

Historical Memberships Discontinued

Action was taken at the November Board of Directors meeting to not accept any new or renewing memberships at the historical level effective March 1, 2003. After all current memberships in this class expire it will cease to exist. I have asked John Walker and Thom Anderson to comment on this action.

By John Walker

The FRRS Board of Directors has voted to streamline the membership process by phasing out the WPRRHS Historical membership level. As one of the members who worked to establish the WPRRHS, I have been asked to comment on this decision.

Historical memberships were created in 1996, following a rift in the membership concerning the direction of the FRRS and the museum. Basically, some members wanted their membership money to go towards specific WP/Feather River Route preservation efforts and certain improvements at the museum. To accomplish this, the FRRS established the Historical membership level and created the WPRRHS to give those members an avenue to accomplish these goals. Then FRRS President Steve Habeck, promised the full cooperation of the FRRS in these matters and the FRRS Board of Directors has been very supportive of our efforts in every respect. This support has come in the way of financial and organizational support and a generous free hand to act autonomously within our own sub-organization.

And the WPRRHS held up their end of the bargain as well. The WPRRHS took over production of The Headlight, the establishment of the Arthur Walter Keddie Railroad Library, has hosted six successful conventions and taken part in other special events such as Railfair in Sacramento and Truckee Railroad Days. Numerous artifacts and records have been added to the museum archives and improvements to the educational displays around the museum are in progress.

The establishment of the WPRRHS has helped improve the FRRS and the Portola Railroad Museum significantly. The issues, which originally caused the split in the membership, have been resolved. And the FRRS has even changed the mission statement to better reflect the core mission of the organization. That being, of course, the preservation of the history of the Western Pacific Railroad and other railroads along the Feather River Route.

This unique partnership has netted great results. And I'm pleased to say that there is harmony in the organization once again. Many Active members such as Frank Brehm, Andy Anderson, Norman Holmes and Vic Neves have worked tirelessly on WPRRHS projects and many WPRRHS members have already renewed as Active members and volunteer on other FRRS projects or jobs at the museum. Thankfully, there really is no good reason to keep the Historical membership level any longer. By phasing out the Historical membership level, Historical members will once again be allowed to vote in FRRS elections (a powerful voting block!). We will receive The Train Sheet and all of the other FRRS membership benefits as well. This will also streamline the membership record keeping process and cut FRRS mailing and office expenses.

The Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society (WPRRHS) remains the official WP Historical Society of record

and all Active members will be joint FRRS/WPRRHS/Portola Railroad Museum members. The WPRRHS will continue to operate as a separate department within the FRRS, just as the Mechanical and Operating Departments do now. Thom Anderson remains the Administrator (Department Chairman) of the WPRRHS and we will continue the work we have done to make The Portola Railroad Museum and the FRRS even better.

I encourage all Historical members to upgrade your membership to the Active level. I also want to thank you for your support in the past. We could not have done it without you voicing your opinion by electing to join at the Historical membership level. Now that our differences have been resolved and we are all one big happy family again, it's time to fully support the FRRS by becoming an Active member again.

I also want to use this opportunity to go on record and thank Wayne Monger, Steve Habeck, Vic Neves, Andy Anderson, Lolli Bryan, Frank Brehm, Norman Holmes, Hank Stiles and all of the other FRRS Board of Directors and museum department heads for their assistance, cooperation and support of the WPRRHS. It was their leadership and understanding that allowed us to openly discuss our differences and find a successful resolution to the problem. We worked together and found a way to make the FRRS better for all of us.

In closing, I want to say that I have great confidence in the current Board of Directors. They are pro Western Pacific and are in favor of more equipment restorations and improvements to the museum facilities. Under current FRRS President Rod McClure's leadership, several long standing problems are being resolved and efforts are underway to improve the museum collection and the building and grounds. There is solid financial and legal advice behind every decision undertaken by the Board and I think we will all see marked improvements in the museum in the near future.

But they can't do it all themselves. They need your help. Please make plans now to come up to the museum next year to help. I realize that many people can't come up to the museum every weekend or even once a month. But if you could make it up a few times over the summer we could sure use the extra hands. The museum has overnight accommodations for working members with shower and kitchen facilities. The Union Pacific still runs trains right alongside the museum and the new train watching platform offers a great view of the passing trains. It's a great way to help to museum, learn more about railroading and have a lot of fun also.

Thom Anderson, WPRRHS Administrator, echoed Johns' comments and added the following.

I support the action taken by the Board regarding the phaseout of the Historical class of membership.

This is a positive step for all of us as members of the Society. There is a place in the Society for members whose primary focus is history, which John pointed out was not always so. The historical aspects of PRM will only increase as the plans for the WP Hospital include a permanent archives and library.

I hope that we see increased participation from the members (myself included!) as the Historical Society department becomes involved in the hospital restoration, and Railfan's Day just to mention two functions at PRM.