

FRRS President's Report

September 2016

Railroad Days was again highly successful for the WPRM. While the crowds were down from last year, possibly due to the timing of the event (late August), we still did good business, grossing around \$6300 for the four days (the event started on Thursday, the 25th, with the visit of Congressman Doug LaMalfa and his staff; we ran the caboose train, and gave the Congressman an opportunity to run the 2873, and he held a town meeting that evening in the shop). We also had a private meeting with the Congressman and his staff, representatives from the city and county, and Big Fish, where we presented a program of future plans expertly put together by Eugene. During the presentation, the Congressman attempted to stump us by asking detailed questions about various railroad features he was aware of (it turns out he is quite the railfan), but Eugene had the answers to all the Congressman's questions without hesitation, with amplifying information provided on some answers by Greg and myself. The Congressman seemed satisfied that we were genuine, knowledgeable historians, with plans and experience on hand to make the Museum grow. The other attendees at the meeting all agreed that we represented ourselves very well

Friday was the buildup to Railroad Days, with another day of caboose trains, model railroads in the shop, and Gary Van Tressse on the dock with his live steam trains. Friday also saw the finishing touches applied to SP 4706 (Christine), with Leisa, Greg, Loren Ross, and Burr Wilson putting on the large lettering and heralds in the shop, then admiring their work as the train crew pulled it out of the shop, to be added to the caboose train. There is coverage on the web site of this event.

Saturday saw WP 1503 brought in to handle the caboose train, which ran with 6 hacks for the weekend, including Christine. The crowds were good, and the trains ran quite full most of the day. Book author Janet Dawson was also on hand to sign copies of her two CZ mystery books. Tasty sandwiches were prepared by Ken Chapin for the volunteers on Saturday and Sunday; Ken also bought and donated all the supplies for the sandwiches as well. The sandwich boards that Tom and Eugene made up last year were brought out and set up, and Eugene gave tours of equipment, including the Sweetwood, rotary, WP 484, troop sleeper, diner and baggage car, WP 501, and the business car UP 105. Unfortunately, I was unable to get through the UP bureaucracy in time to get any heritage units for display, but I did learn how to navigate the maelstrom for next year, with help from the Superintendent of Locomotive Operations at the Harriman Center.

Sunday was nearly as busy as Saturday, for us, until late afternoon. Things up at the City Park died off early, but we continued to have visitors. By late afternoon, things were nearly back to normal in the shop, and another Railroad Days (the 34th) was in the books.

In the two weeks preceding and including Railroad Days, a check of the log book shows lots of people who showed up to help prep for Railroad Days, and helped make the event run smoothly.

Charlie Spikes, Loren Ross, Bil Jackson, Michael Giarritta, Burr Wilson, David Epling, Steven Parry, Fred Elenbaas, Alex Wilson, Greg Elems, David Elems, Ethan Doty, and Rick Gruninger are all names that show up multiple times; Elise and Jean in the WP Store, and I'm sure there are others (like myself), who helped preserve the spirit of the "Willing People". My thanks to everyone, mentioned or not.

As I write this, the fall steam work session is well underway. Issues brought up regarding crane and operator qualifications have been dealt with, and work is proceeding smoothly, all things considered. According to the plan, the tender cistern will be placed on the tender frame on Saturday morning, when the crane arrives; the crane will then be used to pick up the trucks and fuel tank that are in the way on the east end, placing everything on a flatcar for storage, and to clear the clutter at the east end. It should make for a much better appearance as visitors enter the Museum grounds.

We received a notice for a probate hearing in Chico regarding the estate of Bruce Yparraguirre that was held on September 6th. Attendance was not required by us, but I set out to go. Unfortunately, I got caught in traffic congestion, road closures, and confusion coming down Jarbo Gap due to the Saddle Fire, and by the time I got to the Courthouse in Chico, the hearing was over, so I got back in my car and went back into the traffic mess and went back up the gulch.

Speaking of court hearings, David Ludington informs us that the preliminary ruling by the court regarding Morgan's stuff is in our favor, but Morgan's attorney, Brian Whipple, has apparently moved, and the notice of the hearing was returned to Ludington. We may have to have the hearing rescheduled once Whipple has been notified, or the judge could just let the preliminary ruling stand. I believe this is a delay tactic that was planned by Morgan and Whipple. I saw Morgan heading to City Hall last week, and he smiled and waved at me as I drove by.

Bank of America is closing their Quincy branch on November 29th. I have submitted an agenda item regarding this issue.

Ken Chapin has been given the formal notice letter from Rick Gruninger that he is to vacate the property by October 1st (amended from September 15th by agreement of Eugene, Rick, and myself, due to a situation presented to us by Ken). He has also been given information regarding rental properties in the area provided by Rick and Leisa. To date, I have not seen any progress toward his departure. We have another

member, Jeff Sanders, from the San Diego area, that is here helping the steam crew, since I wouldn't let him work on anything else (there is a story behind this). He and his wife were belligerent and pushy with Elise when they arrived (something we have seen before), and he indicated to her that he would be here to work at the Museum over the winter, and wanted a key to the sleeper. He was referred to Rick Gruninger, which did not suit him at all, and he was not given a key to the sleeper. We may have another squatter issue trying to develop here. The last time Sanders was here was the day of the election two years ago when the Mason SOS crowd got turned away, and he was seen with them, and left when they did.

The Pumpkin Trains are generating considerable interest in the community, particularly the Portola Fire Department and the senior class at the high school. The Fire Department will provide an engine in the picnic (pumpkin patch) area, as Tom suggested, and will also set up and staff a haunted car that we will provide (we plan on using WP 320, the old dining car/instruction car from the derrick outfit). A planning meeting is expected to occur this weekend.

Preliminary planning for the Santa Trains is also underway. This will be our 25th year doing Santa Trains, and we are hoping to out-do last year's success. There will be at least 7 cabooses in the train this year for added capacity (we had to make people wait last year). I am also looking at adding Fridays to the schedule, to help spread out the crowds, and possibly do more business. I realize volunteers are the key to making this work, and I'm hoping I can get more people to commit some time to this major event.

Steve Habeck

President, FRRS