

To: FRRS Board of Directors  
From: Paul Finnegan, *Train Sheet* co-Editor  
Re: *Train Sheet* Report  
Date: November 6, 2018

### **September/October 2018 Issue #178**

Since the last report to the board, the *Train Sheet* Team (Kerry Cochran, Greg Elems, Matt Elems, Eugene Vicknair and me) has continued to work together to get the next issue, #178, out in a timely manner. I continued to be very frustrated by the poor customer service of the alphagraphics print shop in Las Vegas. Matt Elems suggested we start a search for a new vendor. On Monday October 22<sup>nd</sup>, I interviewed two print shops local to me in Sunnyvale. A privately owned shop, Pine Press, and the local alphagraphics office. I was very impressed by the Pine Press office, but not by the Sunnyvale alphagraphics shop. Both promised me a quote by email that day. I received Pine Press's offer by the end of the day. I never received anything from the Sunnyvale alphagraphics office. After repeated emails and phone messages left with the Las Vegas print shop with no response, I finally gave up on them.

The quote from the Sunnyvale Print Press shop was very complete with the Las Vegas print shop's prior quotes, so based on the superior customer service, after communicating with the rest of our *Train Sheet* Team, I started working with Pine Press to produce the September/October 2018 Issue #178.

There base quote included, 750 sets of 8.5x11 two sided black, printed on 60lb. white, collate and saddle stitch, imprint names and mail about ~630 issue, deliver to Post Office.

Number of Pages in issue:	Pine Press Price:
16	\$900 + tax+postage
20	\$1150 + tax+postage
24	\$1300 + tax+postage

I continued to create and collect items for issue 178 until the submission deadline, 10/31/18.

### **Timeline for September/October 2018 Issue #178**

On 10/31/18 14:04 ~ 14:30 PDT, Eugene and I had a phone conference where we went through the detailed plan for issue 178. (Notes from this phone call available upon request.)

On 11/1/18 06:17 PDT, I requested an invoice from Print Press for the issue #178 job which has settled out to be a 24 page newsletter with an additional one page insert. I received the invoice from Pine Press at 08:06 PDT. (I continued to be impressed by Hassan's service.) The invoice was for \$2,112.40. This is a little higher than the quote from alphagraphics in Las Vegas (\$1,903.12) we were working with last month because the number of pages has increased from 20 to 24 and we added a one-page insert advertising *the Iron Feather* book and the WP Historic calendar which were not part of last month's (annulled) project. The postage estimate has increased (due to the increased number of pages), but also note I will pay out-of-pocket for the international postage and plan to request reimbursement from the society. (I estimate this to be about \$50.) I expect future issues to return to either 16 or 20 pages. This one was bigger because it really covers almost six months of museum events.

11/1/18 09:28 PDT: I sent the invoice to the Eugene Vicknair and the bookkeeper's office to initiate approval and funding of the project.

11/1/18 13:14 PDT: I sent out the first draft of issue 178 to The *Train Sheet* Team for review before publication.

11/2~3/18: Feedback was received from the review team and a second draft was circulated. The hours of the Santa Train changed, so a new graphic was created and replaced the incorrect one in the first two drafts. The wording on the Santa Train announcement was updated and a few minor layout issues were addressed. Higher density graphics required an update of the insert.

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11/5/18 05:39 PST: Eugene reported a couple of minor typos that I fixed and the PDF files and USPS mail list were sent to the print shop.

11/5/18 13:19 PST: Pine Press emailed me that the proof copy is ready for review.

11/5/18 13:40 PST: I received confirmation from Susan Scarlett that payment had been made to Pine Press.

11/5/18 14:10 PST: I reviewed and approved the proof at the print shop. It is expected to be printed and in the mail this week.

11/5/18 14:28 PST: I sent the email version to 43 domestic members, two international members and ten board members and officers.

### ***November/December 2018 Issue #179***

Issue #179 is expected to go to the print shop in early January. In 2019, the *Train Sheet* will become a quarterly publication. Issues will be published in January, April, July and October.

The following articles are already in issue 179:

- What the heck is an injector?
- Fuel Injectors Status at WPRM - David Elems
- Help wanted - WP Headlight
- Note from the editors
- Things Around the Museum - USA Ammo Car
- Rob Spangler's Layout WP 8th Sub
- Background Screening for Volunteers - Kerry Cochran
- Reflections of the Western Pacific (part 5) - Jack Palmer
- Fairmont Motor - Charlie Spikes
- Join our Operating Department - Paul Finnegan
- WP 501 Work Report October 2018 - Seth Adams

The following articles are planned for issue 179:

- Santa Train Report
- FRRS 2019 Calendar of Events

### ***International Members***

In joining the *Train Sheet* editorial team, something that surprised me was none of the international members were listed as receiving their *Train Sheet* issues by email. This surprised me since the delay in international mail is notorious. I had emails for five of the nine international members, so I sent them a personal email asking if they would prefer to receive their *Train Sheet* by email. I got a very positive response from the United Kingdom right away. I got another from Brazil the next day. For the members I do not have an email address for I plan to include a personal note in their postal issue inviting them to email me if they would like to change to email delivery.

### ***Promote Email Delivery***

I plan to send an email to as many members as possible about December first who do not currently receive the *Train Sheet* by email to invite them to switch to email delivery. This will reduce our cost and our members will get the newsletter earlier and in color.

## ***Automated Train Sheet Quality Check Tool***

The tool Matt and I are using to produce the *Train Sheet* is a tool called Scribus. It creates and updates a “.sla” file that contains all the information necessary to create an issue. To assist in the publication of the *Train Sheet*, I have created a new UNIX based tool called *extract\_information\_from\_scribus\_sla\_file.sh* which reads the Scribus .sla file for an issue of the *Train Sheet* and performs a set of quality audits. The tool displays a great deal of information about the content of the *Train Sheet* to help the editors quickly find and resolve various problems. The tool:

1. Displays the name, timestamp and size of the Scribus sla file being audited.
2. Displays all the fonts used in the issue and displays any that are not on a pre-approved list of fonts. This will eliminate having mixed fonts in an issue.
3. Scribus allows the use of “Marks” which act as constant variables within a project. I have created marks for things like the issue number, issue name (e.g. “September/October 2018”), copyright year, etc. For a new issue, the editor creates a new folder, copies in and renames the template, sets the marks for that issue one time, and all the places where the marks are used in the issue will now be updated correctly.
4. Scribus uses styles to control fonts, font sizes, centering, etc. All the “Story Text” inside an issue should be a pre-defined style. The tool lists all the styles used and any “Story Text” sections that are not a predefined style.
5. The tool does a spell check of all the story text using the same dictionary I have developed for the website. This way all the “special” railroad words and our proper names are already in the dictionary.
6. Scribus allows images to come from anywhere on the files system. To make the projects more portable, I have defined a directory/folder structure where there a folder for an issue and all the images used in that issue are under it in a sub-folder called “images” or they are in a folder “..\shared”. To move a project to a new editor or system, you copy the folders and sub-folders and it will work and be complete. The tool lists all images used as “OK” if they are in an approved folder or “Bad” if they are missing or somewhere else on the file system.
7. I started using the string “TBD” for things that are in the issue but not finalized yet. The tool finds all the TBD strings, displays the TBD message and page (e.g. “Found on page 15 :<ITEXT CH="TBD - empty article"/>” or “On page : 15 ../shared/TBD\_image.jpg)
8. A common problem in documents is having mixed font sizes. The tool finds all text that is not either 12 point type or on an approved list (e.g. the “TRAIN SHEET” on the cover is 52 pt.). Many of these will not really be errors, but the editor can easily look at the text and hopefully will recognize special size requirements like banner ads.
9. It compares the “Copyright Year” mark to the current year from the system clock and reports an issue if they don’t match.

I hope this tool proves useful in doing a final quality check before sending an issue out for the review team and sending to the print shop.