

handle the membership duties for the museum I learned a valuable lesson. The biggest lesson was that the membership "list" was presented to me in printed form, not on any kind of computer devise. After over 150 hours of hand entering all the known names, addresses, etc. the database was done (Ya, right).

Well, stealth members appeared, seemingly out of thin air. Addresses were either out of date or just plain wrong. No formal presorting had ever been done (to my knowledge anyway) nor had the list been checked against USPS database's.

Now it is, and I believe most of the bugs have been worked out. Those with non-complying addresses will still have some delivery delay, or they might not get their publication at all if the Postal Carrier can't find you. For those of you who haven't received your issues it's not because I'm ignoring you, it's because of more stringent Postal Regulations concerning accuracy of our mailing list. Since we do get a discount because we are non-profit and I mail items as "Machine Compatible", our postage cost have dropped as compared with when the list was handled elsewhere.

Member renewal forms are mailed earlier now, to allow you some time for renewing instead of being mailed late. I was late in June because I took my famous vacation to Portland, a profitable trip for a local mechanic and an even better day for Ford Motor Credit Company. Unfortunately it put us behind by a month, hence the late renewal notice's. Things are on schedule now, and will stay that way.

Member numbers haven't been assigned since I took over, primarily because a system was not in place for a logical numbering system. After much thought I will devise a simple plan and implement it over the next few months. This number will show on your mailing label as well as your membership cards.

Ah yes, membership cards. We are madly working to catch up on getting cards out to all members that need one. From now on

cards will be issued on a monthly basis. Mr. Holmes has okayed me to design a new card, and pending Board approval (for the design and cost) you may be seeing new style cards issued by the end of the year.

When renewals are received at Chico, the checks are deposited with the museums bank, usually during the first two weeks of the month. Credit card orders are sent to Portola for processing. There may be a future change in where renewals are sent (Portola instead of Chico) but this hasn't been decided on, yet. I expect I will still handle the renewal orders and the updates on the database, but the money would go directly to Portola, circumventing the circuitous routing it endures now.

In closing, I want you all to know that we are working hard to get all the membership renewal scheduling on a regular basis (i.e. better time management) and to continually improve the services to the membership via both mailing and quality of service. I am open to any criticisms or suggestions, if you have any, please contact me at the Chico Membership address.

—Bill Shippen



In the High Sierra, the weather is scorching as summer draws slowly to a close; all too soon the cool days of autumn will be upon us. In Portola, Railroad Days are over and Railfan Day is fast approaching and at the museum, there is still a lot of activity. Our new facilities managers Ken Iverson and Doug Morgan have been busy as bees and their work shows. This proves that two people can do more than one.

I have heard from two people who would like to work on our program for control of the replacement parts inventory. This database will let us know exactly what we have and where it is stored, this will save us both time and money. It will be a big job but a very important one. Also we need help cleaning out and then building shelves in some of our box cars, all you people who like to throw away junk and suggested that we do so, please call me, more people make a large job seem smaller and it is more fun to work together.

We have seven locomotives "in service" at this time, more than enough to run the RAL program and enough to give our customers a good selection from which to choose themselves a locomotive.

We have rebuilt several water pumps on our locomotives this year and we are using water treatment in some of the cooling systems, this should prevent problems at a later date. The cab interiors of the SP 2873 and the VIA 6776 have been painted and what a difference this makes to our rental customers and to all who come to look at and work on these locomotives.

This year at Railroad Days we had a first, instead of running around making repairs to keep the trains running, we were working on maintenance and repair items on other equipment and the locomotives ran without our attention. We had a lot of people just stopping and watching us work. This is somewhat new to me and may take some getting use to, but already I think I like it.

The caboose train (more than one goose is geese, so more than one caboose must be cabooses) has seen attention again this season. Cracked windows have been replaced, door latches have been repaired, stoves have received attention and a multitude of small fixes have been made. Things still need to be done, but if it all got done we would have not a thing to do. But I doubt that we will have to worry about that anytime soon.

I want to thank all of you who have come up to the museum and helped out. This museum would be just a display of sad hulks without

your hard work and dedication, very little of what we have done could have been accomplished without your help. The people in Portola that work so hard putting in hundreds of hours each week, could not get us where we are today. Your devotion to this idea that is the Portola Railroad Museum is in large part what has got us where we are today. My hat is off to all of you.

See you at the museum...

—Hank "Flat Iron" Stiles

—EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTES—

Last year I announced that I would like to retire from the responsibilities of Executive Director by December 31, 1999. I would still remain on the Board of Directors and continue to be active in the work of the museum, but would like to have some free time for myself and family. We have grown to a point where there is enough work for a full time person just to keep up with the book work. An endowment fund was established which, if fully funded, would provide an income from interest and dividends for the salary of a paid Executive Director. A number of organizations such as ours have had to go to a paid administrator because of the ever increasing regulations, duties and responsibilities found in today's world. Some have started endowment funds to insure the future of their operations. If we have to pay for this position from general funds there would be little left to fund maintenance and restoration projects.

Our endowment fund has a goal of \$500,000. A very generous donation of 250 shares of a bank stock opened the account and several cash donations have been added to the fund. The balance now stands at \$41,378 (depending on the stock prices) which is far short of our goal. There are a number of ways you can contribute to this fund ie: appreciated stock which you receive current value as a tax deduction, property, as a beneficiary to a life insurance policy and of course cash. A donation to this fund will help