

Director's Report
Steve Habeck, FRRS Vice-President
December, 2013

The first Santa Train went well, despite the cold and snow. We had enough volunteers to safely run the train, cover the gate, and man the passenger cars. The “new look” Santa Train made it’s debut, utilizing mostly LED lights, in several colors. Although expensive, the LED lights are worth it, due to durability and reduced power consumption. I wound up spending \$805 out of my own pocket at the stores in Quincy where I got supplies, as well as about \$600 at the hardware store in Portola, on our account (almost all of which was acquired on sale at half-price or lower). As usual, I started on the train in mid-October, and barely got it done in time due to my work schedule on the extra board. Charlie Spikes, his son Eric, and Duane VanDerVeen got the fence lights up and working (started by Matt Elems), and, of course, the passenger cars were really dressed up this year by the usual team of my daughters Jennifer and Kathy (and grandson Zayden), Kathy’s husband Kevin, my wife Mary, my sisters-in-law Vickie Krois (Sarge) and Susie Johnson, and Vickie’s partner Eddie. Gail McClure arranged to have the light plant delivered, as well as handling publicity and fundraising. I would have liked to get lights up on more handrails and barricades, but time didn’t allow that to happen, as well as the bitter cold (I did manage to get the front gate lit up, although it was an extreme ordeal in the wind and cold on Tuesday, the 3rd). As usual, Fritz and Poindexter worked behind the scenes to accomplish a lot of things that needed to get done. Gail has compiled a list of everyone who helped out for the decorating, operation, and serving for the Santa Trains, to which I add a hearty “Thank You”.

I received a phone call on Wednesday, Dec.11, from Kolson Lucas of Sterling Rail, who is the contact we’ve been dealing with regarding the sale of the VIA lounge. He stated that he and the prospective buyer are planning on visiting the Museum in late January or early February, and here’s why: the buyer is now interested in making an offer for a package deal including the VIA lounge, our crew sleeper (ex-CN 1112 *Edenwold*), AND our “B” unit, WP 925-C (ex-CN 9190), all of which they saw on our website. While I am still unhappy with the Board’s decision to sell the lounge car, I will respect that decision and proceed accordingly. I will NOT, however, have anything to do with undermining our volunteer crew support facilities by selling the sleeper, or even consider selling our “B” unit. We have invested too much time and money in this equipment, and I seriously doubt any offer made would even come close to what these pieces are worth to us. I can’t see a blue-carded, operational “B” unit, part of our core collection, going to a static display site to rust away. Also, the sleeper has flat spots (I suspect illegal) on all it’s wheels, which would have to be dealt with. Now I know why the lounge car is still here.

Mechanical wizards McClain and Whetstone have disassembled the leaking cylinder liner on WP 707, and, as suspected, it had lower liner seal rings at one time, but they’re now essentially gone. The liner, cylinder, and head are still removed, to be replaced when the weather improves. They were assisted greatly in locating the leak by

Matt Elems, who helped them water the engine and start it, to find the leak. Seth Adams was here on the Thanksgiving weekend to work on WP1503, then turned his attention to a fuel leak on the 1100, which he and Matt Parker repaired (although I subsequently blew something out in the fuel system while switching prior to the first Santa Train on Friday, Dec.6th, spraying fuel oil all over the engineer's side in front of the engine). Until this gets fixed, we have no available engine, unless we are able to water the 2873 (if the hoses and riser aren't frozen). The 1100 also needs to have it's antifreeze/water mix topped off (no level visible in the coolant sight glass). We suspect it leaks past the heads/upper liners seals into the airboxes when it gets really cold.

The electric cart has a flat tire (left rear), the same one we've had fixed before. With all the plowing Fritz did after the snowfall, plus the use of the cabooses stoves and the engines, we need to acquire some diesel fuel. The backhoe, 1100, 2873, and the cabooses stoves all need fuel. I can't see paying road tax on diesel when we don't have to, so I haven't bought any up town.

I have a plan for the shop ready to put in place after the Santa Train teardown is completed, assuming we can get an engine to run. We will have the 165 and it's tender back in the shop, as well as the 1503 and the 917-D for upcoming work. The business car will also stay inside, now that we have it finally dried out and ventilated.