

President's Report for March 2019

Due to the warmer weather, and some rain instead of snow, all the plowing and shoveling that was done repeatedly at the Museum during February, primarily by Ethan on the backhoe, and 1L shoveling and snowblowing access paths, has resulted in relatively clear access to the building. Most of the plowed and shoveled areas are now down to bare ground (mostly covered by water and mud). But we have access, and several places to park vehicles. Ethan and 1L also cleared the drainage along the north side of the building, allowing a lot of the snowmelt and water to drain into the storm drains, instead of into the north side rooms. We still have water in the north side rooms, but not as much as we have had in the past.

I have set up 4 heaters in the Board room, all placed on blocks of wood to keep them off the floor, and the power cords are all routed up and off the floor (there is some water in the room). It should be tolerable in the Board room with these heaters, unless it gets really cold. Also, it appears we have lost the refrigerator in the Board room; stuff in the freezer was found to be thawing, and stuff in the fridge is looking questionable. The room is in serious need of a serious cleanup, as well.

I finally found out today (Friday, 3/8) that I'm being allowed to go back to work. I successfully navigated through all the hoops the Medical people threw at me; now I'm working on the next round of hoops that the Managers in Sparks are putting up in front of me. It can't be soon enough; I've already gone a month with no income, with my first decent paycheck probably not coming until April 10th.

We had to tap our restricted funds, as expected, due to the double whammy of a high down payment, plus the first installment, on our liability insurance, as well as the simultaneous costs of moving the reefer in San Jose. All these bills came due within days of each other.

Susan, our bookkeeper, is still looking for a budget for 2019. I know we're starting to gear up for the operating season, but we need to get this roadmap generated and approved before our workloads get even worse.

As I expected, we have been contacted by John Bartell from Channel 10 in Sacramento; he wants to see (and film) our rotary in action, actually plowing snow. I cannot justify the manhours and costs involved in doing this, simply for the sake of doing it. However, it has been suggested that we look at setting up a plan to offer people a chance to ride and/or photograph the rotary in action, charging appropriate fees. I would consider doing a rotary run if we can generate some decent income from it. Further discussion is warranted, and time is becoming a factor. The warmer weather is shrinking the snowpack. I went out to the sewer crossing today (Friday, 3/8), to check on the snow depth. There is still about 3 feet of snow over the track at

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Milward, which will make for a good show for plowing. The difficult part is access; the city has plowed the road to the sewer plant, but it's a hike through deep snow beyond that to get to the prime plowing area. Also, the road is flooded for quite a ways from the Edenwold crossing to the west. I asked Ethan to start prep work on the rotary set last week, in anticipation of its possible use, and Fritz managed to get some time off to take a look at them today. So far, no major problems have cropped up; work on the equipment will continue. Setting up to run the rotary will involve digging out every switch we will need to operate; as the track is still buried. This will make the switching take much longer, as well as being very labor-intensive.

I have not heard anything on the movement of Doyle's sleeper and the VIA lounge. They remain on the West Pass, ready for inspection and interchange.

Finally, the abundant snowfall and bad weather we endured in February has seriously slowed our progress on our plans to clear out the shop, reorganize it, and start mechanical work on our locomotives. This will probably delay the availability of locomotive(s) for the RAL program startup this spring. This will require close communication between the Mechanical Department and the WP Store/RAL scheduling to minimize overbookings and disappointed customers as we get into our season.

Steve Habeck (PT)

President, FRRS