

Rail Tales

January 2009

NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

If interested in joining All Aboard Westcliffe, call Doris Porth at 719 783-2217.

Visit the All Aboard Westcliffe website:

www.allaboardwestcliffe.org

Volunteers are always welcome to come help with the various activities of All Aboard Westcliffe. Call Tim Thrun at 783-0423.

The Saga of Moving a Caboose

A sure example of the value of Grandma's adage, "Don't get excited, nothing is ever going to go right," is the attempts to move the old caboose onto railroad tie cribbing. The purpose of this move is to elevate the caboose to allow work underneath and prepare it for setting upon tracks (wheels) to continue the restoration. Lacking specifications for the caboose built in 1889, it was assumed the weight to be about three ton. On an appointed day this early summer Brad Baltzy came with his fork lift rated at 3 ton capacity, but could not lift it. Next Mel discussed the project with Ace Hardware, referring specifically to the big fork lift, which had been used by the contractor moving the Lutheran parsonage at that time, learning it had a lift capacity of 9,000 lbs. or 4 ton.

Approximately one month lapsed between this discussion and the next moving date. On the appointed time, arrangements were made with Ace Hardware and Brad Baltzy would be the operator. However, when Brad went to get the machine he learned they had returned the large fork lift due to technical problems and were now offering a 3 ton

fork lift. Brad knew immediately there was no need to take the equipment and declined the use.

Since AAW members and other interested persons were anticipating a move on this day Mel decided to check with Steve Schultz to see if his schedule would allow for an unexpected interruption to learn if his loader would lift the caboose. Steve could break away from his work in about a half hour and since his job was just 1 ½ blocks away it was convenient. Amazingly, when his machine was put to the test it would begin to lift the caboose, but the hydraulics were not sufficient to tilt it back on the fork lift structure to stabilize the load for movement across the ground to the installation site. We tried chaining the caboose for stability before lifting it, but the chains broke. Since a machine was finally at hand that would at least move the caboose, we decided to use the remaining time to drag both cabooses to a better position. The important caboose was dragged out to a position which would allow a crane to swing it around to the desired location and the other caboose was turned 90 degrees to a new location which will allow more track to be laid on the east side of the property on a future work day.

From the beginning, Mel had in mind working some sort of arrangement with Sterling Home Center (the modular home sales business in Silver Cliff) to utilize the crane which lifts the modular units onto a foundation to also, the same day, set up and move the caboose. So that was the next inquiry. The crane was due in a week or such, but on the appointed day, two houses were ready to be set on foundations and the operator would not have sufficient time to also set the caboose. However, the owner of Sterling Home Center knew of a smaller crane working just north of town. So Tim rushed out to talk with that operator and learned he was willing to come in about an hour to do the job. And given the size of

the crane it was assumed this would be the day. The crew first placed the lifting pads under and connected with straps to the spreader bars above. Then attaching the cable from the derrick and applying pressure, instead of the caboose lifting into the air, the rear wheels of the crane came off the ground. Again the equipment is just too light for the job or the caboose is too heavy for the equipment.

To be continued...

Summer Work Plans Reviewed

Several projects are continuing through the winter and new projects being added to the list of things to do:

- COMPLETED - Lettuce shed forge installed to help rebuild cabooses
- Restoration of the freight wagon display continues
- COMPLETED - Baggage cart display repainted
- COMPLETED - Mining kitchen roof replaced
- Engine House Museum work continues
- Cataloging contents for display in Engine House Museum continues
- COMPLETED - Parking lot work of split rail fence
- Forklift caboose onto track (Two failed attempts)
- COMPLETED - Seed and establish lawn in front of Interpretive Center

If you are available to help out with any of these projects, give Tim Thrun or Mel Porth a call.

Railroad Museum Grand Opening in Planning Stages

A grand opening for the Railroad Museum is in the planning stages for the first weekend in May, 2009. Several AAW members have expressed an interest in helping with the organizing and planning of this event. Anna Stubbs, Marie Thrun, Addie Heck, Beverly Goertz and Delores Stoesser agreed to serve on this committee.

It will be a great community event. Railroad Memorabilia is always accepted. If any AAW members, members of the community and interested parties with railroad memorabilia,

photos, etc. would like to donate items to the museum, please call Tim Thrun or Mel Porth

Bookkeeper Needed

AAW will be hiring (YES, a paid position) a bookkeeper for the organization. If any of the members are qualified and would like to be considered for this position, please contact Mel Porth with your qualifications, etc.

The position will require knowledge and experience in accounts payable and receivable, bank deposits, statements, state and federal taxes, and financial reports.

Model Rail Road Club

The Westcliffe Model Rail Road Club (a wholly owned subsidiary of All Aboard Westcliffe, Inc.) is located in the basement of the AAW Interpretive Center. This loosely organized small group of highly intelligent individuals meet every Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm to play with toy trains from October through May. Their mission is to build a HO scale model of the 1920's era Denver and Rio Grande RR main line from Canon City to Salida CO. through the Royal Gorge with a spur line up Texas Creek to the small valley hamlet of Westcliffe.

This gargantuan project is underway now and will most likely be a life long "work in progress" for most of the old fossils who currently have worked on it. However, your mission (if you choose to accept it) is to get involved and help build a rail road. Men, women and children of all ages... if you enjoy playing with paper mache, or painting small objects, or are detail oriented or a modeler, come join in the fun and really see the rewards of your labors grow into something you can actually play with again and again.

That's right, I said fun! Remember when you were a kid with big eyes as you watched that small model train chug down the track and through the mountains? Well this is it brothers and sisters.....your chance to help build a rail road! Come see for yourself. Downstairs in the basement of the Interpretive Center.

Storage Building at Caboose

Work will continue soon on the storage building. All the framing is in place. Next comes siding and roofing.