

FEATURE ARTICLE

FROM THE STEAM CHEST - NOVEMBER 1960

By Craig McDowall

Ed. Note: - The Steam Chest was the newsletter of the Highballers, the group that formed in 1958 and then incorporated as the West Coast Railfan Association (Today's WCRA) in May of 1961. As we move towards the WCRA's 50th anniversary in May 2011, these looks back will be fascinating insights to our organization's past. Much of this issue from 1960 focuses on happenings in the logging railway scene, which was in its final years in the area.

Rayonier Lumber Co.

On the Rayonier Sekiu line, engine #8, a 2-6-6-2 side tanker was back in action as one of the new diesels was out of service. Willamette #2 is in storage at Hoko Camp after being used a few months ago. Willamette #4 was sent to the Sekiu shops and was completely overhauled and repainted and then sent to the Doleduc reload (a standby steam reload station located near Forks, Washington) to await truck transportation to Port Angeles to be put on display. The old Long Bell engine was looking like she just came out of the builders shop. Most of the Rayonier railroad crews hate the new diesels and say "they aren't worth a plugged nickel". They also say that "old #14 could handle more tonnage up the Dickey Camp grade unassisted than the two diesels can today double-heading". Further "the old steamers could re-rail themselves if they derailed but when the diesels derailed, it would tie up the entire railroad due to the narrow tires on the diesels, compared to the steamers wider tires would take a gauge wider than 4 feet 8.5 inches".

In other Rayonier news, the line from Lake Pleasant to Sappho Camp was recently ripped up. And Shay #10, the only surviving Ozette Timber engine, on display at Forks has had a steel walkway installed so folks can enter the cab (MCM note: and likely increased the risk of removing appliances!). Re the locomotives:

- #45, a 2-6-2, has been donated to the city of Hoquiam, Washington.
- 2-8-2 #90; is in the shops for minor repairs and a repainting and
- 2-8-2 #70 is kept under steam and is used around the Railroad Camp line as a switcher, a stationary steam boiler and as a 'hot engine' to steam up the mallets after being dead over the weekend or holiday period. She replaced the #45 in these duties about two years ago. The crews loved the #45 and say that she was the fastest engine on the roster.
- Mallets #110 & #111 are generally kept as spares with the 14, 38 and 120 seeing most of the road service.
- Mike #38 is considered the best engine on the Rayonier roster. She has been in use longer here (5 years) than at the Sierra Railroad where she became famous. During those five years, she has had nothing more serious than tire replacement and is loved by all the hoggers.

- Sister mikes #2 & #101 are stored unserviceable at R.R. Camp.

Georgia-Pacific Railroad

The Nine Spot of the GP's Toledo, Oregon operations met her end on October 7th when she and two Southern Pacific coaches were wrecked in a trestle collapse during the filming of a new movie "Ring of Fire". The trestle collapse was deliberate for the movie. The Baldwin saddle tanker 2-6-2 had a tender added to her. The movie crew also burned an old International Paper Mill to the ground at Veronia, Oregon.

The trestle was on the abandoned Simpson Logging Company's branch line in the Grisdale area of Washington state. The train collapsed 180 feet down to the bottom of the gorge.. The movie script has the train full of passengers run onto the trestle (the train was escaping a forest fire) where all the passengers detrained and had to walk across to the other side because the train "stalled" on the middle of the trestle and then 'caught fire'. They set this up with smudge pots creating the smoke and the trestle was undermined by a donkey engine at the base of the trestle. The end result was a pile of wood and steel, engine, tender and two coaches in a ravine some 50 miles from Shelton, Washington.

Simpson Logging

Simpson Logging operates four diesels out of their Shelton, WA location. They generally make one round trip a week to the woods and one engine is used as a switcher at Shelton. The "Lee Wills", a Baldwin-Whitcomb road switcher is in use at the McCleary, WA mill. She came second hand from an industrial operation in California and was named after an old Simpson hogger. An ancient derelict 0-4-2T, which could handle two cars, is to be restored cosmetically and displayed at McCleary. She was used as late as 1942 and bears some resemblance to the "Minnetonka", the Northern Pacific's first engine; a Smith and Porter 0-4-0 from 1870.

Hillcrest Lumber Co.

Osborne Bay Wharf #1 (affectionately called "Number One Spot") spent some time in the parent Hillcrest Lumber Co. shops at Mesachie Lake B.C. during Sept. and is now back in service at Crofton. During its absence, diesel #7 from Western Forest Industries (which had shut down their rail operations and Hillcrest now does their switching) was leased to Hillcrest for the Crofton job.

There is some speculation that Hillcrest might purchase WFI's Shay #5 and retire Climax #10 (the only known active Climax in the world other than one in New Zealand) to standby duties. Climax #9 (a smaller two truck coal burning sister engine) would then be sold. It is likely to be sold to a preservation group or it might be put on display at their Mesachie Lake offices.

Great Northern

GN is running a vista dome car on one of the *Internationals* between and Vancouver and Seattle. The morning train from Seattle, which arrives in Vancouver at noon, has had a dome car in its consist for a few weeks now. GN crews are nervous about this as they fear someone may throw a rock from one of the overpasses in the Still Creek Cut in the Grandview area a mile east of the station. This has occurred a couple of times when rocks were thrown at the diesel windshields.

Chicago, Burlington & Quincy business cars "Burlington" and "Roundup" visited Vancouver from October 20-23rd carrying the railroad's President and VP.

BC Electric Railway

BCER diesels #941 (*Ed. Note—BCER #941 now on exhibit in the CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre*) and 942 have been repaired and returned to service after a "cornfield meet" a few weeks ago. BCE has announced that the BCER company will go into self liquidation later this year to simplify the corporate structure of British Columbia Electric Co. This will not affect the railway nor its employees.

Canadian Pacific Railway

Stainless steel coaches taken off *The Dominion* (CPR's second transcontinental passenger train) are now in use on the four Montreal to Quebec City passenger trains. Lounge cars "Algonquin", "Kokanee", "Tremblant Park" and diners "Cartier", "Champlain", and "Frontenac" are the former Dominion coaches. They are also occasionally being used on the "Atlantic Limited" between Montreal and St. John NB.

CPR 4-6-2 #1270, the engine which made the last run between Montreal and Three Rivers, hauled an Oct. 16th special to St. Agathe, PQ. #1271, 3476 & 3492 are all tied up at Three Rivers as there is no room for them in Montreal.

November marks the 75th Anniversary of the driving of the Last Spike to complete Canada's first transcontinental railway at Craigellachie in Eagle Pass in the Canadian Rockies.

Pacific Great Eastern Railway

A PGE diesel was the target of a charging bear near Squamish recently. The bear was knocked off the tracks and was killed in the collision. No reported damage to the diesel other than some "red paint" on the front coupler!

And that's it from 1960!