

## PRESIDENT'S DESK by Norman Holmes

On May 9th Barbara and I returned from a five week trip to Fiji, New Zealand and Australia to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. We visited most of the regular tourist sites and a number of railway museums. It was interesting to see how other countries and organizations treat and operate their railway museums. Most museums were not too different than those in our country with a few members doing most of the work as in this country. A number of organizations in New Zealand and Australia have locomotives and cars that are maintained in a satisfactory condition to allow their operation on the government owned railways. Inquiries about arranging special train operations in the event of a group visit were generally very receptive. Steam was, of course, the main attraction with diesel preservation now just coming into being.

While in New Zealand we had the opportunity to meet the seven FRRS members living there. Most have American HO gauge model railroad layouts, which we visited. Richard Morgan showed us around the railways in Auckland then Milne Collis and his wife took us on a week-long tour of the North Island arranging several special showings of railway museum equipment. We also had the opportunity to meet with officials of the NZ Railways and received an introduction at a rededication of a New Zealand Railways steam locomotive event.

Tourism is a very important industry to the countries we visited. Because of the lower value of the US dollar, foreign visitors are coming to America in greater numbers. We should do everything we can to make our railroad museums an attractive place to visit.

In a recent issue of the GAZETTE, news letter from Orange Empire Railway Museum, they wrote about their two heavy-weight Rio Grande baggage cars. The interesting fact was that one car, D&RGW #743 was once WP #804. When the WP started

passenger service in August, 1910, all passenger equipment was leased from the D&RG. It was lettered and numbered for WP. No. 804 was a baggage-buffet-library car and operated in passenger service until April, 1911. The car was returned to D&RG and used in its original configuration until 1920 when it was converted to a full baggage car.

Also noted in the GAZETTE was an announcement that they have received SP #3100, a GE U25BE. This brings the number of GE U25B's preserved to five.

## DEPOT PROGRESS

The Union Pacific has extended the property lease with the City of Portola for an additional fifty years. This will enable us to apply for funding for our replica WP depot building. The building permit has been applied for and a

ground breaking ceremony has been tentatively scheduled for June 18, 1988. We have some money on hand to do the initial ground work, but much-much-much more will be needed to complete this most important project. We are in need of someone to help us in grant writing. Gordon Wolleson has agreed to be "Project Manager."

## GUATEMALA TRIP

The Guatemala Trip raffle - depot fund raiser is going great. Members returning the ticket stubs along with the \$2 each has been good, with a number of members requesting additional tickets. We have a supply of tickets available by mail or at our Gift Shop for anyone wishing to donate to this worthy cause. The trip is being provided free by Chris Skow through his Trains Unlimited travel service and all profits will go to our depot construction fund.