

From the Desk of the President



As this is written, we are in the midst of the 1996 holiday season. There is now some time for home and family, with the last operations of the season, the Santa Trains, successfully concluded. Portola was blessed (?) with a white Christmas, about three feet's worth, on the weekend before the holiday. Digging out will take time, but much of it can wait till after the holidays. We are now in the midst of the first post-Christmas storm, with more snow expected after a full day of heavy rain. Fortunately, the Museum was quite well prepared for the onslaught, with the necessary switching completed and winterization of the locomotive fleet accomplished well in advance of the bad weather. The collection now reposes under a deep blanket of white, at rest until the spring thaw brings the onset of yet another visitor season. With this issue of the Train Sheet, we have included the 1997 calendar of events; the 1997 FRRS calendar will either be with this Train Sheet, or with the next issue of the Headlight, depending upon how production schedules converge. 1997 promises to be an exciting year for the FRRS; please stay with us and watch us continue to grow and improve. Make your plans now to see many of the FRRS Directors and members at Winterail on Saturday, March 8th; also, the WPRRHS will have their first stand-alone convention in Oroville on Friday, April 18th, and Saturday, April 19th, at the Depot Restaurant (the WP Oroville Depot). What better place is there to have a WPRR Historical Society convention than an authentic WP depot? Don't miss it.

On behalf of the FRRS Board of Directors, I would like to thank all of you for your continued support of the FRRS and the WPRRHS, and I hope that your holiday season was a happy and healthy one.

Steve Habeck

A Word From Your Executive Director

Another year is here. No doubt you have been inundated with appeals for donations to this and that organization. Most are worthy of your support. For this reason we have avoided making a year end request for donations, however a few generous individuals have made year end donations. Thanks so much.

This time of the year there are very limited museum activities and visitors, but there are still ongoing expenses. Our nest egg to carry us through the next four months all but evaporated with some costs necessary to pay past losses of Pacific Limited Group. Additionally the cost of moving WP 563 (story elsewhere) and acquiring a McCloud all-door box car both came at an inopportune time. Both the 563 and the McCloud car are acquisitions we cannot pass up.

You will notice that we have established funds for several projects. We ask that you consider a donation to one of the funds that you are most interested in or to the General Fund if you have no preference. If you work for a corporation you might make an inquiry to see if your employer has a matching gift program. That way your donation is doubled. Also if you donate to the United Fund you can designate the FRRS as a recipient for your donation.

Don't forget to send in your tickets and money for the free trip sponsored by Trains Unlimited, Tours. The odds are much better than the lottery.

Norman Holmes

For Sale

Are you interested in purchasing one of the builder's plates from WP's big mallet No. 260? Earl Failla, P.O. Box 70, Merlin OR 97532, 541-471-1405 has one for sale at \$400.

Preservation Column...

On Being Neighbors

By David Dewey

Well, the holidays are over and the Santa Trains have come and gone. For those of you who don't get up to Portola for them, they are an evening event where we light up a caboose train with Christmas lights and invite everyone down for refreshments (Homemade cookies, etc.). It's kind of a special time when the "locals" can come by and enjoy the museum in a nonrailfan way, yet it is still enough "railroady" that some fans come too.

One of the things that makes the Santa Trains so special is that it is one of the unique ways that we are a "good neighbor" to Portola. Many of us at the museum are aware that we are a financial benefit to the surrounding community. Some of the local businesses and city officials are also aware that we contribute much to the area; but the average citizen isn't aware of this, or even what's on the museum grounds.

This is normal for a museum like ours. Museums in small communities such as ours rely on volunteers from widely dispersed areas. The museum volunteers and staff form a community of their own that does not necessarily interact with the "normal" surrounding community. Why is it important to involve ourselves in the local area?

The museum cannot function inside a vacuum; what happens to the area around us affects us. Sometimes the effects are good, sometimes not so good. By forming relationships with the people, businesses, and governments around us, we "get to know" them. Then we will know when they think there is a community problem, or when a new idea forms that might change our surroundings. They also "get to know" us, so they have an idea what needs we have and how we can help them. A sense of belonging helps foster a mutual concern for everyone's well-being. This normally translates to support when we need help, even if it is as simple as a streetlight changed.

The Santa Trains aren't our only way of reaching the local community. We have also worked with school teachers on projects and educational programs at the museum. While the students learn about railroading, we get some restoration work done. More importantly, the local students learn what we're trying to do here and (Hopefully) learn to respect our artifacts (read: vandalism protection!).

In this day of shrinking support for cultural projects and establishments, it is more important than ever for museums to become not only good neighbors, but to be an active community member.