

Parts is Parts

By David Dewey

Historical societies are usually groups of diverse people with a common interest. In our case, we are all interested in railroad history. Some of us are WP "fanatics," others are locomotive "junkies," caboose "freaks," boxcar "crazies," or just plain "foamites." Before anyone gets too upset with me, I'm not putting any of you down, just pointing out that we each have different railroad interests; I'm personally guilty of being a steam "nut."

Our most visible members are those who are involved in the operating department. They are out there running trains and interacting with museum visitors. They perform a critical role in making our museum a "live" railroad, enhancing the visitors' understanding of railroading. However, those interested and able to volunteer their time to be train crew members are only a part of our overall membership. There are others who have talents in public relations, business management, marketing, research, copy machine repair (quick, get that person's phone number!), food preparation, and other specialties. Their participation, although less visible, is just as important to the success of the museum.

It is this diversity of talents that allows the society to grow and adapt to inevitable changes in the museum's environment. The museum exists in a very complex environment, interacting with government (local, regional, state, and federal), business (local and national), the public, and our own members. Dealing with all these groups and keeping the museum running smoothly is a complex juggling act which benefits from the multi-talented support of our members.

I found an excellent example of this at another railroad museum. The museum was established next to a two-lane state highway, with an overpass over their connecting railroad. The state decided to widen the highway and remove the overpass, as the railroad line was no longer in use (although the museum was negotiating to purchase it). Fortunately one of the museum members was very familiar with highway law, and the state's procedures for public input in highway improvement planning. Because of his knowledge and efforts, the museum was able to persuade the state to build a new overpass and add the museum's own highway entrance road with entry and exit lanes.

What started out to be a disastrous change in that museum's environment has become a great improvement in public access. The member who achieved this is not a "hands on" operating type person, just one of their many diversely talented members with an interest in railroad history. As the television ad states, "Parts is Parts," but at least in our environment, the whole is greater than its parts.

It's nearing board election time, and I urge each of you to consider your talents and abilities. If you have some business sense, are interested in the museum's future, and are willing to diligently commit your time and energy to furthering the causes of the Society, then consider volunteering to run for the board.

CASH Donations

The following people have made cash donations to the FRRS:

George Andrews
Robert Blanch
John Claudino
Ken Conner
David Edwards, M. D.
John Flower
Martin N. Gibson
Norm Gidney
Donald & Lorraine Grant
Richard Green
Ernest Henton
Thomas Lawler
Roger & Judy Leezer
William Redding, Jr.
Richard Rowe
Francis Sellman
Richard Simonsen
Paul Tilden
Jack Tomczak
Eric Wright
Gregory Zucco

New Life Member

Preston Harrison

from Richmond, VA

has joined the ranks of FRRS Life Members

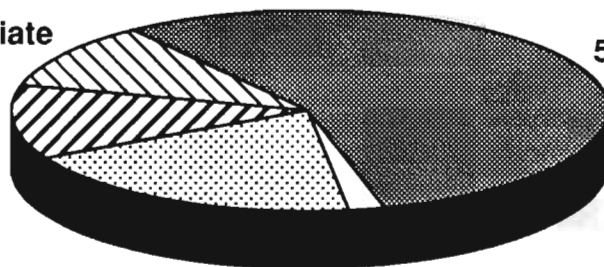
Membership Report

as of February 26, 1994

114 Associate

579 Active

123 Life



200 Family

22 Sustaining

Total FRRS membership is 1,038.
Of these, 30 are Charter members.