

Preservation Column...

Paperwork

By David Dewey

One thing all organizations seem to produce profusely is paperwork, especially because of the popularity of computers and their printers. Computer printers can generate paperwork faster than human minds can manage it. Railroads generate a lot of paperwork too, and as a Railroad Museum, we save, use, display, interpret, and store paperwork; emphasis on the latter!

As many of you know, just storing paper does not insure it's survival. The paper itself can be self-destructive, by having a high acid content that will eventually eat itself. Even if the paper is low-acid, but kept in a high acid container (like a manila envelope) it will eventually be destroyed. Some of the paperwork is needed for everyday use, like locomotive wiring diagrams, and comes to us already in poor condition. High use paper was often taped with masking tape, or "scotch" tape so it would stay together longer. OOPS--we now know that the adhesive in such tape destroys the paper!

As a museum, it's our duty, and obligation, to try to preserve these important paper goods as long as possible, for the generations after us. This means; storing paper in as acid-free an environment that we can, using copies of paperwork for shop use (an advantage of our modern technology--the Xerox machine), and having irreplaceable damaged paperwork conserved.

Oh great, another big museum word--conserved. Conservation is the preservation of an object by arresting its deterioration, and sometimes partial restoration. There is some debate as to where conservation ends and restoration begins; but generally, in conservation, the object retains almost all of its original materials and finish, unlike the 805A's exterior, which was restored (old paint stripped off, filler, new metal, new paint, etc.). In the case of paperwork, conservators can remove tape and it's adhesive, and treat the paper to reduce the acid content. They might reinforce worn creases or other areas that are too fragile to handle. This work requires specialized training that is not often given freely; something called job security, but let's not get into politics or protectionism right now.

Meantime, what an understaffed museum like ours can do is to keep the paperwork in a controlled environment, where it is not subject to water, food spills, sunlight, etc. And to keep rolled plans in individual tubes so they don't get abraded or creased. We can use acid-free storage materials, which are available, although pricey, and to use copies when we are out in a unit trying to figure out which relay is preventing everything from running.

By the way, winter has arrived (at least in Portola), so watch out for roof leaks!

Almost Here

As of this writing, the ex-Sacramento Northern GE 44-tonner that we have purchased has arrived in the Union Pacific's Portola yard. In the next issue of the Train Sheet, look for photos and a history of this unit.

Appreciation

Everyone who helped out on our 10th Anniversary Celebration, "Circle the Wagons," on the Fourth of July weekend will be receiving a Certificate of Appreciation for their work and along with it will be receiving a voucher which will be redeemable in the FRRS Gift Shop for a free "Circle the Wagons" mug and T-Shirt. These certificates and vouchers are expected to be mailed around Christmas time.

New Life Members

Welcome the following new life members to the FRRS:

Rick Gross
from Sparkill, NY

John Hittner
from Walnut Creek, CA

James Mathew
from Sparks, NV

Dr. Larry M. Over
from Eugene, OR

Allen L. Wiebe
from Sparks, NV

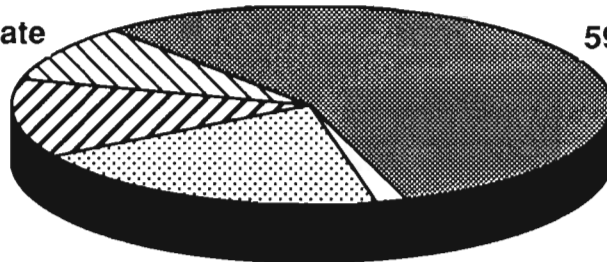
Membership Report

as of October 27, 1994

104 Associate

599 Active

136 Life



212 Family

19 Sustaining

Total FRRS membership is 1,070.
Of these, 28 are Charter members.