

Vice-President/Director Report

August 2020

It has been a very busy time around the Museum since the last Board meeting, at least for me. I have received, processed, and submitted the application for our D&O (Directors and Officers) to Vivian at Deeble, and am awaiting a response with a new quote. Repair work on the backhoe is continuing; the bad outrigger ram has been replaced; next are the rams for the clamshell on the bucket, and then addressing hose and fitting leaks, and an oil and filter change. The compressor/condenser for the archive car A/C has been mounted, plumbed, and is in service. We are once again watching this unit guzzle distilled water (8-10 gallons per week). Our honeymoon with low electric bills is also over; with the sleeper, lounge car, and archive car air conditioning running (the sleeper is now off, now that the Steam Work Week is over), our electric usage will be back up where it has been (can't wait till we start the soda machine and the ice machine back up). A new issue has developed with our mangled gate on the track out to the West Pass (known as Charliegate). We had a few gate-crashers attempt to enter the Museum via this gate, primarily during and after the Railfans meet at Virgilia in July; they were apparently told by someone that it was OK to come in and look around, which is not the case. I have also witnessed a couple of our local kids on dirt bikes and ATV's opening the gate and running around the Museum grounds, primarily late in the afternoons, coming from the UP yard. I really believe we need to get this gate fixed, and cost should not be a major consideration. We're going to have to get the rest of the fencing done, too, if we want to keep our collection from suffering more damage, primarily from the locals.

Working at the Museum 5 or 6 days a week, every week, it has become very obvious to me that we are dealing with a facility (building, grounds, and trackage) that is nearly 70 years old, and really showing it in a lot of places. While the few of us that are there are trying to get things done that we see as the immediate priorities, there is far more to be done than we can hope to accomplish, even with the facility being closed to the public. Nearly every week, another problem rears its ugly head and gets added to the list. For instance, the center of the roof on the *Clover Plot* sleeper has been blown off by strong winds earlier this year (end to end); the excellent job of tarping and securing the *Silver Hostel* that Bob Sims worked on last year held up well through the winter, but one of our summer thunderstorms 2 weeks ago shredded the tarp over the dome in one afternoon; and we have had to rearrange our priorities to promptly address some recently-emerging track issues in the yard.

I have also purged the answering machines in the WP Store on a couple of occasions (every 10 days or so). There were very few calls that needed a response or a reply; most were hang-ups. Some wanted to know when we were going to open; apparently "until further notice" is not good enough. I also have very little tolerance for those who expect us to be open because "this COVID stuff is bullshit" (more than one caller said this).

I have briefly looked at the submission by Chris Skow and Norman Holmes suggesting we consider opening for Labor Day. I will discuss my reasoning on this issue at the meeting; however, I will say that after Ethan Doty and I conducted a review of several railroad museum websites in California, we only found one (Perris) that might be open (their web site wasn't clear about that). Regardless of how this discussion goes, I will not be a sacrificial pawn in this scheme, nor will I ask anyone else to do so. The discussion on my part will include many of the reasons why I am convinced we will *not* be able to open for Labor Day, period.

Steve Habeck

PT/VP