



# C & TS Dispatch

Vol. 2 No. 2

June 1989

## THE RAILWAY POST OFFICE CARS OF THE CUMBRES AND TOLTEC

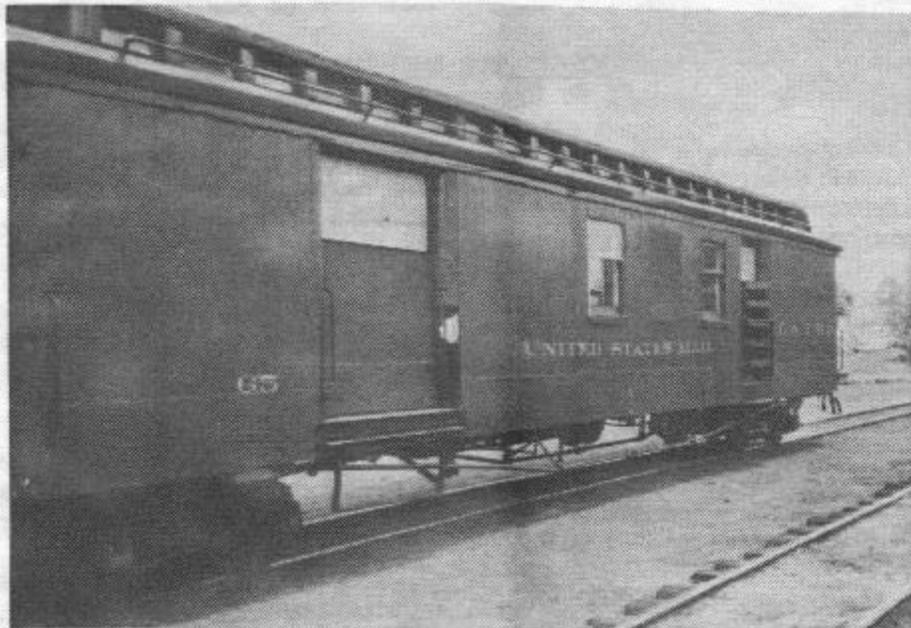
By Art Nichols and Earl Knoob

When Colorado and New Mexico purchased the Antonito to Chama narrow-gauge line from the Denver & Rio Grande Western in 1970, the states acquired two former railway post office cars: numbers 54 and 65. In this issue and the next issue of the Dispatch, we feature the RPO cars of the C&TS.

Railway post office cars at one time had what today we call "high visibility." On the D&RGW the daily passenger trains brought in the mail to Sublette, Chama, Monero, and other places along the railroad for almost seventy years. But when scheduled passenger service ended in 1951, mail service by rail also stopped.

The first railway post office cars in the United States began carrying mail sixteen years before the narrow gauge reached Chama. A test run was made between Chicago and Clinton, Iowa in August 1864. From that first run, the spread of railway mail service was remarkable. By 1924 there were in service 2,800 baggage-mail cars (one compartment for baggage and one compartment for mail) and 1,200 postal cars (one compartment for sorting and classifying mail).

[continued on page 4]



RPO Car 65 stands on the ready track in Chama for its 1989 first-day run on the New Mexico Express. May 1989. Photo Credit: Bill Lock

THE C & TS DISPATCH

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Chip Irwin			

The Friends is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, a 64-mile long operating railroad and museum of railroad history and technology between Antonito, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico. The railroad is owned by Colorado and New Mexico and operated by Kyle Railways. Volunteers from the Friends have especially been active in restoring and preserving equipment and buildings on the line.

Family membership in the Friends is \$15.00 per year. All contributions are fully tax deductible and will be gratefully accepted. Please write to us in Chama for information about the Friends. The Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad is both a Nationally and State Registered Historic Site.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

July 21, 22 & 23, 1989	Volunteer Work Session - Chama
Aug. 16, 17, & 18, 1989	Volunteer Work Session - Chama
Aug. 18, 1989 (Friday)	Annual Meeting & slide show - Chama
Aug. 19, 1989 (Saturday)	Moonlight Special Charter Train (open to all members and public)
Oct. 15, 1989	End of Season C&TSRR

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

By Spencer Wilson

I would like to propose a couple of projects for the Friends which will, I believe, add to the general interest and development of the depots at both Antonito and Chama. I refer specifically to the waiting rooms of both depots which, at the moment, are virtually empty of materials or displays relating to the railroad.

1. In both depots we need glass display cases which can be locked. These would be used for the display of historic items from the property and each community. I think that we might be able to acquire such cases by donation.

2. I would also like to find some dedicated model builders who could build layouts of the line. These would not be to scale, nor would they be operable. The main purpose would be to provide a visual display, a graphic one, of the line through the mountains with the principle features--the grade to Cumbres, the Los Pinos canyon, Toltec Gorge, tunnels, etc. We should have one of each display for each depot.

Both of these projects will add to visitor interest and make constructive use of the waiting rooms. Any members interested in donating the glass display cases or modeling parts of the line should contact Spencer Wilson at P. O. Box 1833, Socorro, New Mexico 87801.



## THE WINDY POINT

by Bill Lock

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad started its 1989 season with a bang on Saturday, June 10, 1989. Almost 400 people rode the train, and because of the good crowd, double heading was necessary out of Chama that morning. There are three locomotives in daily operation, all in good serviceable condition. Another, No. 488, should be ready for service by the busy time in July. Our Director, Russell Fischer, has written an excellent article about winter work on the Railroad and the condition of all the equipment, which you will find starting on page 6.

This summer also gives every appearance of being a busy and productive summer for the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Inquiries and response about our work sessions is very strong, and we look forward to having two productive Volunteer weekends. Please see the calendar on page 2 for our summer activities. Our speakers have been lined up for our Annual Meeting and Program on Friday, August 18, and I am pleased to announce that Earl Knoob will present a slide show on the Rio Grande's original narrow gauge mainline over Marshall Pass. Director and retired railroader John Carson will give the other slide show and talk on his experiences while working for the Rio Grande. The topic of his talk will be on train wrecks.

I certainly recommend the new Paramount Pictures movie just released "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade." This Steven Spielberg movie was featured pictorially in the last issue of The Dispatch (April, 1989, pages 6 and 7). I just had the opportunity of seeing the movie and was extremely impressed. The high level of adventure continued throughout the movie. The sequence involving the Railroad is very dramatic, but do not be late for the beginning of the movie or you will miss it. The Railroad and our Director Russ Fischer received a nice plug during the credits.

We are all very excited about the Moonlight Charter Train Ride. Ticket sales have been brisk, and if you are planning to attend you should mail in your payment and reservation form as soon as possible. If for some reason you do not receive an invitation or application for the Moonlight Train Ride, write to Friends, 7801 Academy NE, Bldg. 2, Suite 102, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109.

Unfortunately, Director Joe Vigil of Chama has resigned. We hope that Joe will continue to exercise his leadership for the Railroad and for this organization. I am pleased to report that at a very productive Special Meeting of the Board of Directors held on June 17, 1989, Volunteer Frank Burton of Albuquerque was elected to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Vigil's resignation. Mr. Burton will fill Mr. Vigil's term, extending through August, 1990. Frank brings a wealth of experience and commitment to his new position. We are happy to have him on board.

## RAILWAY POST OFFICE CARS (cont.)

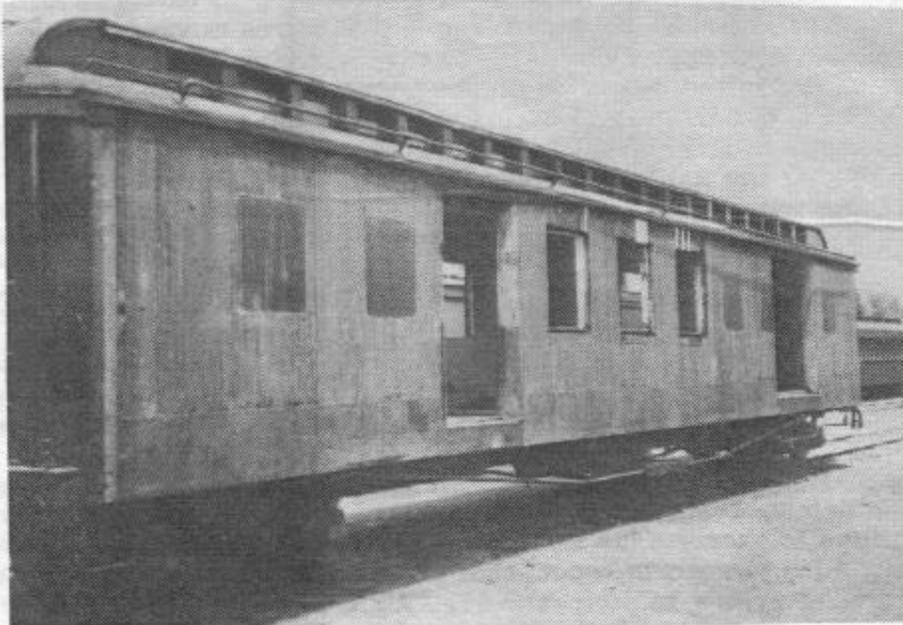
Cars 54 and 65 of the Cumbres and Toltec at one time were baggage-mail cars. According to the American Railway Association Classification, Recommended Practice, adopted in 1915, baggage-mail was:

A car having two compartments, one for baggage and one for mail, separated by bulkheads; the mail end fitted with suitable apparatus for sorting and classifying mail, and with or without mail-bag catchers, with or without end doors or windows, and having suitable side doors.

The official folio sheet of cars 60, 64, 65, and 66 is reproduced here with some touch-up on the final print. Every line isn't clear, but enough are to make it an interesting historical trace. (The folio reproduction is from Earl Knoob's collection - see following page 5).

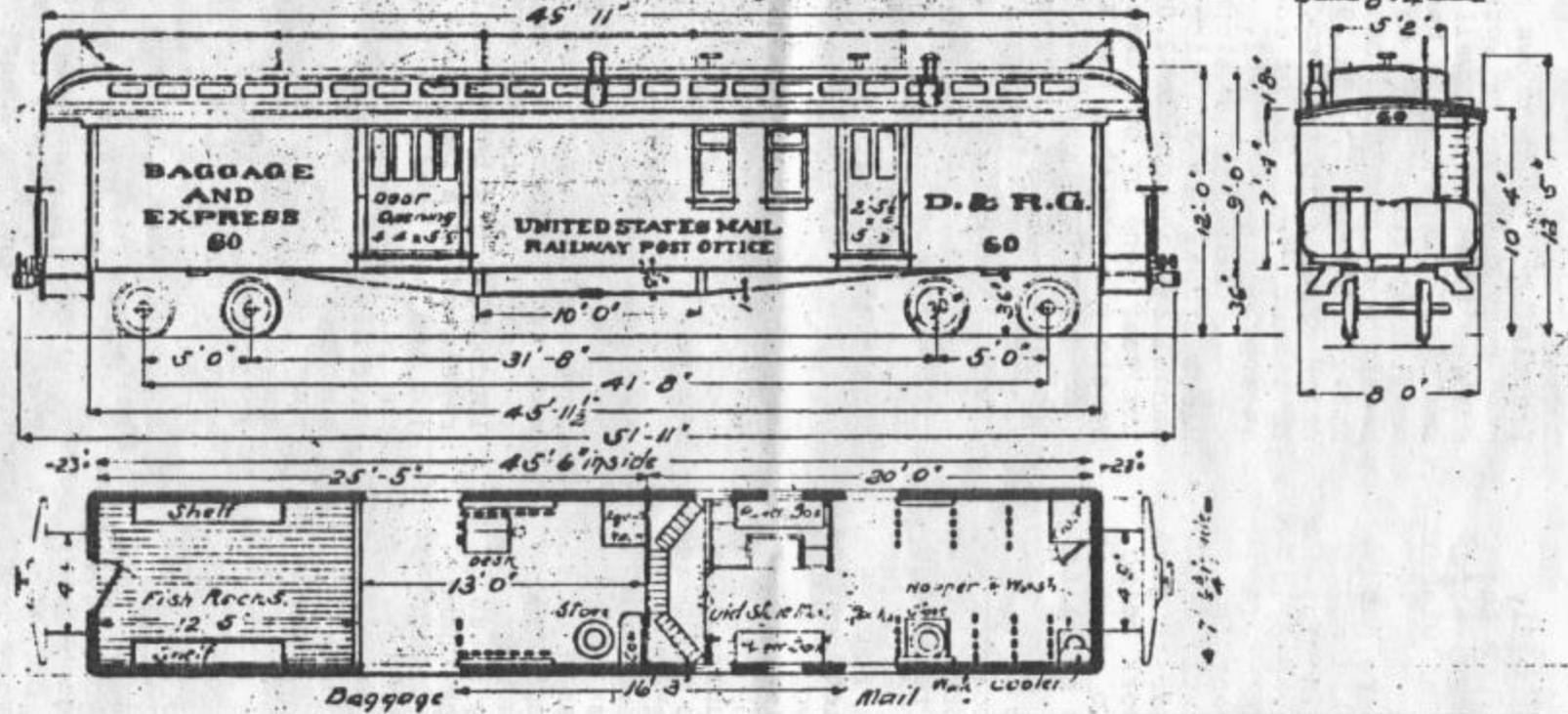
The two C&TS cars were probably built in 1887 and rebuilt to their present configuration in the 1920's (end platforms removed). Then after the last run of the San Juan in 1951, they were converted to enginemen's bunk cars for rotary trains. Car 54 was converted in 1978 to a coach with fake siding for the film "Butch and Sundance--the Early Years." Car 65 was used as the Chama office during depot remodeling in 1979, and on opening day 1988 it hauled the mail for the first time in over 37 years.

Volunteers from Chama restored RPO Car 65 before the season opened in 1988. Similarly, in order to have an RPO car on the Colorado Express, Volunteers from Antonito restored RPO Car 54 for opening day 1989. This project and the very successful RPO trip was organized by Bertha Sorensen, the Postmistress at Antonito and a new member of the Friends. Another new member of the Friends who participated in the work project to bring RPO Car 54 to its current condition was J. C. Quintana, who also works for the United States Post Office in Alamosa. Thanks to these volunteers and others for their hard work and effort in allowing both sides of the Railroad to have an RPO car on opening day.



RPO Car 54 in the process of cosmetic restoration by Volunteers.  
Chama yard, May 1989. Photo credit: Bill Lock.

— Denver and Rio Grande System —  
 Baggage and Mail Cars Nos 60-64-65-66.  
 NARROW GAUGE.



Length over End Sills: 45'-11 1/2"	Length inside Bagg. Room: 25'-5"	Mail Racks: Old Style.	Brakes: Westinghouse Automatic
Length overall: 51'-11"	Width: 7'-6 1/2"		Coupler: Janney
Length inside Mail Room: 20'-3"	Interior Finish: Green & White		Weight: 36250
Width: 7'-6 1/2"	Heating: Stoves.		When Built: 60-64 1894
Width over Side Sills: 8'-0"	Lighting: Oil Lamps.		65-66 1867
			Builders: D & R Co.

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## WINTER WORK ON THE RAILROAD

By Russell Fischer (May 1989)

Winter has traditionally been a time to recoup from the busy fall trains and prepare for the upcoming season. The winter of 1988-89 has been no exception. In fact, there has actually been more work done this last winter than in many years. Right now, many people are hard at work to make sure that all of the equipment is ready for opening day. I thought it best in order to give a complete survey of work being done on the property to start at Antonito and go across the line to Chama.

1. Antonito shop work: Four of the Antonito coaches are having running gear work completed. Crews are replacing the coil springs with better-riding leaf springs in four of the cars. (See the pictures and explanations of this work on page 7 following.) Also, the crews are replacing any bad wheels that they encounter. Bad wheel sets are sent to Telluride Iron where brand-new steel wheels (that can be repaired--as opposed to the old cast iron wheels) are being pressed on the axles. One interesting note is that the Antonito cars are actually approximately 6,000 pounds lighter than the Chama cars because of their design, and it was necessary to obtain a slightly lighter leaf spring than the leaf springs that are already in all of the Chama cars. Most likely, the remaining three Antonito cars will have the type of springs changed next winter.

2. Track work: A pictorial report on page 9 in this issue shows the work having been completed on Ferguson's Trestle, accidentally burned last summer. We are very pleased to have that restored and back in order. In addition to the work on Ferguson's

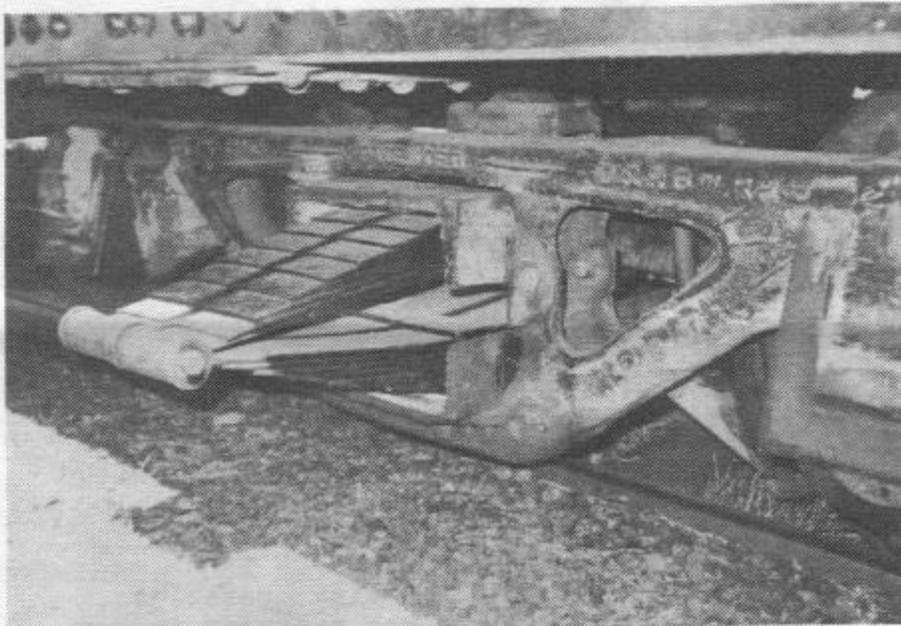
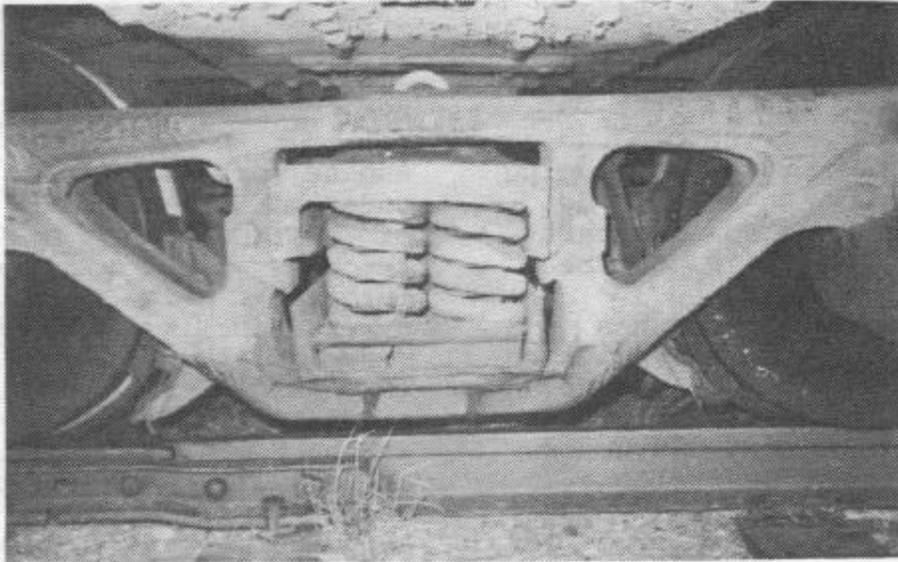
Trestle, our track crews have been busy doing major work on smaller trestles, as well. The small bridge at MP 281 has been completely rebuilt and major repair work also done on the small bridge at MP 288.29. The track crew is in the process of replacing a section of rough rail at approximately MP 282.

3. Economic Development Block Grant: In addition to the annual replacement of 2,000 ties per year done by our track crew, we are pleased that the Railroad Commission has been able to obtain a block grant from the Farmers Home Administration for the replacement of 5,000 new ties. This will involve our hiring an additional crew and the purchase of some new equipment to handle this project.

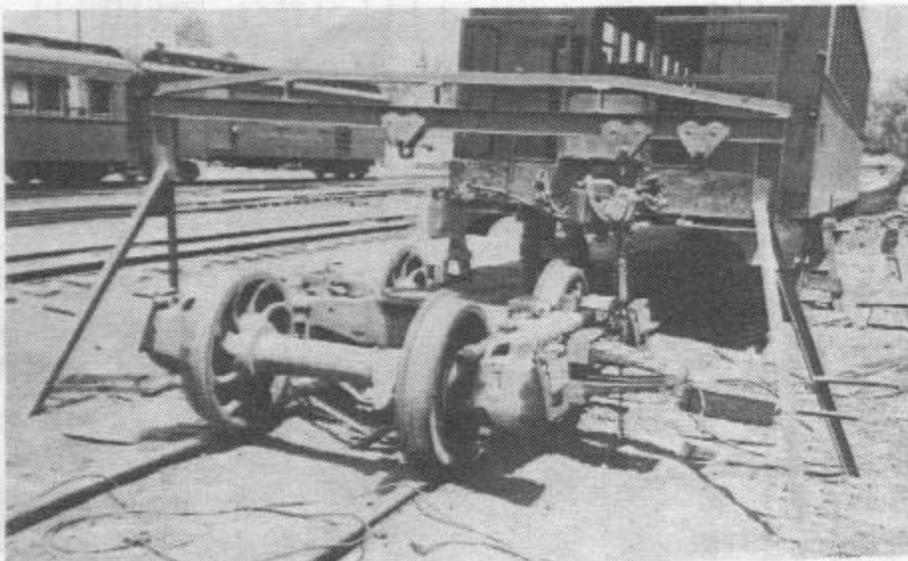
4. The Chama Shop: The Chama shop crew has been very busy this winter, especially now with the responsibility of four locomotives to prepare for the season.

a. The first locomotive completed is No. 487. A complete overhaul of the boiler has been completed with new tubes, a complete refluing and new front and rear flue sheets. The locomotive has been completely repainted in a beautiful paint job and has been in service in the yard and on the line. We have also installed new rod bushings, worked on the crosshead shoes, installed new oak doors and windows (made by our member Frank Burton), and we hope to install new lead and trailing truck wheel sets to make the locomotive look and run even better.

b. Locomotive No. 484 required the least amount of work. All that was necessary was for the annual preventive maintenance and similar work along with the annual boiler inspection. (continued on Page 8)



Changing out the springs.  
Here you can see the process of changing out the coil springs for the leaf springs as discussed in Russ Fischer's article. Above: the old coil springs gave a firm ride. Middle: A truck reassembled with the new leaf springs, giving a much softer ride. Bottom: Process of jacking up a passenger car, rolling out the wheelset and replacing the springs. May 1989, Photo credits: Bill Lock.



Each of our boilers is inspected annually and a hydro test run on them. We also rebuilt the trailing truck spring rigging and various other spring rigging on the engine. We hope to do new cab doors and replace part of the cab floor prior to the beginning of the season.

c. Engine No. 489 has received the fourth extension on its boiler inspection. We do anticipate having a complete boiler overhaul next winter on this engine, and we probably will replace the rear flue sheet and possible the front flue sheet while the engine is being reflued. This winter we jacked up the engine and did some spring rigging work, replaced main and intermediate rod bushings, and made other adjustments in the running gear. We also did minor repairs in the firebox and have installed a new cab floor.

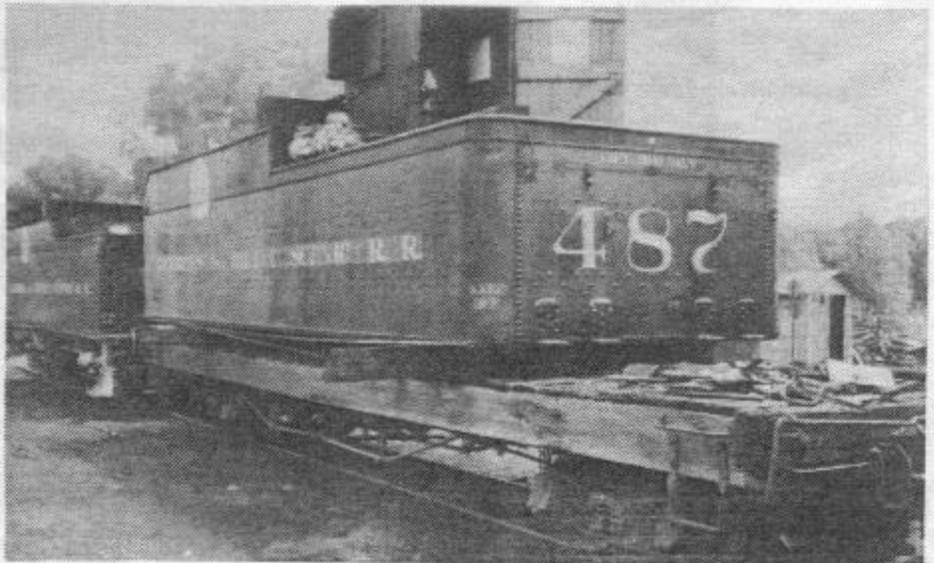
d. Engine No. 488 received the most extensive work after the 487. The engine was jacked up and all the drivers were taken out and sent to Farmington, New Mexico, where the wheels were turned down. We completed extensive work on the driving boxes and basically performed an extensive overhaul of the running gear, including the spring rigging. As with the other engines, an annual boiler inspection was performed as well

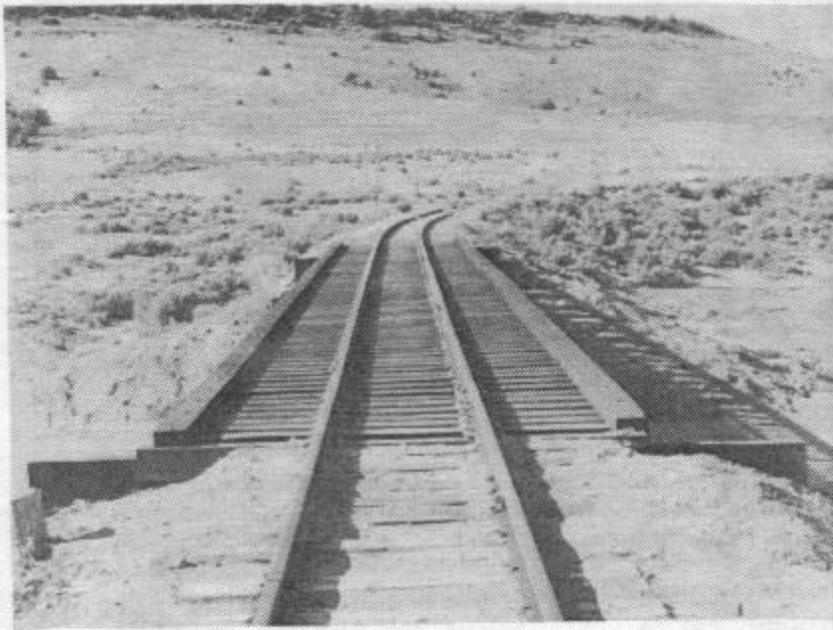
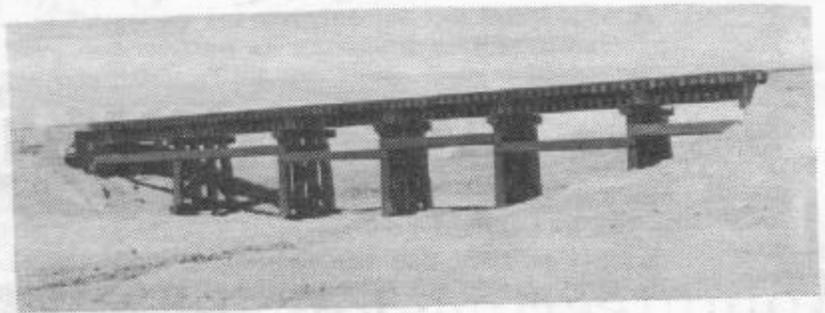
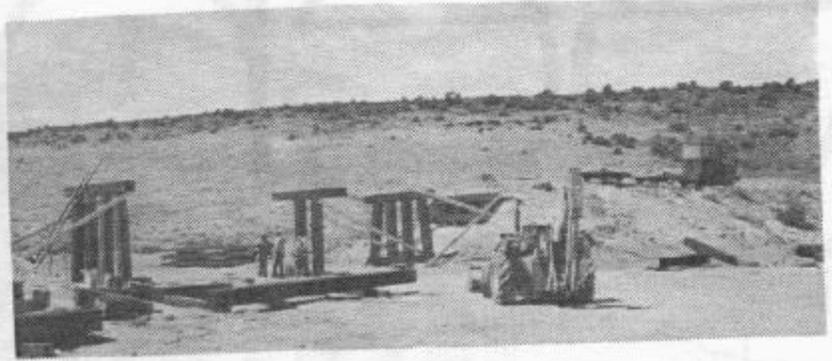
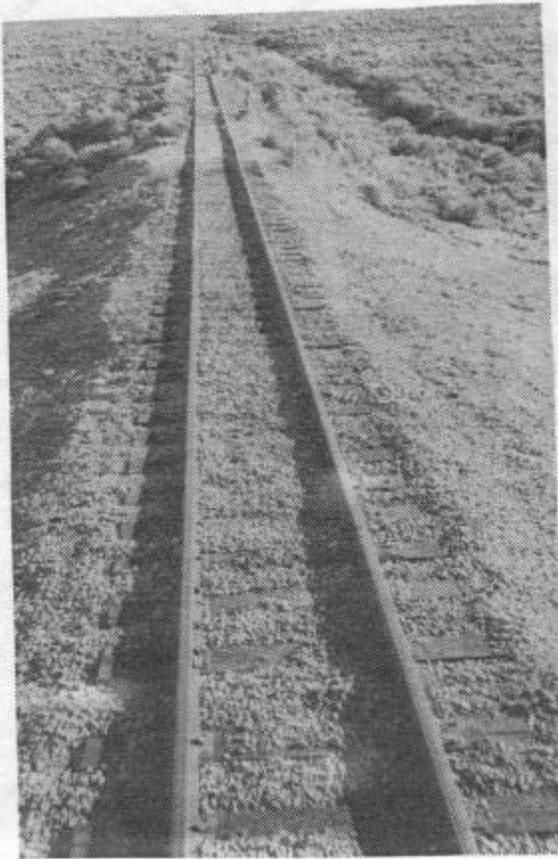
as other annual work. We look forward to having the 488 ready for operation in July.

e. In addition to the engine work on No. 488, we undertook the complete rebuilding of the tender for the 488. The tender was torn down to the framework. Both trucks were torn apart, rebuilt and new wheelsets were installed. At this writing (May 20) we are awaiting the arrival of a new tender tank made at the Mammoth Locomotive Works in Durango. This new tank is a welded tank, but rivet heads are added for appearance sake. This will be completed in time for operation of the 488. The old tender is shown below.

f. The shop crew is also working on the Chama passenger cars and performing annual maintenance and removing the final bugs from their initial construction. We are very pleased with the appearance of these cars and their popularity with the passengers. All of this equipment is receiving appropriate running gear inspections and maintenance. We are hopeful that having four operative locomotives during 1989 should provide the shop crew with additional time to do even more preventive maintenance during the course of the season. The equipment is in fine operating shape, and we are prepared for an excellent season.

An unusual shipment is portrayed by the tender tank on a flat car. Actually, the tender from Engine No. 488, this was removed from the tender frame, placed on a flatcar and moved out of the engine house. Chama, May 1989. Photo Credit: Bill Lock





Ferguson's Trestle.

Work has been completed on the restoration of Ferguson's Trestle burned in June 1988. Pictures depict the difference. Clockwise from upper left: "Ferguson's Fill" - as it looked September 1988, Photo credit: Bill Lock; Erecting the bents with the track crew putting the pieces together, April 1989, Photo credit: Dan Ranger; the next two pictures depict the bridge as completed and ready for operations, May 1989 - Photo credits: Dan Ranger.

# Senior

## EDITION USA

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## OPINION/ADVICE

BEING OF SOUND MIND

### Volunteering: knocking on opportunity's door

by Mary Kouri, Ph.D.

ANY VOLUNTEER job has two faces. To one person, it's pleasure and inspiration. To the next, it's as dull as a plate of mashed potatoes and soft boiled turnips. Yet it's the same job. Why? Because the job matches the first person's interests, skills, energies, curiosities, or needs.

Here are three tips for successfully matching your volunteer efforts with needs in your community. With each tip are possibilities to spark your imagination. When something grabs your interest, check it out or find a similar opportunity in your locale.

1. Focus on what intrigues you, gets your blood racing. For example:

#### Old trains and railroads

John Carson of Grand Junction, Colorado, loved railroads throughout his 45 years with the Rio Grande Railroad and still hasn't gotten them out of his system. Each summer he and a growing number of Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad (Bill Lock 505/822-8200) gather in Chama, New Mexico, to refurbish and maintain the century-old, operational train and narrow gauge tracks.



(L-R) Klaus Haase, Anne Burton, and Carl Carlson volunteer for the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad in their own ways. Photos courtesy of Bill Lock.

Our Volunteer program received a nice plug in the March 1989 issue of Senior Edition (Colorado). Highlights of the article are reprinted above with permission.

## MEET DIRECTOR CALVERT SMITH

by Art Nichols

In this issue of the Dispatch, we feature Director Cal Smith of Jacksonville, Florida. Cal was co-chairman of the maintenance-of-way work at last August's work session. Every summer since 1986, Cal has been coming to Chama, and his dedication and energy have been an inspiration and model for all Friends.

As with many of us, Cal's love of trains came from the family: his grandfather was with the CB&Q, the NYNH&H, and then the NP as a general passenger agent. Cal says that his early interests were train watching and a Lionel O-gauge set that gave way to an HO layout, now dormant. "No time, SN3 is next." He remembers a wintry trip from Boston to Springfield in the cab of a B&A Berkshire-- "those were the good old days when avoidance of liability was not the primary objective of railroads; I can still feel the bunching slack jolting the locomotive and the heat when the firebox door was opened."

In college, Cal was active in the early years of the New England Electric Railway Historical Society, which owns and runs the streetcar museum in Kennebunk, Maine.

A long gap in railroad and modeling activity came with job and family responsibilities, except for crewing on almost every November Suwannee Steam Special excursion, sponsored by the North Florida NRHS Chapter.

In 1984 Cal accompanied Norma, his political activist wife, to the Republican Convention in Dallas. One day was enough, so he took a side trip to San Juan country. After enjoying the "other narrow gauge," Cal drove to Chama and was "overwhelmed by the Cumbres and Toltec and the beautiful country it traverses." He promptly joined the Railroad Club of New Mexico, has worked as a volunteer each August since, and then became one of the original Directors of the Friends.

Cal is right on when he says that "We have a great thing going here, guys and gals! Our challenge now is to bring to our many new associates the satisfaction of helping preserve this unique piece of America and to imbue them with the wonderful spirit of camaraderie and cooperation that is so much a part of our organization. I am sure looking forward to being with all of you this summer!"

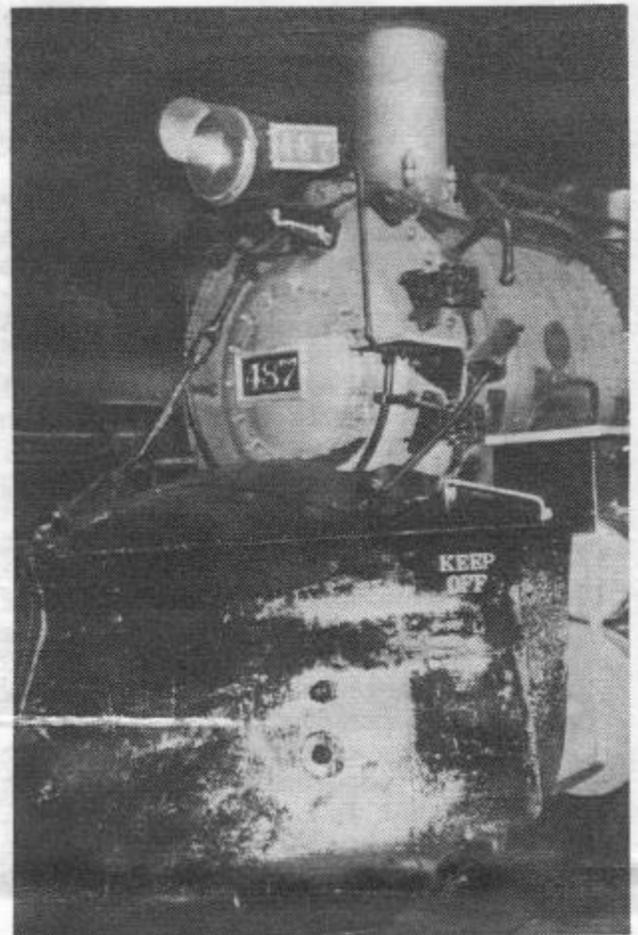


When Cal is not working hard on the M/W crew, he very often is recording railroads on his video camera. Cal presented a professionally edited program one year on Steam Expo. August 1987.



### Highlights of Accomplishments

Winter work is highlighted on page 6 of this issue of the Dispatch. Two of the items of biggest news are the Osier facility and the outstanding condition of the locomotives. Above, work on the Osier Dining Facility has progressed tremendously, and a very handsome building is taking shape in this recent view, (Osier, Colorado - June 1989. Photo credit: Dan Ranger). Right: Engine No. 487 is all ready to go with a beautiful paint job and the restoration of the pilot snow plow, (May 1987. Photo credit: Bill Lock).



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**FRIENDS OF THE CUMBRES & TOLTEC  
SCENIC RAILROAD, INC.  
PO BOX 222, CHAMA, NM 87520**

