

# LINEUP

Motorcar Operators West Official Magazine

**2017 Colorado Fall Colors Excursion  
Idaho Northern and Pacific Railroad and  
the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority  
Fillmore and Western Railroad**

**Volume 25, No. 2**

**Summer Fall 2017**

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## Cover Photo Credits

Front cover: Jen Limon - Speeders en route to Joseph,  
OR

Back cover: Jaime Foster - Speeders en route to La Veta on  
the Colorado Fall Color Excursion between two rock outcrop-  
pings

2018 MOW Membership and Renewals and new membership applications are now being accepted.

All 2017 memberships expired on December 31. Please download the printable form on the MOW website  
([www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)) and fill-out all requested information. Mail the form along with a \$24.00 check to:

Motorcar Operators West, c/o Harry Fischer, Membership Coordinator, 28819 Shadow Valley Lane, Santa Clarita, CA 91390

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# President's Message

## Jim Culbertson

Greetings to all. I thought I would open by showing just how great a hobby and group we are. Our public tends to view us as the circus coming to town with all the trimmings. The colorful cars seem to bring a smile to most people along the way and I think I've seen a few Harley riders thinking they were having fun until we come along. It just seems universal that our hobby brings out that "I get it", from people you come in contact with and it's powerful for our railroads who receive positive publicity when the motorcars show up. Adding value to our railroad relationships helps to keep the rails headed our direction. It's a direction and strategy that Motorcar Operators West is pursuing.



So now let's take a moment to look inside the hobby. Our experience on the Joseph, Oregon run last fall brought this to mind. You are planning a vacation but rather than a travel agent, you have an Excursion Coordinator who will for the most part, plan a significant portion of your trip. Not only will you have a vacation destination and an itinerary, but a bunch of your friends and new acquaintances will be there to greet you. No family could move their brood in these kinds of numbers with any success. For those who participated in the Joseph run, Alpine fest, and the beauty of Wallowa Lake, you know exactly what I'm talking about. The hobby encompasses a great group of people who display cooperation 24/7 with a little herding cats mixed in. Thank your EC for all the hard work in helping plan your vacation.

On the vacation front, we have Oregon & Washington State excursions on the horizon followed by rails in Nevada and Idaho for your Memorial Week. Hopefully more to fill in over the summer and come fall, MOW has the State of Alaska and the Alaska RR which can only be described as a great vacation. In October plans are for a run to the Grand Canyon and the Copper Basin Railroad to round out the vacation season. Book it now before the train leaves the station.

Our efforts to open up old and new rail opportunities continues as a top Board priority. Our continued safe operation and maintaining a positive, supportive role with our host railroads is key to our future success.

Safe and Shiny wheels to you all!

Jim Culbertson

President, Motorcar Operators West

# Colorado Fall Color Excursion 2017

September 9-14 , 2017

**Bill Schertle , Excursion Coordinator**

With help from Lonnie Hughes, Rob Small, Jerry Geiger and Rich Reiff

Written by Bill Schertle

Photos Courtesy of Jamie Foster, Lonnie Hughes, Al Rodi, Norman Wolstein

The Colorado excursions never grow old. So I contacted my friends at the Rocky Mountain Division to ask about a joint excursion with Motorcar Operators West. They were enthusiastic about working together and soon we were in the planning stages of a multi-day Fall Color Excursion from September 9 - 14, 2017. As word spread through NARCOA I was surprised to obtain three sign ups from the deep South and one from New Hampshire. They were a delight to have along with the rest of us from the West.

We began our tour, as we usually do, with the Leadville, Colorado & Southern Railroad. Jerry Geiger was our EC with assistance from Rob Small. Leadville, MP 150.5, lies at about 10,000 feet elevation with the end of track, MP 139, at around 11,000 feet. Along the way, the trees were beginning to turn fall colors. We also crossed the headwaters of the Missouri River. There was a late afternoon run on Saturday and a morning run on Sunday in conjunction with the excursion train. The weather was perfect. Slowly following the train down the mountain provided great opportunities to pause for photos and to enjoy the expansive scenery. The early afternoon setoff on Sunday allowed us to get an early start for the 3-4 hour drive south to our next set-on in Alamosa where we would spend the next three days in the beautiful San Luis Valley on the San Luis and Rio Grande RR. Our EC's for this portion of the excursion were Jerry Geiger and Rich Reiff from RMD and Lonnie Hughes and Bill Schertle from MOW.



After an early morning safety meeting in Alamosa, the lineup began the 29 mile journey to the end of track at Antonito. Our plan was to arrive before 10:00 to watch and photograph the Cumbres and Toltec Narrow Gauge train as it departed for Chama, NM. We arrived in plenty of time as we travelled almost entirely on tangent track with few major crossings. We tied down the motorcars about 100 yards from the narrow gauge tracks and depot.

The coal fired steam engine put on quite a show as it pulled out to begin its day long journey to Chama. We all got some amazing photos, some with our standard gauge motorcars in the distance. We were able to tour the yard and take a short walk into town for ice cream or lunch. We departed about 1:00 for the return trip to Alamosa.

The Cumbres  
and Toltec  
steam engine  
put on quite a  
show.



Our second day on the SLRG would be the most challenging as it begins at about 7000 feet but climbs to over 10,000 feet before it begins its descent to the town of La Veta. The first 23 miles to our rest stop at Fort Garland is flat and straight. From there to the summit at Fir, 21 miles, is a steep climb and a real challenge for the operator. The grades range between 3% and 4%. The view from Fir is spectacular but we soon had to negotiate the steep downgrade to the town of La Veta for lunch and to turn on the wye. All too soon we had to return to our motorcars and retrace our steps back to Alamosa to prepare for our final day on the SLRG.

Our final day on the SLRG would take us west about 16 miles to Sugar Junction where we switch on to the San Luis Central RR for the 10 mile ride to the end of track at Center. The SLC is a shortline that primarily hauls agricultural products in and farm produce out. After turning the cars we returned to Sugar Junction to take the west leg of the wye to continue 3 miles to the town of Monte Vista for lunch in the adjacent park or nearby restaurants. All too soon it was time to return to Alamosa for setoff and to say good-bye to the San Luis and Rio Grande and its friendly and helpful staff.



Our final day on this tour began in South Fork, CO. west of Alamosa. We will be on the Creede Branch of the Denver and Rio Grande. This 20 mile railroad is one of the most scenic many of us have experienced. It follows the Rio Grande and crosses it twice. The right of way was cleared of rocks and debris by several members of the Rocky Mountain Division of Narco before the excursion. Thanks to them we were able to motorcar the entire railroad, stopping for a tour of the restored depot at Wagon Wheel Gap before turning the cars at the famous Wasson Wye. Unfortunately, shortly after our excursion, several crossings were paved over cutting off access to the end of track. We would be the last excursion to reach the wye. Hopefully, we will retain access to the remaining track at least for the near future.



Sasha waiting to hit the rails.

My thanks to the Rocky Mountain Division and especially to Jerry Geiger and Rich Reiff for helping to coordinate this excursion. I was especially thankful for being able to meet some of our motorcar colleagues from east of the Mississippi. They were a fun and friendly group of folks and were deeply appreciative of our efforts in putting together this Fall Color Excursion. I hope to see you on the rails again in the future. Thanks for coming.





Working to free a chain brake after the track expanded in the warm sun.

Cold Joint.



Warm Joint.





# Idaho Northern and Pacific Railroad and the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority Joseph Branch, Joseph Oregon September 29 - October 1, 2017

## Dave Balestreri , Excursion Coordinator

Written by Carol Balestreri

Photos Courtesy of:

Carol Balestreri, Roger Farrel, Sue Fischer, Joan McAmis Good, Jennifer Limon, Vic Theis



Dave Balestreri holds the safety meeting prior to departing Island City.

Set-on was Thursday, September 28 and Friday, September 29 in La Grande, Oregon.

For the first 21 miles, from La Grande to Elgin we traveled on Idaho Northern and Pacific Railroad Company tracks (INPR). For the 63 miles from Elgin to Joseph we were on The Wallowa Union Railroad Authority tracks (WURR) also known as the Joseph Branch, which was once part of Idaho Northern & Pacific. In 1997 the INPR abandoned the rails above Elgin. In 2003 the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority was formed to govern the line.

The new Elgin Depot was completed in 2012 providing a ticket office, gift shop, restrooms, indoor and outdoor waiting areas and parking. Volunteers from the Friends of the Joseph Branch, a non-profit organization, operate the excursion train.



Excursion attendees visit the Elgin Depot Friends of the Joseph Branch store.



Elgin rest stop.



John Martin was bestowed the honorary "Mr. Congeniality" Award by EC Dave Balestreri during the Elgin stop.

Bill Phoenix and his one man band gets everyone prepared for the Alpenfest during the stop in Elgin.



As you can tell from the pictures this is a very pretty run following the Grande Ronde and Wallowa Rivers as we wind our way up to Joseph. We had a rest stop at the Elgin Depot, changed escorts from INPR to Friends of the Joseph Branch and continued on. We stopped in Wallowa for our lunch break and got to see the railriders take off for their ride back to Minam. Upon arrival in Joseph we were picked up by the Moffitt Brothers buses and taken to our accommodations.



There's always time for a photo op, especially on a really cool bridge.

Meeting the Railriders at their turn around point. Most pedalers cast envious eyes on our powered rides after the first half of their 26 mile pedal adventure.



I'm sure glad we weren't passing by when that rock rolled down the cliff.



Beautiful Fall colors on the way to Joseph.



Tall grass caused some traction and braking issues, but everybody made it through safely.

We stayed at the Wallowa Lake Lodge for the two nights (MOW members occupied the majority of the rooms). It is right on Wallowa Lake and encircled by the soaring peaks of the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Others stayed at the Eagle Cap Chalets, while some stayed in Joseph. Saturday was very cold and we elected to remain close by and just wandered up the road to the Alpenfest festivities, eating from the food booths and buying a few Christmas presents at the craft booths. Some folks hitched rides into the quaint little town of Joseph and some took the tram up to the top of Mt. Howard, where there was snow! But everyone was back at the Lodge for the group dinner. We enjoyed the camaraderie of having the dining room all to ourselves, as well as the excellent meal. Sunday morning our busses took us back to our railcars in Joseph and we started off in drizzling rain. The weather got better, though, and we enjoyed the changing fall colors of the scenery back to La Grande and set-off.



Two people were mentored on the trip: Byron "Bud" Bromily of Oakesdale, WA, and Mary Gobel of Amboy, WA.

Thank you to Steve Adams for providing everyone with a track profile of the Joseph Branch, and a copy of the *On the Line* Newspaper of the Eagle Cap Excursion Train. Also thank you to Rogers Asphalt Paving for graciously giving us permission to leave our cars and trailers in their lot while we were off enjoying our trip to Joseph.

Cold and rainy departure from Joseph on Sunday. The weather pretty much stayed that way most of the way home.



# MOW Annual Meeting

Nov 11-12, 2017

Western Railway Museum, Rio Vista Junction, California

The MOW annual meeting was held November 12 at the Western Railway Museum. The meeting started with a night run on Friday November 11, going to Molena to the South, then followed by a run North to Cannon.

The official meeting was held the following day at 11:00.

Following the meeting, the Friday night run was repeated at 1:00 Saturday afternoon



Jim Culbertson, MOW President, leads the annual meeting



Robin Douglas swearing to something EC Dave Balestreri is saying while Frank Luft looks on.



Wildlife on the run to Cannon on Sunday.



# Fillmore and Western Railroad

January 6, 2018

## Wayne Parsons, Excursion Coordinator

Photos Courtesy of:

Carol Balestreri, Sue Fischer, John Fowkes, Paul Greenfield, Jen Limon, Laura Wambsgans

For a while it looked like the Fillmore and Western run might not happen due to the wildfires that struck the area in Dec 2017. Fortunately the fires moved west towards the coast, away from Fillmore and Santa Paula, and were out by Jan 8 when the run was scheduled. The weather turned out to be beautiful, in the 60's and the sun shining.



EC Wayne Parsons leads the morning safety meeting



Entrance to the movie tunnel just outside the Fillmore yard on the way to Piru.

After EC Wayne Parsons conducted the safety meeting, the consist headed towards Piru for the first part of the run, passing orange groves, and artichoke fields, before arriving in the small town of Piru.



Orange groves along the track to Piru.





Piru terminal.

Departing the Piru terminal, headed back to Fillmore.



Harry (Membership Dude) and Sue Fischer and friends

John Fowkes' Kalamazoo 56A and M-19.



Parked at Fillmore Station, preparing to depart for the Loose Caboose.

Returning to the Fillmore and Western yard, headed East for the afternoon run to Piru.





1902 bridge.

We then headed back to Fillmore, and after a short stop, we departed the Fillmore yard for the Loose Caboose, a garden center and gift emporium with some lovely Koi ponds. After a short break, we turned around and headed back to Fillmore for another quick stop before returning to the Piru station. On the trip back to Fillmore, we stopped at the Bennett's Honey Farm to sample different types of honey, and purchase honey and honey products. We got back to the Fillmore yard in the late afternoon, which got everybody set off before dark.

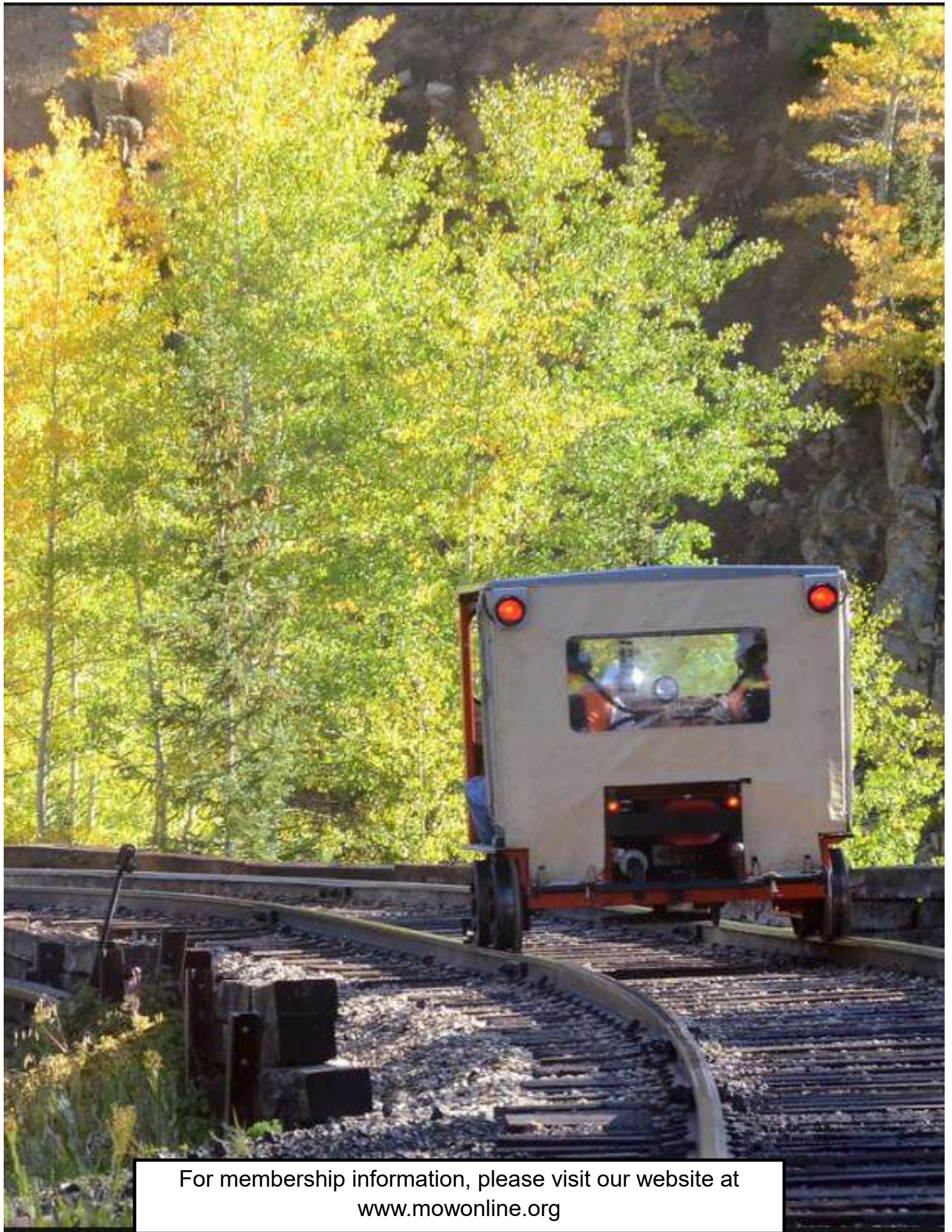


The Loose Caboose, where we had a short stop and turned back to Fillmore.

You can see the burned hills in the background, after the devastating wildfires in December.



Run participants check out a bee hive at the Bennett's Honey Farm.



For membership information, please visit our website at [www.mowonline.org](http://www.mowonline.org)