Director's Report
Steve Habeck, Vice-President/Director

Although the Museum season is essentially over, work at the Museum has ramped up lately, due to the end-of-season activities and other issues. The following locomotives that were in service this year have been winterized (water drained, stacks capped, provisions taken to prevent freeze damage): WP 2001, WP 707 (already down due to a cylinder liner leak), WP 925-C, WP 805-A, WP 917-D, WP 1503, and WP 608. Additionally, FR&W 1857 and SP 2873 are drained, spotted near the water riser for filling if needed. SP 1100 is available with it's water/antifreeze mix. I also put up the "closed for the season" sign on the front gate, and took down the temporary signs.

With the room made available in the yard due to the recent scrapping, we were able to clear all of our equipment off of the West Pass, and get everything of ours inside the gate. This was important for two reasons; first, the UP is preparing to deal with Morgan and his equipment, which is now the only equipment out there on the UP side of the fence, and secondly, our gondolas, which are now empty, are inside our property. Empty gondolas are considered free dumpsters by the locals in Portola, and we don't need to be dealing with nasty trash, containers of oil and God-knows-what else, and tires, by the carload. The locals can fill a gon in a matter of days.

Although we are used to large corporations like the UP moving at a snail's pace on many things, occasionally they can shock you with how fast things take place. While attending rules class in Sparks on October 23/24, while still on light duty, I saw my doctor in Reno during my lunch break on Thursday, the 24th, and got my release to return to work. On Friday, the 25th, I faxed the release to Roseville, and my claims rep called to confirm they got it, and that probably nothing would happen until at least Monday, pending review by UP's Medical Officer. On Friday night around 6 PM, CMS called me and told me the medical review was completed and approved, and to mark up! The next day, the local manager, Ray Breedlove, called me and set up a check ride to get my engineer's license reinstated, which we finally did on Sunday afternoon on an empty grain train out of Sparks (to Lovelock, where we got out and taxied back to Sparks). He entered the info into the system on Monday morning, and I immediately got called by CMS, notifying me I was on the bump board, which allows me 48 hours to place on a job. Less than 10 minutes later, I was notified that I was picked up on the Portola trainmen's extra board (I was the senior bidder), and was first out. Shortly after that, I was called to go to Gerlach and relieve the crew on a loaded rail train. The engineer on that train was Director Greg Elems. So, I went from light duty to back in service in less than 3 days. Because I'm on this extra board, and have no vacation or personal leave days available (since I was off for almost 10 months), I do not expect to be at the meeting in Roseville (unless I get cut off, which is always a possibility).

Dave McClain and Dwight Whetstone have completed repairs to the cylinder

rings and heads on WP 501. This necessitated some rapid work on my part to get some batteries in it. First, Fritz Elems completed the cleanout of the rotten wood and rust from the battery box on the 501, and replaced the wood in the bottom of the box for the batteries to sit on. With help from the Elems brothers, 8 single batteries from stock were installed, after servicing and jolt-charging each set of 4 with the new 32-volt chargers we purchased. Although the batteries responded well to the servicing and charging, they were still unable to turn the engine over; they're just too old and sulfated. Again with help from the Elems brothers, we started the 1857 and ran the jumper cables to the 501. We were able to spin the engine, and it tried to start, but the old fuel in it just doesn't have enough zip to ignite. The engine smoked and tried, but wouldn't start. Additionally, we have a water leak in the line from the cab heater (freeze-broken tee) that needs repair, and the water sight glass in the engine is too short for the mount (it's about 1 ½" too short). The water leak is being addressed by Fritz. My recommendation for the batteries is that we buy a new set of 8 heavy-duty (11" wide, if they are still made, otherwise the 8" will have to do) single batteries and put them in the 1857, which is a hard-starter, and take the old batteries from the 1857 and put them in the 501. The switch engines require single batteries, due to the shape and location of the battery boxes (except the 1503). I also think we will have to get 50-100 gallons of fresh fuel in the 501, and clean the fuel filters, before we try and start it again. I also expect there will be other issues to resolve with this engine, since it hasn't run in so many years. But, we're close.

The baggage car and the Plate have been placed in the shop for the Santa Trains, and my daughter/sister-in-law team have already started work on them. With the 105 over on track 2, the steam engine and tender, by necessity, had to go outside. Fritz closed the cap on the stack, and tarped the steam dome and smoke box openings. The engine and tender will return to the shop after the Santa Trains, as soon as the tear-down and cleanup is completed on the passenger cars, so they can be locked up and taken outside. I have most of the power cords routed for the cars so they can get going with the setup. This year the plate will have 4 power feeders, and the baggage car 11, spreading the load around the shop and beanery areas, utilizing 15 separate circuits.

Because of the recent break-in, we have become much more vigilant about security on the property. We are now leaving a row of lights on in the shop (which I change every time I'm there), as well as lights on in the lounge, shower car, and sleeper. The yard light between tracks 3 and 4 on the south side is also on. The light on the southeast corner of the building is out - - I went to Bulbman in Reno and got two of the correct bulbs for this fixture (100-watt metal halide), and we replaced the bulb, but the fixture still doesn't work. I suspect the ballast (an M90 type) is bad, and needs to be replaced. This will require taking the fixture apart while in the man-basket, using the shooting boom lift, which we haven't gotten around to yet. As a stopgap, I have the platform lights on the SN caboose turned on, which light the area fairly well. We also have the option of turning on the lights over tracks 1 & 2 on the east end of the building. The exterior lights on the office car, shower car, and lounge car are also on, and checked every time we're there.

We've also determined that we don't want to park any equipment (like the 1100)

on the south lead, west of the pedestrian crossing (east is OK). Doing so provides a dark, enclosed area around the Charlie O on 6 rail, the shorty gon on 5 rail, and whatever is on the lead. We think our burglar utilized this dark, enclosed area to wait for his opportunity (at the time of the break-in, we had two gons on the south lead, and this area was dark and completely enclosed, such that anyone in that area could not be seen from the parking lot, up on the hill, from the front gate area, or the east end of the yard).

Rod ordered 3 barrels of lube oil and 1 barrel of antifreeze, and these have been delivered to the Museum, and are now in the oil car, thanks to Fritz. We now have stock for startup next spring. Also, due to a fortunate turn of events, Gail was able to get the Coke machine winterized and both propane tanks filled on one day when she was there, and the vendors showed up.

NAPA had it's annual 70% off sale on NAPA Gold filters recently, and Fritz took advantage of this by obtaining several air and fuel filters for our locomotives, per Rod's and my direction, saving us well over $1000 on what he bought. He also found the NAPA oil specifically made for air compressors, which should help us keep the correct oil in all of our compressors, both in the shop and on our locomotives. We have had some issues in the past with the wrong oil being used in the air compressors.

I'm sorry this report got as long as it is, but I tried to cover everything that's going on at the Museum. At least you won't have to listen to me ramble on at the meeting.