotonut@aristotle.net
<b>HISTORIAN</b> - Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington Ave #31, N Little Rock AR 72114 (501-945-7386)
<b>BOARD '05</b> - Leonard Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)
<b>BOARD '06</b> - Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Dr, Little Rock AR 72205-2769 (501-664-0232)
<b>BOARD '07</b> - Fred Fillers, 29009 Bandy Rd, Little Rock AR 72223-9720 (501-821-2026), cfillers@aol.com
<b>BOARD '08</b> - Ron Esserman, 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754 (479-331-2030), shay473@cei.net
<b>BOARD '09</b> - Douglas Harley, 840 Horseshoe Mountain Rd, Paris AR 72855-5543 (479)-963-2800, dharley2@cswnet.com

The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization of railroad and train enthusiasts that was formed in 1969. We are also the Little Rock Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. We meet on the second Sundays of most months at 2 p.m. Anyone interested in trains is welcome!

Dues to join the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB are currently \$20 a year, which includes the monthly Arkansas Railroader newsletter. If you'd like to join the NRHS through our club (thus being a member of the Little Rock Chapter NRHS and national NRHS), you must pay \$22 a year more, bringing the total to \$42 a year for both. Dues are always payable on January 1st of each year, but you may pay at any time (membership will extend through the following year).

To join or renew, send your name, address and phone number plus dues to the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB, PO BOX 9151, NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119. Call 501-758-1340 for information. The newsletter editor's email address is: trains@trainweather.com The Arkansas Railroader is put on the Web monthly, and that address is: <http://www.trainweather.com>

The next meeting/gathering of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13 at the newly renovated Bald Knob, Arkansas depot, now home to Arkansas Traveler Hobbies. Time will be 2 p.m. Bald Knob is about a hour's drive north of Little Rock on US 67/167.

In December, we'll have our Annual Christmas party, Saturday December 10, 2005 at 6 p.m. at our usual meeting site, Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church in Little Rock. It will be catered by Franke's Cafeteria like years past. Cost is \$15 per person, payable by noon on December 6 to Walter Walker (8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826), [wwalker@aristotle.net](mailto:wwalker@aristotle.net))

**THINK ABOUT YOUR 2006 DUES** – It's almost time for Arkansas Railroad Club dues again. They will remain the same \$20 a year as they have been now for several years. This \$20 means you are members of the Arkansas Railroad Club only which includes the monthly *Arkansas Railroader*. If you'd like to join the National Railway Historical Society (and thus be a member of the Little Rock Chapter NRHS), you must pay \$22 more (NRHS dues went up to \$22 from \$20). So...pay a total of \$20 for club only or \$42 for local chapter dues AND NRHS dues. If you can afford it, I do recommend joining the NRHS – their Bulletins have been improving for years and there's always great stories (including some by our very own Gene Hull and others). Very entertaining railroad-related reading. Fill out the form elsewhere in this newsletter.

Look on your mailing label on the envelope – if it says 2005, your dues are due. Some of you have paid several years in advance, so check your label.

**NEW MEMBER:** Tom Sandlin, 7500 Highland Dr, Mabelvale AR 72103, 501-261-1199, [high.green@earthlink.net](mailto:high.green@earthlink.net) – Welcome Aboard!

**OFFICERS/BOARD NOMINATIONS FOR 2006** – The Nominating Committee has nominated the following for Arkansas Railroad Club officers and Board members for 2006. They will be elected at the next club meeting, which is Sunday, November 13, 2005 at the restored Bald Knob, Arkansas depot in Bald Knob.

**2006 OFFICERS:** PRESIDENT-Fred Fillers; VICE-PRESIDENT-John Hodkin, Jr.; SECRETARY/TREASURER (**note:** these positions have been combined for 2006)-Walter Walker. **OTHER**

**2006 POSITIONS:** EDITOR-Ken Ziegenbein; NRHS DIRECTR-Tom Shook; PHOTOGRAPHER-John C. Jones.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** 2006-Jim Wakefield; 2007-Ken Ziegenbein (filling Fred Filler's place); 2008-Ron Esserman; 2009-Douglas Harley; 2010-Robin Thomas.

**FROM LYNN GAINES, JR** – “Attorney J. M.. “Jack” Kyle III, V.P., Union Pacific Railway, entered retirement in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on September 30, 2005. Kyle was well known as the person handling UP Foundation Grants in this area. He started railroading as a summer intern while in college. He is a relative of former Arkansas Governor Frank White. Kyle also has other relatives living in South Central Arkansas.”

### **BOOK REVIEW – by Jim Johnson, former SP Public Relations Head, now retired**

**THE TOOTIN' LOUIE: A HISTORY OF THE MINNEAPOLIS & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY.** By Don L. Hofsommer. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401: University of Minnesota Press, 111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290, 2005. xvi + 374 pp. \$38.95.

Seldom is there produced an historical account by an individual who truly possesses, as well as displays through the book's pages, a devotion to his topic. Such is the case with Don Hofsommer's long-anticipated annal of the history of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway: *The Tootin' Louie!* Hofsommer traces the post-Civil War beginnings of its existence as “The Albert Lea Route”, through its acquisition of the Iowa Central, and its transition to “The Peoria Gateway”, to its premature demise, coolly calculated by its C&NW competitor, in the early 1960's. Frank P. Donovan Jr's 1949-publication of “Mileposts on the Prairie” was an excellent rendition of a then-operating, solvent and formidably-competitive M&StL, but Hofsommer's account was developed with “The Peoria Gateway” nearly 4 ½ decades in its undeserved grave, making access to historical records, accounts, photos and artifacts far more difficult. Add to this the fact that the M&StL, in memoriam, had one of the shortest-lived historical societies (mid-to-late 1970's). But, true to form, Hofsommer considered these factors as challenges rather than insurmountable obstacles.

The M&StL was unique in so many ways, among them being the numbering system for its diesel locomotives (bearing the month and year of each unit's acquisition), as well as its practice of using a standard paint scheme, incorporating green, yellow, red and black, on its road units, but purchasing Alco demonstrator switchers in whatever color scheme they already had on them.

Reviewing Hofsommer's masterpiece provided gratification for one whose grandfather toiled as a machinist at Oskaloosa shops until his retirement, but a week after the reviewer's birth at Oskaloosa in July, 1941. Although Homer M. Johnson, originally an Iowa Central employee until the IC's acquisition by and merger into the M&StL, was caught up in the Shop Strike of 1922 (“Feelings at Peoria were likely the hardest, but at Oskaloosa and elsewhere the worst that happened was that those on strike did not talk to those who stayed on the job”, observes Hofsommer), was re-hired (with his seniority now listed below that of the “scabs”) following the February, 1923 collapse of the strike, he would be forced to travel to Cedar Lake Shops in Minneapolis for two years, returning for brief visits with his wife and two young sons every other weekend on his employee's pass (which his grandson still possesses) before he could finally, again, hold a third-trick assignment at Oskaloosa. So much for union loyalty! The reviewer shed unconsolated tears when passenger trains 7 and 8 were abolished on May 31, 1958, only a month prior to his annual summer vacation rides to Albia, Eddyville, Albert Lea or wherever he could afford a day trip aboard M&StL gas-electric motor car-powered, fluted-side stainless steel-equipped passenger car consists (again uniquely, M&StL motor car numbers carried a “GE” prefix and each was named for a community served by “The Immie”); and still possesses a brick, embossed with its “Oskaloosa” firing location mark, from the platform of the demolished depot at London Mills, Illinois, where he spent a year teaching and coaching children of both the miners from the mines at Middle Grove as well as those of the M&StL agent at Rapatee.

Hofsommer captures every memory, preserving it for those who never saw the magnificent depot at Oskaloosa or the massive, overhead truss steel bridge across the “Father of Waters” at Keithsburg, Illinois (a scene depicted on one of M&StL's large, full-color calendars in the early 1950's).

The reviewer wishes the souls of those who sacked, pillaged and otherwise hastened the demise of the “Missing & Still Lost” an eternity on a subterranean, non-stoker steam firemen's roster from which there is neither promotion nor retirement. And he wishes author Hofsommer many more successes equal to “The Tootin' Louie”. None, however, can ever expect to be superior, simply because of the subject matter. Long live the M&StL – if only in the fond memories of those who knew her!

- Jim Johnson, Overland Park, Kansas

## WANTED: FOR SALE OR TRADE

The following is for those who want to find certain railroad-related items, information, or want to sell or trade such items with other railfans. We reserve the right to refuse listings if deemed inappropriate. The Arkansas Railroad Club is not responsible for misleading ads.

**HOBBY SHOPS IN ARKANSAS** - Here are a few Arkansas hobby shops that you might use when ordering any commercial books or commercial railroad stuff that you see listed in these Want Ads. Here, in plain text form, are those hobby shops: ONE TRACK MIND, 10524 Helm Dr, Mabelvale, AR 72103, 501-455-5050, onetrackmindtrains@hotmail.com, <http://www.arkansasweb.com/onetrackmind/> \*\* ARKANSAS TRAVELER HOBBIES, 400 East Market Street, Bald Knob, AR 72010, 501-Railfan (724-5326) \*\* MICKEY'S MODEL WORKS, Village Mall, 759 Hwy 62 E Ste 77, Mountain Home, AR 72653, 870-424-5765 \*\* HOBBY SHOP DELUXE, 119 North Front St, Dardanelle AR 72834, 479-229-5126, hsd@cox-internet.com \*\* HOBBY SHACK, 1200 John Harden Dr, Jacksonville, AR 72076, 501-982-6836 \*\* TRACTIVE EFFORT HOBBIES, 3061 N. Market Ave. #7, Fayetteville, AR 72703, (479) 571-8722 \*\* EUREKA SPRINGS MODEL RAILROAD COMPANY, 127 Spring St., Eureka Springs, AR 72632 479-253-2525, <http://www.railroadtrain.com/>

**FOR SALE** - Tom Duggan has MOPAC Employee Timetables for sale 1940-50s. All divisions except Texas. Tom Duggan, 479-756-1901.

**WANTED** - Help with Nashville, Arkansas peach industry spur lines. I am doing research on the once vibrant peach industry centered at Nashville, Arkansas. As the peaches were shipped via rail, I wonder if any of your members might have detailed information about the spur lines in Howard and Hempstead Counties. If so, I would appreciate if you could put me in touch with the person. Best regards, Jim Jackson, Texas A&M University - Texarkana, Jim.Jackson@tamut.edu (Or, just write to Ken Ziegenbein, Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock, AR 72119)

**RAILROAD HISTORY HELP WANTED FOR STATE CAPITOL DISPLAY** - DAVID WARE, State Capitol Historian, Arkansas Secretary of State's Office, wants Arkansas railroad memorabilia, photos, stories, etc., for a State Capitol display on Arkansas Railroad history. This display will be done in the Spring of 2006 from mid-January through May. If you have anything to loan please contact him either by phone (501-683-3187) or preferably email him at: david.ware@sos.arkansas.gov

The Arkansas Railroad Club's official coordinator for this project is Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Dr, Little Rock AR 72205-2769, 501-664-0232. If you have any questions about what to donate and how secure the site will be, or other questions, contact Jim.

## RAILROAD ABANDONMENT PROPOSALS

The address of the Surface Transportation Board is: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, Washington DC 20423. The STB phone number for abandonment procedures (Office of Public Services) is: 202-565-1592. If you contact them, it would be handy to use the Docket Numbers. Their Web address is: <http://www.stb.dot.gov> if you'd like the complete listings.

These abandonment proposals have been printed in the Federal Register or have come directly from the Surface Transportation Board. They will go in effect unless one of the following occurs: 1) an offer of financial assistance is received; 2) a request for public use of the land is received (for instance, rails-to-trails); 3) petitions to reopen the case is filed. Railroads, before they can file these "notices of exemption under CFR 1152 Subpart F," must certify that 1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; 2) any overhead traffic can be routed over other lines; 3) no formal complaint filed by a user is pending and; 4) environmental reports, historic reports, transmittal letter, newspaper publication, and notice to governmental agencies have been met. Even though approval is granted for the railroads to abandon, it may be months or years before track is actually taken up.

**GEORGIA - CSX** - to abandon a 0.85-mile portion of its Southern Region, Atlanta Division, Gainesville Midland Subdivision, between milepost GGM 39.2 and the end of the track, milepost GGM 40.05, in Hall County, GA. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Code 30501 and is within the station of Gainesville, GA. A final decision will be issued by December 14, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 658X, decided September 8, served September 15, 2005)

**CALIFORNIA - SANTA CLARA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY** - to abandon all common carrier obligations over a 1.19-mile line of railroad, extending from milepost 16.30 to milepost 17.49 in Santa Clara County, CA

(Industrial line), and a 2.77-mile line of railroad, extending from milepost 2.61 near Paseo Padre Drive to milepost 5.38 near Grimmer Boulevard in and near Fremont, Alameda County, CA (Milpitas line). A final decision will be issued by December 16, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-980X, decided September 12, served September 16, 2005)

**WEST VIRGINIA - CSX** - to abandon a 15.12-mile line of railroad on its Southern Region, Huntington Division East, Jarrolds Valley Subdivision, between Jarrolds Valley Junction, milepost CLP 0.0, and Clear Creek, milepost CLP 15.12, at the end of the track in Raleigh County, WV. effective on October 22, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 661X, decided September 16, served September 22, 2005)

**IOWA - GENERAL RAILWAY CORPORATION D/B/A IOWA NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD - DENIED**

**REQUEST TO ABANDON** - To abandon 17.05 miles of track between milepost 237.25 (Engineering Station 1593+95) west of Lake Park, IA, and milepost 252.3 (Engineering Station 886+81) west of Braaksma, IA, in Dickinson and Osceola Counties, IA. IANW states that there has been no local traffic on a portion of the line since it was purchased in 2001, and that there has been no local traffic on the remainder of the line since December 21, 2003. Under 49 CFR 1152.50(b), “[a]n abandonment or discontinuance of service or trackage rights is exempt if the carrier certifies that no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years . . . .” Because there has been local traffic on the line during the 2 years prior to the filing of the notice, the line does not meet the 2-year out-of-service requirement and the proposed abandonment does not qualify for the exemption at 49 CFR 1152.50. The notice will therefore be rejected. (STB Docket No. AB-1067X, decided September 23, served also on September 23, 2005) (*My notes...the railroad wants to abandon this line but they messed up the details and have to refile*)

**IOWA - CHICAGO, CENTRAL & PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY** – To abandon a 0.79-mile line of railroad, the North Cedar Rapids Spur, extending from milepost 87.74 at 16th Street, N.E., to milepost 88.53 near 20th Street N.E., at the end of the track, in Cedar Rapids, Linn County, IA. Effective on November 11, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-314 (Sub-No. 3X), decided October 5, served October 12, 2005)

**OKLAHOMA – BNSF - STILLWATER CENTRAL RAILROAD, INC. (SLWC)** – For BNSF to abandon, and for SLWC to discontinue service over, approximately 2.95 miles of railroad between milepost 539.96 and milepost 542.91 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, OK. Effective on November 12, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 430X), decided October 3, served October 23, 2005)

**WISCONSIN – WISCONSIN CENTRAL LTD** - To abandon a 4.62-mile line of railroad, from milepost 235.84 on the Pembine Sub (formerly milepost 249.38 on the old Shawano Sub), near Crandon, to milepost 231.22 on the Pembine Sub (formerly milepost 254.00 on the old Shawano Sub), in Forest County, WI. Effective on November 12, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-303 (Sub-No. 29X), decided October 6, served October 13, 2005)



## ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS



### LRWN BRIDGE SINKS

(*Bigelow, Arkansas*) – Got a call from John C. Jones of our club about noon on Friday, October 14 saying that a Little Rock & Western bridge near Bigelow had sunk two feet the evening before as the LRWN train was heading west toward Perry. Apparently, the two locomotives made it across and many of the cars, but the last 4 got stuck on the bridge as it sunk into the soil. It was estimated that major repairs would take 4-5 days. Meanwhile, LRWN’s motive power, that usually switches the UP North Little Rock yards were stuck on the west side of the bridge. UP sent a locomotive to the site. This line is the former Rock Island ‘Sunbelt’ line.

**Question:** “What are you doing in retirement, Ken?” – **Answer:** “I’ve been embedding TrueType Fonts in my PDF Distiller.” (*This usually short-circuits farther questions – of course, if you know much about computers, you know what I’m talking about with that answer.*)

**18 ARKANSAS PROPERTIES LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES** (*even though these particular structures are not railroad-related, they do sometimes have depots listed and preserving history is always interesting and I thought I’d share this listing at least this one time.*)

(*Little Rock*) - Eighteen properties in 15 Arkansas counties have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the country’s official list of historically significant properties, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Director Ken Grunewald announced October 12.

The newly listed properties are:

- \* **Herring Building at McRae in White County**, a 1933 structure designed in the early twentieth-century commercial style of architecture
- \* **Melvin Chrisco House at Damascus in Van Buren County**, a 1947 structure built by African-American contractor Silas Owens Sr. in Owens' trademark Mixed-Masonry style
- \* **Scotland Cemetery near Junction City in Union County**, containing burials dating to 1842
- \* **Judd Hill Cotton Gin at Judd Hill in Poinsett County**, a ca. 1930 brick cotton gin
- \* **Duncan House at Harrison in Boone County**, an 1893 Queen Anne-style residence
- \* **Cleburne County Farm Cemetery near Heber Springs in Cleburne County**, containing burials dating from 1896 to 1936 of people who died at the county "poor farm"
- \* **Old U.S. 79 Kingsland Segment at Kingsland in Cleveland County**, a two-lane concrete highway built in 1938
- \* **Jerome Elementary School #22 at Jerome in Drew County**, a 1930 Craftsman-style structure
- \* **Richard and Mettie Ealy House at Twin Groves in Faulkner County**, a 1942 Mixed-Masonry design by African-American builder Silas Owens Sr.
- \* **Dennis and Christine Garrison House at Greenbrier**, a 1951 Owens Mixed-Masonry design
- \* **Merritt House at Greenbrier in Faulkner County**, an Owens Mixed-Masonry structure erected in 1948
- \* **Reuben W. Robins House at Conway in Faulkner County**, the 1929 Spanish Revival-style home of a state supreme court justice
- \* **Singleton Family Cemetery near Charleston in Franklin County**, containing burials dating to 1870
- \* **Malvern Rosenwald School at Malvern in Hot Spring County**, a 1929 African-American school built with assistance from the Julius Rosenwald Fund
- \* **Lone Star Baptist Church at Redfield in Jefferson County**, 1901 Plain Traditional-style home of African-American congregation
- \* **Prescott City Jail at Prescott in Nevada County**, a ca. 1912 reinforced-concrete structure
- \* **Arkansas Highway 57 Bridge at Stephens in Ouachita County**, a 1928 Warren pony truss bridge
- \* **Shelton-Lockeby House near Murfreesboro in Pike County**, a wood-frame dog-trot house built in 1905.

**OTHER DAYS REMEMBERED** – From Lynn Gaines, Jr comes the following remembrances of South Arkansas in Cleveland County: **65-years ago, September 1940** – “The Western Union Telegraph Co. has a crew of workmen stationed here while their lines in this section are being rebuilt.” (*Lynn writes that he remembers his father flashing his flashlight beam on the shiny new lines!*) \*\*\* **70-years ago, September 4, 1935** – “The Cotton Belt depot and the W. D. England home at Kedron were destroyed by fire. The railway station had not been used by the company for several years.” \*\*\* **107-years ago, March 7, 1898** – “The construction of a new depot at this place is now in progress. Rison, being the county seat and a rising town, deserves a first-class depot.”

#### **UNION PACIFIC HIRING IN PINE BLUFF/NORTH LITTLE ROCK**

Two Union Pacific job ads, sent to me by Lynn Gaines, Jr., are offering good-paying railroad jobs in the Pine Bluff and North Little Rock areas. 1) Several Boilermaker positions – inspect the condition of boilers and related equipment (among many other duties). Of interest here is that one of the minimum requirements is a minimum of **two years experience on steam locomotive boiler repairs!** 2) Diesel Mechanic \$19.75 per hour. Diesel mechanics are responsible for the inspection, repair and maintenance of the mechanical components on diesel electric locomotives.

To apply, go to the Union Pacific website: [www.up.com](http://www.up.com) and click on ‘Jobs at UP.’ You can also call UP at 800-877-5634.

#### **DEADLY TEXARKANA TANKER EXPLOSION**

(*Texarkana, Arkansas October 15, 2005*) - Hundreds of homes were evacuated October 15 (Saturday) after seven empty train cars and a tanker containing propylene derailed in a Union Pacific switchyard in Texarkana about 5 a.m., exploding in a ball of fire and leaving a plume of smoke over the south end of the city. Reports say it was dark as night in the south part of town. One person was killed when a nearby home was destroyed and at least seven people went to hospital emergency rooms with complaints of respiratory problems. At least two

homes and several vehicles were destroyed in the quarter-mile area surrounding the accident. Seven hours after accident, the propylene tank continued to burn but the fire was under control and the smoke had thinned out.

After arriving from Omaha, Neb., Union Pacific spokesman Mark Davis said none of the railroad crews were injured. Davis said a Union Pacific train coming from Chicago hit the back of another freight train in the rail yard, causing the eight cars to derail. The train was headed for Laredo, Texas, when it hit the back of the other Union Pacific train, which was coming from Pine Bluff and headed for Harlingen, Texas, according to Davis.



## GENERAL RAIL NEWS



### UP BUYS 98 LOW-POLLUTION LOCOMOTIVES

(*Vancouver, Canada*) - RailPower Technologies Corp. has sold 98 low-pollution, road-switcher locomotives to Union Pacific Railroad for use in Texas operations. Vancouver-based RailPower said on October 14, 2005 that Union Pacific will use \$81 million it was awarded recently by the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan "towards the purchase" of the energy-efficient vehicles. The RP20 series of switchers was designed to reduce high fuel usage in road and branchline switching operations where locomotives use up to three times the amount consumed by yard switchers. It is estimated that the new RailPower road switchers will provide fuel savings of 20 to 40 per cent with reductions in nitrogen oxide and particulates of about 80 per cent.



**UP 3985 on tour in Boise, Idaho at the depot September 24, 2005. (Dianne Fernstrom photo)**



## AMTRAK NEWS



### EAGLE DERAILMENT

(Blackwell, Missouri, September 27, 2005) – Amtrak's Texas Eagle carrying 103 people derailed in eastern Missouri after striking boulders on the tracks from a rockslide about just before midnight on Thursday, September 28, 2005. About 20 people sustained minor injuries.

According to news reports, the train was moving slowly through a winding area near Blackwell, about 50 miles southwest of St. Louis, when it struck the rockslide. Jefferson County Sheriff Glenn Boyer described the boulders about half the size of a car hood on the track. However, the train's engineer, who spoke with me and others at the Little Rock train station on October 2, said the train wasn't moving slowly at all. In fact he said it was moving 60 mph and that the boulders described in the press as half the size of car hoods were in fact a single much larger rock that the engine plowed through, thus breaking it up into smaller chunks that witnesses saw later. He said the lead locomotive did a 180-degree turn. He was bruised in quite a few places and limping, but he at least was able to be at the station and do some paper work.

The cause of the slide was not known, but the area had received about 1 2 inches of rain earlier Wednesday. The engine (which did a 180-degree turn) and its six passenger cars left the tracks. While the engine ended up on its side, the relatively slow speed may have prevented the cars from overturning. The injured passengers were taken to a hospital while others were taken by bus to a firehouse in nearby De Soto to spend the night. Most of those injured suffered neck and back pain.

### AMTRAK RESUMED NEW ORLEANS SERVICE OCT 9

The first passenger rail service from New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina suspended all operations began Sunday, Oct. 9, with the departures of the City of New Orleans to Memphis and Chicago and the Crescent to Atlanta and New York. The Sunset Limited will not resume service to New Orleans until 2006.

### 10-YEAR SUNSET SABOTAGE ANNIVERSARY

Exactly 10 years ago - on October 9, 1995 - under the glimmer of a full moon, Amtrak's Sunset Limited snaked through the Gila Bend Mountains about 60 miles southwest of Phoenix. The train, heading to Los Angeles from Orlando with 268 passengers, descended toward a trestle at Quail Springs Wash - the only significant curve along 100 miles of track. Rolling along at 50 mph, engineer Gean Haffey checked the 12 trailing cars in a mirror. His assistant, Gary Lawrence, looked ahead through a windscreen. They passed a green light indicating the rails were safe ahead. Most of the passengers were nodding in their seats or dozing in sleeper cars.

At 1:23 a.m., the desert stillness was broken by a grinding crash as engines jumped the tracks. With a sickening scream of torn metal, both engines and eight cars left the rails, some of them toppling down an embankment. Mitchell Bates, a porter, was killed. Seventy-eight people were injured, a dozen seriously. The Sunset Limited had been sabotaged for maximum damage. Those responsible pulled 29 spikes that held the tracks in place. They used jumper cables to reconnect wires so that a red-light warning system failed.

The perpetrators also left notes - "Indictment of the ATF and FBI" - decrying law enforcement sieges at Waco and Ruby Ridge. They compared federal agencies to Nazi secret police and identified themselves as "Sons of the Gestapo."

The sabotage and wreck is still an unsolved mystery and authorities are again asking for help. If you can help solve this, FBI Special Agent Scott McKee, the case agent, wants your help. He said he's hoping a new round of publicity will coax someone with information to call the FBI at (602) 279-5511. (*The Arizona Republic, Oct 9, 2005 by Dennis Wagner*)

## ACTIVITIES OF OTHER RAIL GROUPS

Blank this month.

To join/renew membership in the Arkansas Railroad Club (Little Rock Chapter National Railway Historical Society), fill out the form below. **Annual dues are \$20** for local dues (plus **\$22** for the national NRHS dues if you want to join the NRHS through our chapter, a total of \$42 for both local and national dues). Send to: Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Send check, made out to the Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. Call 501-758-1340 for more information or visit us on the web at <http://www.trainweather.com> and click on *Arkansas Railroader*. Our email is [trains@trainweather.com](mailto:trains@trainweather.com).

## REMEMBERING OLD DEPOTS

*P.B. Wooldridge*

The Pine Bluff Sub-Division of the Cotton Belt, 152 miles in length, was completed in 1882. When I hired out as a telegraph operator in 1937 the railroad was in bad shape due to the Great Depression which followed the stock market crash of October 1929. The railroad filed for bankruptcy on December 12, 1935.

Old wood railroad stations were scattered up and down the line, often only five or seven miles apart. Employees were cut to the bone, and many stations were closed, some to re-open only during the fall harvest of cotton.

Buddy Gaines had hired out back in 1923. When Buena Vista was re-opened in the 1930s, Buddy was sent there. Searching thru the old depot, including the attic, he found stacks of old train orders dating back in the 1880s, also other old records such as a Monthly Merchandise Received Report dated 1908 which he gave me.

As I traveled the length of the railroad on the Extra Board, I realized that these old depots were historic relics and each had played an important role in the history and development of this section of Arkansas. Today nearly all the old depots are gone but fortunately a few remain as railroad museums.

Back in their heyday the click-and-clack of the telegraph instruments and the passenger trains were the only outlet to that vast world outside. The most important element in the American Experience was the railroad. They made it possible for what some called our Manifest Destiny.

*(Written February 10, 2002)*

NOTE...Two stories are missing from this PDF version: 1) Gene Hull's story about fish hatcheries on special rail cars in the 1880s called "A Real Fishy Railroad Story." The other one missing is a 9-page obit of the 102-year-old Marshall, Arkansas depot of the Missouri & North Arkansas which burned in August 2005. This was written by Jim Wakefield. These are both in the 20-page printed edition of the Railroader.