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MARCH MEETING & PROGRAM: Our meeting for this month will be held on Sunday the 8th starting at 2 PM at the Missouri Pacific Office Building in North Little Rock. Program will be given by Mr. Charles Kalkbrenner (pronounced Coalburner), Manager of the Cotton Belt Railroad diesel shop at Pine Bluff. Mr. Kalkbrenner will discuss Cotton Belt diesel operations at Pine Bluff and in addition will bring some guests from Pine Bluff. Trust we will have another good attendance so, bring those guests and lets fill up our meeting rooms.

We extend a cordial welcome to our new member, Dapny Henderson of D.G. Henderson Construction of North Little Rock. Danny joined our club at the February meeting.

First edition of the Southern Railway steam excursion schedule for 1981 has been received and the trip of interest to our group is the annual Sentimental Journey sponsored from Memphis to Corinth, Miss. on Saturday, May 2 and Sunday May 3 with a round trip on each day. Power at the smoky end will again be old standby No. 4501. Am sure there will be some from our club who will again want to make this trip.

INTERESTING NEWS ITEMS FROM HERE AND THERE

The Panama Limited has been renamed the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS at the request of the city's mayor. You may recall that the old CITY was a dawn to midnight coach train while the old PANAMA was all-Pullman until 1968 and ran overnight. Amtrak first kept the CITY and dropped the PANAMA, but soon reversed this. However, the first service and first class clientele are long gone; Amtrak's alleged management actively discouraged Pullman business. We recall that the CITY was known up and down the Illinois Central as the AFRICAN QUEEN. Amtrak people unofficially renamed the train the CHICKEN BONE SPECIAL in recognition of the large quantities of fried chicken consumed aboard, with bones often left under the seats or between the cushions. CREDIT: Southeast Texas Chapter, NRHS, Beaumont, Texas with the above. Editor's Note: I had the pleasure of riding the CITY a couple of times and I can see now why it was named the AFRICAN QUEEN. Enough said.

sent

Am quoting below some information ~~recently~~/your editor by Bill Pollard which should be of interest;

"Wednesday, February 11, 1981: Abandoned Rock Island trackage between Little Rock and Fordyce was revived briefly today, for use by the first Rock Island train since the railroad's shut-down on March 28, 1980. Rock Island clean-up crews operated RI #829, (switch engine) with 41 cars from Biddle to the Cotton Belt and Fordyce & Princeton connections in Fordyce. The train carried 41 cars, primarily pulpwood flats and covered hoppers. The slow operating speeds caused the 78 mile trip to take almost 12 hours. The train was preceded by a hy-rail truck to check track and cut trees that had fallen across the track. A second truck followed along the highway to flag highway crossings at points which had previously been protected by automatic crossing flashers. Unit #829 was to be used in switching service at Fordyce on February 12, and then make a return trip to Biddle on Friday, February 13, bringing all remaining Rock Island cars to Biddle from this segment of the railroad".

THE PAST, WILL WE EVER GO BACK?

By: Ken Ziegenbein

Remember the good old days when passenger trains went everywhere in the country? Remember in the 60's when the railroads treated passengers like livestock? Well, I say today's Amtrak passenger trains are immensely better than the trains were, say 15 years ago. The electric equipment works most of the time, not like the steam equipment which continuously broke down. Reservations are much simpler today with one national system than they were in the 60's when the average person had to transfer to several railroads and ticket agents to get anywhere. Everyone (especially railfans) complains about the food on Amtrak. Seems some people want to have a gourmet restaurant on each train. I say, horsefeathers, That's not why most people ride trains. We're living in a "MacDonalds" society today (Look at the billions who eat there). The food aboard Amtrak is at least as good. (I've heard passengers remark how good some of the tray meals really are). The primary purpose of Amtrak is to serve as people movers, not people feeders.

Lastly, the train through Arkansas is again up in the air and it doesn't help to longer on such things as "it ain't as good as it used to be" philosophy. Lets all write letters to our Congressmen asking them for support in keeping the "Inter-American in operation. After all, "now" is the only time we live in. Let's keep the past where it belongs, in books, slides and memories.

Editor's Note: Thanks very much Ken. Although I do not agree with you one hundred percent I do respect your opinion. It so happens that I had the good fortune to live in the "Golden Era" of passenger railroading. In my opinion nothing offered by today's Amtrak can match that of our passenger trains of yesteryear. As for MacDonalds.....????

The St. Louis Southwestern (Cotton Belt) has been given permission to abandon, effective March 1st, operations on the Caruthersville Branch in Missouri and the Blytheville Branch running from Blytheville to Paragould. The latter branch was, until January 1, 1914, known as the Paragould Southeastern Railway and at one time was narrow gauge. Thinking you may be interested, shown below is passenger schedule from the Blytheville branch taken from an old Cotton Belt passenger timetable in the year 1930. Note service was by the old faithful gas electric motor train. Passenger service on the Caruthersville branch utilized one of the Cotton Belt's long drover's cabooses.

Paragould, Hornersville and Blytheville			Table No. 3		
SOUTHWARD—READ DOWN			NORTHWARD—READ UP		
No. 305 Rail Motor Car Daily	No. 301 Rail Motor Car Daily	Miles From St. Louis		No. 304 Rail Motor Car Daily	No. 306 Rail Motor Car Daily
12.05PM	7.00AM	212.7	W Paragould	10.40AM	4.00PM
		219.7	W Morning Star		
12.27PM	7.22AM	249.3	Bard	10.30AM	3.35PM
12.31PM	7.28AM	251.0	Brighton	10.14AM	3.25PM
12.35PM	7.30AM	252.4	Bertie	10.10AM	3.25PM
12.40PM	7.35AM	254.8	Cardwell	10.05AM	3.20PM
12.45PM	7.44AM	257.8	Arbyrd	10.05AM	3.10PM
12.55PM	7.53AM	260.8	Hollywood	10.47AM	3.02PM
1.10PM	8.05AM	265.0	Hornersville	10.30AM	2.48PM
		274.2	Columet		
1.50PM	8.35AM	275.8	Gonzell	10.05AM	2.23PM
2.02PM	8.47AM	279.6	Chickasawba	10.05AM	2.13PM
2.05PM	8.50AM	280.6	W Blytheville	10.05AM	2.10PM

At the moment I am looking at a little coach seat menu from the SOUTHERN PACIFIC about the AUTOMATIC BUFFET CAR. Do any of you remember this? If you don't here is a short explanation...In the waning years of passenger service the S.P. took several of their full diners off some of their trains and in their place substituted what is better known as the "Automat Car". Part of the cars contained the traditional dining car tables, the other part contained automatic vending machines and Microwave Ovens. You could even get cocktails, whiskeys, etc. on the cars. For example: Dry Martini for \$1.00, Manhattan, Vodka Martini and Old Fashioned, Scotch, Bourbon, Gin, for the same price. You could still get a hot tray meal from the attendant if you did not want to use the machines of the microwave oven. The menu I have is dated in August of 1970 (not too long ago). Looks to me that there was plenty in these cars to satisfy your appetite at rather reasonable prices.

Wonder how today's Amtrak Amdinette would compare to S. P.'s Automat Car? I never rode an S.P. train with one of these cars nor have I ridden an Amtrak train with the Amdinette.

CONFIRMED LOCATIONS OF FORMER RAILROAD OWNED PASSENGER CARS IN ARKANSAS

<u>NAME OR NUMBER</u>	<u>TYPE OF CAR</u>	<u>FORMER OWNER/OWNERS</u>	<u>NEW OWNER/OWNERS AND PRESENT LOCATION</u>
7	Business	St. Louis Southwestern	Owner Unknown, located near Wabbaseka, Ark.
TRAVELER	Business	St. Louis Southwestern	Elrod Lumber Co. Rison, Ark.
RANGER	Business	St. Louis Southwestern	Howard Hindman, Lake Ehrling, Bradley, Ark.
50	Business	GM&O - ICG	Robt. L. Dortch. Car now based at L. Rock
99	Business	COLO. MIDLAND-W.F. & S. ME-NA	Owner Unknown. Located at Kensett, Ark.
MAGNOLIA	Business	Louisiana & Arkansas	Mr. & Mrs. Pratt Rammal - Couchwood near Hot Springs
CHOCTAW	Business	Rock Island	Hugh Patterson, Little Rock, Ark.
PIKES PEAK	Diner-Lounge	Rock Island	Bruce Nelson, El Dorado, Ark.
CYNTHIA	Sleeper	Several Lines	Messrs. Bill Pollard, Bill Eldridge and Randy Cookus. Car based at Little Rock
UNKNOWN	Sleeper	Southern Pacific	Henry Ketcher, North Little Rock, Ark.

Cars owned by our club which include former parlor car owned by Pullman Company and baggage car formerly owned by Rock Island are not listed. Business Car SAN JOSE is not listed since it is still in service of the Cotton Belt and is based at Pine Bluff. This is a heavyweight biz car and was formerly in the service of the Southern Pacific. Former Cotton Belt heavyweight business car FAIR LANE, now at Tahlequah, Oklahoma, is for sale. Wouldn't it be nice if this car could be brought back to Arkansas or Texas?

Mr. B.B. Garrett, Special Assistant, Cotton Belt, Tyler, Texas, retired effective February 1st. Am sure you will remember that Bryan presented a special program for our club in 1979. He will now have more time to devote to his famous WHISTLE Stop Ranch at Flint, Texas. We wish Bryan the best of everything on his retirement. He is a personal friend who I have known since the days of World War II.

Pacific Northwest-NRHS and the Southern Pacific will operate a special excursion train between Portland, Oregon and Sacramento, California utilizing SP 4-8-4 No. 4449. The engine will be re-painted into its original livery of orange, red, black and silver. Train will travel southbound from Portland on April 25th. The northbound movement will be from Sacramento to Klamath Falls on May 15th and continue onto Portland on May 16th. CREDIT NRHS NEWS, FEBRUARY, 1981.

See all of you at the March meeting. Pay your DUES now.

The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization. Regular meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month (with some exceptions). Refreshments usually available and visitors always welcome. Send all news items and exchange newsletters to editor.

Could the three guys ---
pictured at the right be ---
Bill Merck, Jim Bennett ----
and Walter Walker??? -----

Or, it could be Bill Bailey,
Boyd Pyle or Randy Tardy.

What do you think???



DON'T FORGET YOUR DUES.
THERE MAY BE A CUT OFF TIME
SOONER THAN YOU THINK.

Lets all try and get some more
new members. Interest in rail
roads is at an all time high.

