The Willow Creek Gazette

Willow Creek Railroad Museum Winter 2015-16

Celebrating Willow Creek's 41st Year

1975 - 2016

Inside this issue:

2015 is Now History …. …

2015 was a big year for Willow Creek Railroad.

Extensive modifications were made to the signal system. New signals were added that allow better spacing of trains which reduce run time delays. Control of the system has been consolidated so the entire system can be activated at a single location near the ICP entrance. If someone forgets to turn the signal system off, it will automatically turn itself off after a given period of time.

The historic searchlight signals from the former Southern Pacific line near Brooks have been activated to change at random intervals so visitors can see how these signals operate.

The remodel of the ICP has been completed except for a few minor finishing items. A storage track has been added on the south side. We look forward to completing signage on the building false front.

APMA is progressing on the planning of the new gateway entrance to the park. This can have a significant impact on the Willow Creek layout on the east end and proposals for the revised track plan have been started.

The 2015 steam-up and other APMA scheduled events helped us through generous donations from riders. Other significant donations have assisted toward the completion of our projects.

Thanks to all who have donated their labor (and $).

Submit your article / comment: wcrr.gazette@gmail.com

Do your have an article or a photograph that may be of interest to the members? You can now submit it via e-mail:

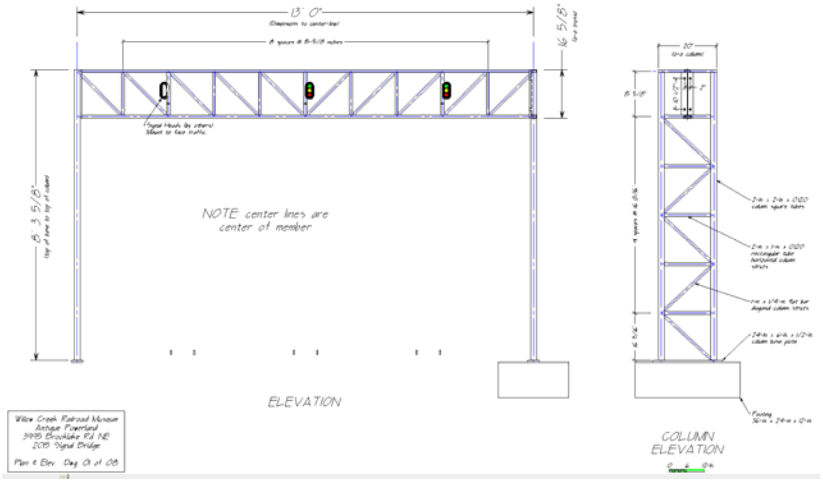
wcrr.gazette@gmail.com

We've asked previously for article ideas without much success. Maybe this will make it easier. (we hope) You can submit photos as .JPG's; stories as .PDF's or Micro$oft Word documents or .TXT files. This can be easily copied & formatted into the Gazette template for publication.

The Editor looking for article ideas

Your assistance would be appreciated.

2015 Signal Bridge Project



We are fortunate to have the assistance of Mike Myers, Welding Instructor, with the Welding Program at Chemeketa Community College. Mike and his students previously built our Willow Creek bridge and the west end signal bridges. Each signal bridge for this project has over 70 pieces of steel to be cut, fitted and welded. This project provides the students with experience at constructing a project from construction drawings and specifications. Hopefully this helps them with their future careers in fabrication and construction.

Here Noel Meyer is touch sanding to remove remaining weld splatter prior to sending the bridges for sand blasting and powder coating.

Dry days in September allowed the excavation for the signal bridge footings.

2015 Signal Bridge Project <==> continued

Hmmm.... Murphy's Law: something always seems to present a challenge for placement of the footing anchor bolts.

Dick Hofsheier's assistance in transporting the signal bridges to and from the sand blaster's and powder coater's work sites is much appreciated.

Another nice dry October day. Here, Ernie Hellman builds the footing forms for the new signal bridges.

.... and the winter rains started the next day...

November 21ST...

...finally, a break in the rain...cold but dry...

with two mixers working, the four footings for the two signal bridges were poured.

Signal System Operation Class

This year Alan Shifley spent many much appreciated hours updating Willow Creek's signal system operation. On some of those days, the weather was uncooperative.

On Saturday September 5th , Alan held a signal and low voltage class. He explained how the system works and how to check the system in case of errors.

The classroom was followed with a demonstration. With multi-meter in hand, Alan showed how to take track test readings.

In Memoriam
Jack Chapman
March 18, 1923 - January 21, 2016

Jack was a WWII veteran. He was in the Pacific Theater. Jack was a machine gunner and flew in a small Douglas A-20 Havoc bomber. Jack is on the left in the 1944 New Guinea photo.

Jack was known for was his patriotism. Over the years, Jack donated the Willow Creek flag poles and the American Flags. He'd sure let you hear it if they weren't flying when he drove in!!!

He worked and retired from the phone company in Yakima Washington.

Jack was among the first people to participate in the "Great Oregon Steam Up" on the current site in 1970. He first joined WCRR in1995 but dropped out later. He rejoined in 2002 and started building his "consist" and became a very supportive member.

He was always available to give rides on his train whenever there was a Powerland event or birthday party. Jack was very generous in his contributions to Willow Creek. He donated the clock we see in the station cover; the box car that was labeled for Willow Creek; the "grain elevator" cover for the fuel tank; the small building that contains the fuel hose for the steam engines; the mile post signs on the signal stands and much more.

He could be called a perfectionist. His work had to be "just right". He built the grain elevator twice. When the plywood on the first one started to delaminate, he tore it apart, gave it away and built a second one with high grade plywood.

We'll miss you Jack!!!

In Memoriam
Jack Chapman
1923-2016

A Glimpse of History: The railroad lock.

Locks were an integral part of railroad operations. A particular company's territory might stretch over hundreds of lonely miles. The security of its facilities was of utmost importance. Consider how much damage a single misaligned switch might cause, and it's no wonder that railroad companies paid considerable attention to security from the very beginnings of the industry. Railroad locks had to be strong enough to endure harsh, industrial conditions as well as repeated use. They also had to be standardized so that different employees could open them, provided they had the proper key.

Locks evolved through a progression of styles, from very ornate customized variations to more utilitarian, standardized models. Among the most prized styles are the early "cast" locks which had ornate, three-dimensional designs cast into the lock body, The designs were usually based on the railroad's initials. Making such locks involved special fabrication and brass casting skills, since each design varied with the railroad.

In order to maintain smooth operations the railroads were big on security and many locks and keys have survived that were used to lock everything from railway switches to mail bags.

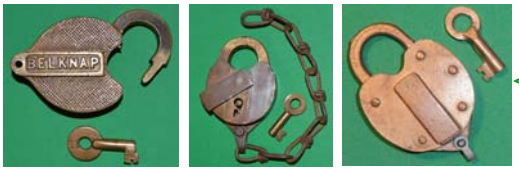
Inner Mechanism "S.P. Lines" Early pressed steel lock

In time, locks evolved to plainer brass models with simple cast initials, and then to standardized, steel models with stamped railroad initials. The steel models were of course subject to corrosion, whereas the brass models just acquired a patina. The shape of railroad locks varied also. "Heart shaped" locks were most common and were typically used to lock switches.

U.P. Signal Lock Signal Lock "key" Signal Lock Mail Bag Lock U.P. Roadway & Bridge Department

A variety of other shapes were also manufactured for such purposes as locking signal facilities, mail bags and buildings.

Value on the collectors market varies accordingly with steel models generally being quite inexpensive ($10-$20) to acquire.



Un-marked railroad style locks.

As with lanterns, "railroad style" locks could reasonably have been used in industrial operations of a non-railroad nature. Generally speaking, collectors consider a lock to be a railroad lock only if it is marked for a railroad.