

To: FRRS Board of Directors
From: Paul Finnegan, *Train Sheet* Editor
Re: *Train Sheet* Report
Date: November 10, 2020

July/August/September 2020 Issue #186

As reported last month, in sending the email delivery *Train Sheets*, I used a new tool I created on the PhirePhly Design web server system, `send_bulk_email.sh`. Given text files with the address list and email body, and the PDF file for the *Train Sheet*, it sends the emails (185 in this case) automatically one at a time directly using our `vesa0[123].kjsl.com` email appliance servers. Previously our bulk emails had to be done in smaller batches as a bcc list going through Hostmonster by hand. Hostmonster has set limits on how many emails could be sent within certain time periods so it took a couple hours to get them all sent.

After sending the emails, I got two reports back from members that the email had been received, but it had no text body and no attachment. Therefore, I re-sent the *Train Sheet* email from my gmail account and both members received it in good order. In the meantime, one member, John Pietrasik, had tried opening the original email on his Windows laptop running Firefox, and the original email was fine. The issue was when he opened it on his iPad. John helped us debug the problem by extracting the raw email code from his original email. With his extracted code, some insights he shared with us and a Eureka moment for Kenneth, the problem (in hindsight) was obvious.

Checking with the other member who reported a problem, she also was using an iPad!

All of the UNIX mail on Hostmonster, and now on the PhirePhly Design system, had been using the UNIX mail utility. Kenneth had encouraged me years ago to change to a more robust mail tool known as mutt. However, Hostmonster did not have mutt installed so I had to use their very old (7/15/10 version) of mail. Now that we have full control on our webhost server, I tried mutt. The version of mutt on the PhirePhly Design system is from 12/18/19. My internal testing showed it worked fine and I sent a second *Train Sheet* email to John using mutt and he acknowledged right away he could open the PDF attachment and the body text was there on his iPad. I have recoded the bulk email tool I created to now use mutt, so we should not see this problem again.

I want to thank John Pietrasik and Kenneth Finnegan for their help. I would not have been able to resolve it without both of them helping me.

Second Issue with Train Sheet by email

On Monday, October 12, Ethan Doty sent me an email asking about issue #186 of the *Train Sheet*, he had not received his copy. I checked the logs and his was emailed on October 5. He checked his spam folder and it was not there. Wondering if this was a side effect as described above, I sent a second copy now using mutt and it was also not received. Then Ethan asked me to send it to his gmail account instead of his `pabell.net` account. He got it right away in gmail. Since we now have access to the mail logs since moving off Hostmonster on both the host system and the email server, Kenneth was able to deduce that the root cause was AT&T (which is the real handler behind the curtain for `att.net`, `sbcglobal.net` and `pacbell.net`) had blacklisted us. So all the email from `wplives.org` would be rejected, not even delivered as spam. Kenneth and I both submitted requests to AT&T to remove us from their blacklist.

With this new insight, I checked and found that 24 other email delivery members were also effected. I resent their *Train Sheets* on Tuesday October 12 from my gmail account so they would be

delivered. I also reconfigured the systems so any MAILER- DAEMON emails (where I would have seen the error last week) will now always be delivered to my gmail in-box and not be subject to gmail spam filtering which had hidden them from me last week.

July/August/September 2020 Issue #186 Timeline

- 10/5/20 – PDF sent to Pine Press, proof approved and email delivery copies sent.
- 10/5/20 – Email copies sent.
- 10/7/20 – Payment made to Pine Press, \$1,022.73.
- 10/7/20 – USPS in mail shop.
- 10/8/20 – International mailings in post office. Extras picked up at print shop.

Small credit balance of \$15.45 will be applied to next issue. Actual cost of mailing was slightly less than estimate.

October/November/December 2020 Issue #187

The following articles are planned (or at least ideas) and current status:

- Member Spotlight: TBD
- Things Around the Museum: TBD
- What the heck was a TELLTALE? (Paul Finnegan – DRAFT IN REVIEW)
- President’s Pin (Greg Elems)
- WP 705 Paint Project (Greg Elems)
- WP 165 October Work Party Report (Roger Stabler)
- Departure Jim Ley (Need author)
- Departure Barbara Holmes (Need author)
- Election Notice (Matt Shuman)
- 2021 Plans & Schedules
- 2021 Operating Department Update (Need author)
- 2020 Website Summary (Paul Finnegan)
- 2021 WP Historical Calendar Promotion graphic (Eugene Vicknair)

We need to have some people step up and write some of these articles.

With no Pumpkin Trains and no Santa Trains this year, the Q4 newsletter is light on material.

Please contact me with how you will help.

One idea for “Things around the Museum” was the story of how Malfunction Junction got its name. I have asked several people and no one seems to know. If you know, please contact me. I have approached several members about being the Member Spotlight, I do not have any willing member at this time. If you would like to be, or could write one about someone else, please contact me.