

RAIL REPORT

February 2020 • No. 712



Rocky Mountain Railroad Club • Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation

Morris Abbott's Rail Rambles 1936–1955

Presented By Bill Jones

February 11, 2020 • 7:30 PM

Bill Jones presents highlights of Morris Abbott's rail adventures in Colorado (and the east) between 1936 and 1955. An avid photographer, Morris took black and white, Kodachrome and 16-mm color movies of various Colorado railroads during his annual vacations to Colorado.

Morris developed his interest in railroads as a boy growing up along the UP mainline in Schuyler, Nebraska, where his father managed a large flour mill. Starting in 1907, the family took summer vacations to Pike's Peak where he developed a life-long interest in the Cog Railway. Later marrying and moving to the east, he took his first

(Continued on Page 2)

Please join us for an enjoyable, educational evening at Christ Church at 2950 South University Boulevard (University Boulevard at Bates Avenue) where there is plenty of off street parking at the rear of the complex. Please bring a guest. **All programs are intended to provide an educational experience on railroading. The general public is welcome to attend. There is no charge for this meeting.**

RMRRRC 2019 Calendar

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| March 10, 2020 | Monthly meeting and program. |
| April 14, 2020 | Monthly meeting and program. |
| May 12, 2020 | Monthly meeting and program. |
| June 9, 2020 | Monthly meeting and program. |

Due to circumstances beyond our control, programs and dates are subject to change without notice. Please contact Dave Schaaf with program ideas at ds5280@comcast.net or 303 988-3456.

Morris Abbott's Rail Rambles 1936–1955



Rails were already being pulled in Cimarron as outside frame Consolidation 361 comes back from the wye with the Club's consist for the final Black Canyon run on May 30 1949. – Morris Abbott photo from the Bill Jones collection.

“railfan” excursion in 1936 with the Railroadians and in 1937 photographed the unique Bridgeton and Harrison 2-foot gauge in Maine.

Starting in 1940, Morris began taking his family to Colorado for summer vacations in the Colorado Springs area. In August 1942 he made a marathon trip bussing overnight to Ridgway to ride RGS Goose #4 to Durango, then taking the San Juan Express to Alamosa the next day. The next week he took the entire family on the Midland Terminal's unique gas-mechanical Motorcar 101 to

Cripple Creek and back and also photographed the daily Midland Terminal ore trains.

1944 saw another trip to the Ridgway yards, then riding the Silverton with true mixed consist, hauling tank cars, dynamite, and concentrate cars for the busy war-time mining traffic. After the war Morris joined the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club and was one of the “Eastern Division” members. Morris was tasked each summer with hauling back cases of Coors Beer for the Club meetings there!

For Rail Report 712, the masthead features UP B Unit 712 at Salt Lake City, Utah. It is a GP 30 B built in April 1963.

– Ken Ardinger Photo from the Tom Klinger Collection.

Morris Abbott's Rail Rambles 1936–1955



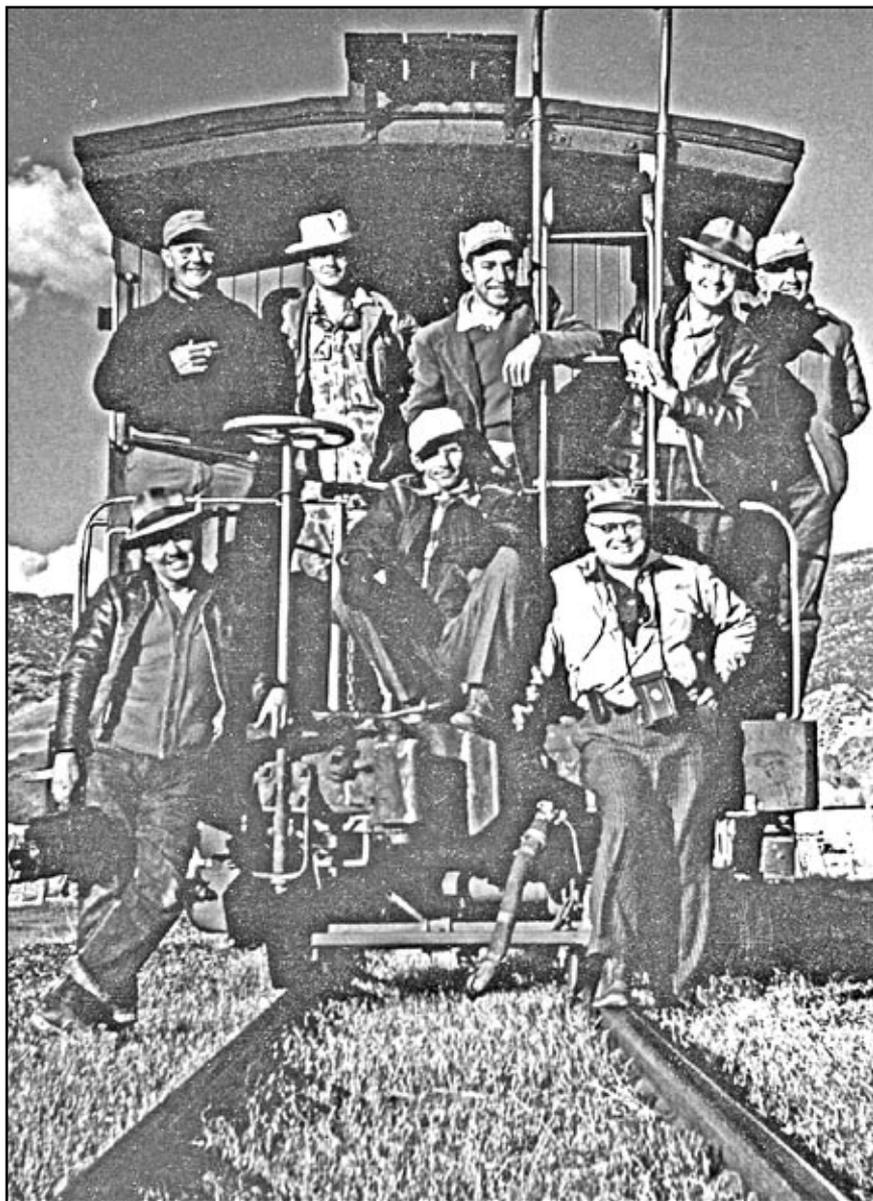
Midland Terminal #63 attacks the 4% grade of Ute Pass with the daily empties returning to the Cripple Creek mines, here crossing the former Colorado Midland trestle over Ruxton Avenue in Manitou, Colorado, on August 10th, 1942.
– Morris Abbott photo from the Bill Jones collection.

In May 1949 Morris rode the Club's excursions on both the RGS and through the famed Black Canyon of the Gunnison taking color movies of the latter. In May 1955, Jack Thode arranged an extra caboose for the final D&RGW operated train over Marshall Pass and Morris joined the "Extra-Extra Gang" for the

historic trip. Morris shot over 400-feet of color movie film with his Cine-Kodak magazine camera which he edited into a record of the final run.

Joins us to see some rare and unique views of Colorado railroads in the 1940s and 1950s.

Morris Abbott's Rail Rambles 1936–1955



Jack Thode arranged an extra caboose for the last D&RGW operated trip over Marshall Pass on May 2, 1955. Dan Peterson photographed the “Extra-Extra Gang” in Sargents. From left on platform, Jack Riley, Jack Thode, Irv August, Dick Kindig, Bob Richardson. Below from left are Ed Haley, Mac Poor (on coupler) and Morris Abbott. – Dan Peterson photo from the Bill Jones collection.



The Ouray turntable on Denny's model Lake City and Ouray Railroad.
– Photo © 2020 Denny Leonard.

Winter thoughts of RMRRC President Denny Leonard

Meanwhile back at Ouray on the Lake City and Ouray RR, a Baldwin VO 660 idles on the standard gauge turntable. It is the first diesel here and portends the shift about to hit the standard gauge lines. In back of number 67, a mixture of cars rest in the yard from the town showing the mixed commercial and industrial base the railroad supports.

By making efficient distribution possible, railroads were the key to the growth and the unprecedented increase of the standard of living of the United States.

Obviously the 3-foot network in Colorado stayed powered by steam for many years in spite of several attempted diesel inroads until economics and politics caused the Durango roundhouse to start acquiring internal combustion power. However, steam seemed firmly entrenched in Chama and the other 3-foot lines in Colorado!

It is a cold January day as I write this and as we look forward to the Club's 82nd year. Highlighted by the activity of the groups in Como and another possible steam up day, Como can be a focus of historical preservation for us this year. They have added more rolling stock and track and I certainly support more grants for them. This time last year we had a wonderful trip to yesterday. Will we see the start of the water tank project? By the way, the Georgetown Loop Railroad Santa Train was great. And, it will be a wonderful summer trip with the new steam running.

Speaking of grants, our organization has helped preserve the history of Colorado railroads and continues to with our yearly grants. There are many worthy projects for the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Historical Foundation to consider. Grant applications will soon will be requested so they can be considered

Winter thoughts of RMRRC President Denny Leonard

this spring. If you know of a candidate, please let an officer or director know, and we will see that an application is sent.

Also please consider giving to the historical foundation. It is tax deductible. We will also be selling some donated books with funds received to be donated to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation.

So in some small way each of us can help to continue the legacy of the Club and move our purpose forward as we are

active, engaged and relevant.

The Club will have a booth in the Rocky Mountain train show at the Merchandise Mart on March 7th and 8th. We have done this for several years to promote the club and our goals. Please contact Mike Tinetti For more information or to volunteer to help.

I appreciate your opinions and knowledge, please feel free to contact me by email at denny@amerm.com or my cell (303) 809-9430.

Help Fund The Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation

Donations to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation provide the funds for the Foundation's grant program that helps to fund educational

and restoration projects. Please send donations to: Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation, PO Box 2391, Denver, CO 80201-2391.

Renewal Status and News

When you read this the 2020 renewal season will have ended. The seniority sequencing takes place this month. The 2020 membership cards are printed near the end of the month or the first part of March. For those who have not renewed this is your last copy of the *Rail Report*.

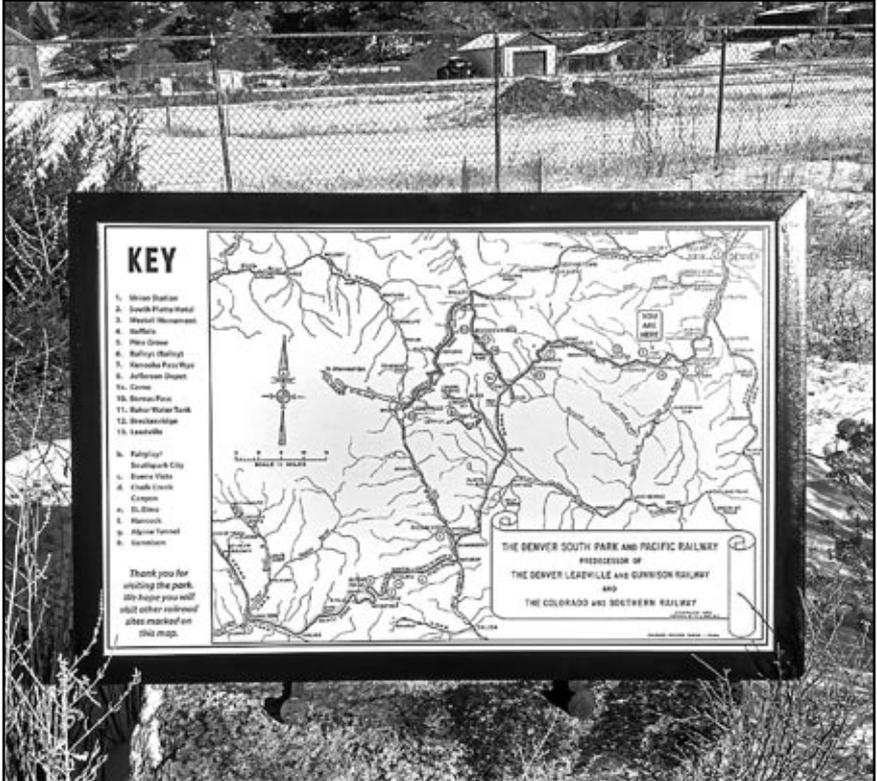
We are a volunteer organization. Those who are currently on the board perform the processing, printing, and mailing of memberships. This takes time. If your

check or credit card has not been cleared or billed as fast as you think it should this is the reason.

The new cards will be mailed in a separate envelope this year. It will cost more and add to the club losses on the balance sheet. The cards are made of a synthetic paper that is resistant to tearing. The cards generate static electricity causing them to stick to the envelopes so look inside carefully.

In Remembrance David Nixon Corbin

David Corbin passed away on December 30, 2019. He was a 43 year member, joining the club in 1975. He left active membership in the Club with his move to assisted living in 2018 at which time his seniority number was 78.



One completed sign displays a map of the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad. The second sign provides a history of the railroad and Pine Grove. – Photo courtesy of the Pine–Elk Creek Improvement Association.

Pine Grove History Park In Colorado Signs

The Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation issued one of the 2019 grants to the Pine–Elk Creek Improvement Association for signs in the Pine Grove History Park. The two completed educational signs significantly add to

public awareness of local narrow gauge railroad history. The signs have been placed in a temporary location and will be moved to park property when excavations are completed.



UP 3985 at Greeley, Colorado, on the way to Denver with the Circus Train on September 28, 2010. – Photo © 2010 Nathan Zachman.

Information for the Railroad Enthusiast

By Dave Schaaf

Union Pacific has reportedly decided not to restore locomotive #3985 to operation. This Challenger has been out of service since 2010. The railroad company is willing to finance the running condition of two steam engines, which are currently #844 and #4014. Since it was restored in 1981, the Rocky Mountain RR Club has participated in many special events with this big locomotive.

On New Year's Day, a BNSF freight train hit a rock slide along the Kootenai River in northern Idaho. Two diesel units went into the water, and the engine crew was safely rescued. The track was closed for about three days for recovery and repair.

Volunteers with the Golden Spike chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society have been working since 1992 on the restoration of

D&RGW #223. They have now been locked out of the Ogden Union Station for about a year due to issues with that Utah city. The state is talking about sending the narrow-gauge engine to a planned museum in Salt Lake City for display only. An offer has also been made to bring it to the C&TS Railroad and make it operable. This class C-16 2-8-0 loco was built in 1881 by Grant Locomotive Works.

Norfolk Southern has sold the four diesel F-units that had been used for their business trains. The Reading & Northern Railroad recently purchased two of them to use for a passenger excursion train that will launch in April. The other two have gone to the Aberdeen, Carolina & Western Railroad in North Carolina.

It was a banner year for some tourist

Information for the Railroad Enthusiast



Union Pacific 1995, Chicago & NorthWestern Heritage unit SD70ACe, laid over at UP's North Yard fuel track in Denver for some maintenance on December 21, 2019. The unit departed Denver on December 23, 2019, headed for Green River, Wyoming. – Photo © 2019 by Chip.

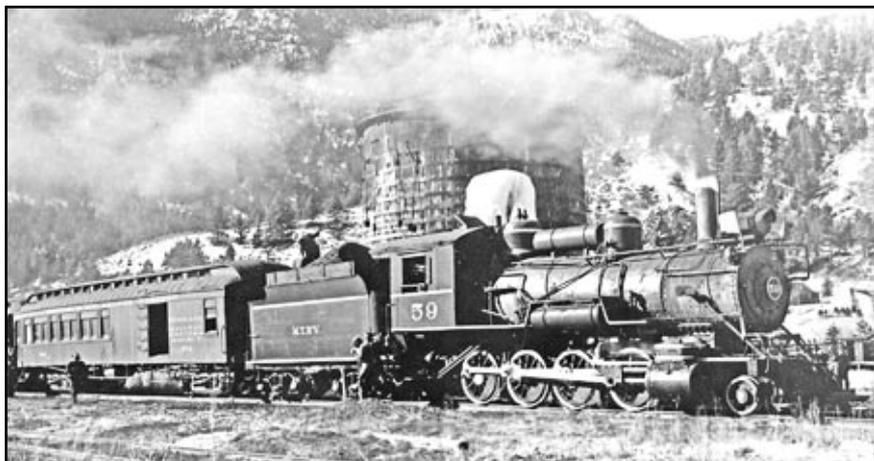
lines in Colorado. The Georgetown Loop set a new record with 195,000 passengers in 2019, and 47,000 of those rode holiday trains. The Royal Gorge Route also had it's biggest year ever.

The Surface Transportation Board is moving toward an environmental impact study for a proposed railroad in Utah's Uinta Basin. A group called the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition proposes building a new railroad that would run more than 80 miles from Kyune northeast toward South Myton Bench and Leland Bench in Utah. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Transportation began studying a new rail line to reach the basin's natural resources, specifically oil. Planners had once considered building a 185-mile route east to connect with the former D&RGW Craig Branch, but later decided that building west toward the UP Soldier Summit route would be preferable because it would also connect with BNSF Railway.

A railroad union is asking the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to issue an emergency order requiring that outdated air brake valves on freight rail cars be replaced immediately. The SMART Transportation Division estimates that at least several thousand model DB-10 air brake valves are still in use beyond their safe life expectancy. These valves can leak in cold weather, causing a loss of stopping capability. A maintenance advisory was issued in 2013, but the union says the fixes have been slow and unsatisfactory.

Canadian Pacific increased grain shipments by 2.1% with the 2019-2020 crop year. CP has added more than 2,170 new high-capacity hopper cars to its fleet.

Operation Lifesaver Inc. released a new public service video to bring attention to the distractions that can lead to tragedy for pedestrians on or near railroad tracks. A major danger is the obsession with hand-held digital devices.



No. 59 taking water at an unidentified location, but most likely at Cascade.

A Cold Trip In February 1949

By Dave Goss

Seventy years ago this month, the Club's only excursion on the Midway Terminal Railway ran from Colorado Springs to Cripple Creek. It was minus seven degrees Fahrenheit that cold, clear February 6th day in 1949. Many of the 169 members and friends car-pooled to Colorado Springs and the list of guests on the train was impressive. Notables included Otto Perry, Dick Kindig, Morris Cafky, Roger E. M. Whitaker, Bob Richardson and Donald Duke. At least nine of the Club's founding members and thirty women were on the trip, as were well known authors Bob LeMassena, Jack Thode, Ross Grenard and Bob Griswold. Many other familiar names paid \$7.00 for this trip behind locomotive 59, a 2-8-0 Consolidation.



This was the last passenger run on the Midland Terminal. In a few months, Engine 59 would be scrapped as the railroad had been given permission to scrap in August 1948. The

Midland Terminal was the last railroad operating in the Cripple Creek area. Today, the former Midland roundhouse is a brew pub and commercial center on Colorado Highway 24 and South 26th Street in Colorado Springs.

The two photos were taken by an unknown photographer and his photographs were found in an unlabeled album in the Club's archives last year. A detailed description of this last trip can be found in the Club's book, *Rails Around Gold Hill*, by Morris Cafky.

A Cold Trip In February 1949



The Cripple Creek Station photo clearly shows the Club's drumhead on the rear of the four-car train. Two former D&RGW combination cars and two former Colorado Midland cars were the consist.

Current Railroad Happenings



BNSF 8510 South moved some 20 retired SD70MAC locomotives from Alliance, Nebraska, to Galveston, Texas, on Sunday, January 5, 2020. The train passed South Denver, traveling on the Joint Line. – Photo © 2020 by Chip.

Helping the Competition

By Dave Goss

Back in 1965, the Club was nationally recognized for its trips and excursions. If anything, we had established ourselves as experts in arranging narrow gauge trips in southwestern Colorado, in addition to our mainline trips elsewhere. In some recent correspondence provided by Jimmy Blouch and now placed in the archives, we have learned of an exchange of information with another organization that might have been considered a competitor to the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club.

The Central Coast Railway Club (now know also as the Central Coast Chapter of the NRHS) contacted Trip Chairman Ed Haley asking for advice about a charter they were planning to hold in September on the D&RGW branch of Durango and Silverton. That year the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club itself hosted its annual Memorial Day excursion on that same line. Central Coast President Hal Rogers was particularly interested in how the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club handled the food and drink concessions.

Ed replied with the information that Mr. Rogers needed, recommending John E. Burt who ...”has taken care of this on quite a number of the club’s narrow gauge excursions and previous to that time had worked in the car for the original concessionaire ... Mr. Burt manages to have a variety of tasty sandwiches priced from 25 to 50 cents, with coffee and soft drinks and various accessories such as potato chips, fruit, candy, ciga-

rettes, etc.” It is interesting to note that the cost of sandwiches in 1965 seemed to be very reasonable and that cigarettes were available for purchase, something that has disappeared on today’s concession cars.

The Central Coast Club was very appreciative of Ed’s help and especially of some advice that Ed offered as to timing of their excursion over LaVeta Pass. The trip itself originated in California and the cost for the whole tour included round trip rail fare, first class or coach from San Francisco or Los Angeles as well as round trip Pueblo to Alamosa to Durango to Silverton, and Pueblo to Denver via Royal Gorge, Dotsero and Moffat Tunnel. San Francisco passengers were provided 12 dining car meals and Los Angeles passengers 9 dining car meals. Fares ranged from \$245.15 for chair car, \$338.25 for an upper berth, \$354.25 for a lower berth, \$368.25 for a roomette, \$403.25 for a single bedroom and \$358.25 and up for a double bedroom, compartment, or drawing room (per person). The nine-day trip ran from September 18 to September 26, 1965.

This exchange of information between like-minded organizations without any hesitation or friction was noteworthy and perhaps something that current day organizations should do to help each other. In this contentious world of 2020, cooperation and common interests are sometimes hard to find let alone accomplish.

“Fake News” of Railroad History: Cars Over Mosquito Pass The Greatest Railroad Undertaking Ever Known in America

Source: *Denver Republican*, April 9, 1888

Contributed by Dan Edwards

A large party of Union Pacific surveyors is in the vicinity of Como, working on what is commonly supposed to be a line for a railroad from that place in a nearly direct line across Mosquito Pass and down into Leadville. The general course of the line is said to be around Mount Silverheels, strike the London Junction line, and then up Mosquito Gulch and through the pass to the west wide of Park range. The people of Fairplay have been considerably exercised by the reports and will use strenuous endeavors to prevent the road running north of their town.

To one familiar with the apparent impossibility of crossing Mosquito Pass with a railroad, it would seem that the only practical course for the U.P. will be to bore a long tunnel. If constructed, the road will be unparalleled for engineering enterprise by any like

project ever attempted in America. Mosquito Pass is usually closed with snow from September to May. On the west side the mountain is almost precipitous for 4,000 feet. The summit of the pass is 13,000 feet. [Note: today its elevation is given as 13,185 feet.]

The new road would cut off about 40 miles of the present South Park line. It is a great undertaking, but if possible of accomplishment, it would place the South Park far ahead of all competitors on distance [from Denver]. The route over Mosquito Pass was talked of in 1879, but Major [J.A.] Evans [not Gov. John Evans], the chief engineer, dissuaded the company from the project. He did not believe it practicable. Since then, however, greater feats of engineering have been successful that Major Evans ever dreamed of. The route may now be deemed possible.

The Spring 2020 Rocky Mountain Train Show

March 7th & 8th

Saturday: 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Sunday: 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

At the Denver Mart
451 East 58th Avenue
Denver, CO 80216

Visit the Club booth while there!

Tickets can be Purchased at the Show:

Adult Admission \$10.00

Kids under 12 admission is Free!

Scouts In Uniform admission is Free!

Active Military Members with ID
admission is Free!

Sorry, No Discounts at the Door.

Colorado Railroad Museum

Friday Tours – 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Each Friday, join museum staff for an hour of exploring a different aspect of Colorado's railroad history. Tours are subject to change and are based on guide availability. Each week's theme is explored using a variety of museum resources to help bring the subject to life with the understanding that guests are welcome to continue their visit on their own after the tour.

Highlights

February 7, March 6, April 3, May 1, June 5, July 3, August 7, September 4, October 2, November 6, December 4, December 18.

The Caboose

February 28, April 24, May 29, July 31, September 25, October 23.

Locomotives

March 20, May 15, July 24, August 28, October 9, November 27, December 11.

The Railroad Kitchen

March 13, May 8, June 26, September 11, October 30, November 20.

Railroad Post Office Cars

February 14, April 10, August 14, October 16.

Ted Rose and the Legacy of Railroad Photography

February 21, March 27, April 17, May 22 & June 12.

The Galloping Goose

June 19, July 10, August 21.

The Storybook Tour

July 17, September 18, November 13.

Admission: \$3 plus general admission: \$10 adults, \$5 children, \$8 seniors (ages 60+). Museum members, children under 2 and active military personnel are free.

Railroads and the American Industrial Landscape: Ted Rose Paintings and Photographs

February 3, 2020 to August 2, 2020 in the Lower Gallery

The railroad has inspired some of the most important artists of the 19th and 20th centuries including Ted Rose who created stunning, mostly black-and-white photographs of American Industrial settings in the 20th century.

The Museum hosts this traveling exhibit featuring 24 silver gelatin prints and 3 original watercolors from The Center for Railroad Photography & Art (www.railphoto-art.org)

For information call 303-279-4591 or visit <http://www.coloradorailroadmuseum.org>

Colorado Railroad Museum Admission

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club Members in good standing, and upon presentation of a current membership card, are entitled to free admission. Members are invited to join the Colorado Railroad Museum (a Museum membership provides certain merchandise discounts), and members may participate in restoration or other maintenance programs as volunteers.

Intermountain Chapter, NRHS Events

For information call 303-883-2435 or see <http://www.cozx.com/nrhs>.

Saturday Lunch Meeting, February 15 at 1:00 PM

At Malones Clubhouse Grill, 14455 West 64th Avenue, Unit G, in the Arvada West Town Center in the northeast quadrant of West 64th Avenue and Indiana Street.

Publishers Statement — Rocky Mountain Rail Report

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Club Information

Rocky Mountain Railroad Club
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Web: <http://www.rockymtnrrclub.org>
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www.facebook.com/rockymtnrrclub

Club and Foundation Officers

President	Dennis Leonard
Vice President	Dave Schaaf
Secretary	Andy Dell
Treasurer	Keith Jensen

Club and Foundation Directors

Nathan Holmes, Ron Keiser, Pat Mauro,
Debbie MacDonald, Steve Subber, Michael Tinetti.

Membership Information

Membership in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club may be obtained by sending the annual dues to the Club address listed above.

Regular membership dues are \$35.00. Overseas regular membership dues are \$45.00.

Contributing membership is \$50.00. Sustaining membership is \$70.00.

Patron membership is \$100.00. Golden membership is \$500.00.

An associate membership for spouses and children is \$25.00 additional.

Members joining after April may send a payment of \$3.00 for each month remaining in the year. New members who join in-person at a meeting will be given a free copy of the Club history book

Members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club are also members in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club.

Board Meetings

Members are always welcome to attend any board of directors meeting. Please contact any Club officer for the date, time and location.

Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter contributions and items for publication should be sent to:

Bruce Nall, Editor
Rocky Mountain Rail Report
PO Box 620579
Littleton, CO 80162-0579

E-mail: selectimag@aol.com

Items for the March 2020 *Rail Report* should be sent by February 7th.