

endless! And it would be safer than setting up scaffolding or climbing tall ladders.

A small "Bobcat" type front-end loader. These tractors are great for landscape projects, cement work and clearing snow. Their diminutive size allows them to squeeze into tight areas that our Backhoe will not fit into. An auger attachment on the back would help us dig holes for fencing, signs and other projects.

A John Deere "Gator" or similar all-terrain, work vehicle. These vehicles are great to have when you need to haul a 55-gallon drum of oil or some big wrenches, track tools or parts out to the end of track to do some maintenance on an engine or some track work. Ideally, a 6x6 with a flat deck on the back would be great!

Snow blowers. As I write this, there is four to five feet of snow on the ground at Portola. We could really use one or two of these.

Our carpentry shop is always looking for good quality power tools. Circular saws, Sawsalls, routers, table saws, cordless drills, nail guns, planers, vacuum systems, cutters, joiners, you name it, we want it and could use it.

A new copy machine. Ours is wearing out and the copies are getting worse and worse. A color copier, or perhaps an all-in-one printer, copier, scanner, fax machine would be great.

A sand blaster. Small or large, we can use it.

If anyone is in the aggregate business, we could use a few truckloads of sand, 4-6 inch river rock and drain rock for various landscaping and facilities projects.

A bead blasting system for cleaning small metal parts. This would help the restoration and mechanical department.

The gift shop and the display room need glass display cases. Upright or counter styles are both good. We're also looking for some "Slat-wall" style display panels.

A large conference table capable of hosting 10-12 people for Board of Director meetings or conferences. We can refinish the table (or perhaps another member can help in this area). We already have some nice chairs; it would be nice to put them around a nice conference table.

Reception area furniture. We would like to change the entranceway into the museum. We need a nice reception desk and counters, which we can use for brochures and informational signs. If someone out there is redoing the reception area of his or her offices, please consider donating the old furniture to the museum.

Waste oil heaters. Many automotive shops and airport hangers use these types of heaters to heat large buildings. We've got a large building and we've got waste oil and it would be great to burn it up and help heat the building.

Thanks; we will have more items listed in the next issue.

## **Caboosing Around the Museum**

By John Walker

09.04/5 Labor Day Weekend! Still cleaning up from Railroad Days this week. Our "TGMTT" special train departed for Truckee on Sunday with Rod McClure at the controls and Steve Habeck watching the markers at the rear of the train. Lots of last minute details to tend to in order to get the train out on time. Ed Powell, Alan Hirasawa, Gunther, and others changed

seven brake shoes on the UP6936. Rick Edwards and Hank Stiles were busy in the shop area while Kerry Cochran, Don Nelson, Lew Barnard, Jack Palmer, Bill Parker and Charlie Spikes ran passenger trains around the museum. John Walker and Linda Knudson packed items from the gift shop to take to Truckee later in the week. Norman Holmes worked on sprucing up the Quincy #4. The weekend was fairly calm for a three-day weekend but the weather was nice. Andy Anderson ran RAL's. Lew Barnard shot an RAL promotional video, which will play on a lap top computer at train shows which we attend in the future.

09.28 Jeff Sanders of Hesperia, California, Charlie Spikes and John Walker spent a full day cleaning out the WP baggage car located next to the loading dock. This car has been used for storage by four different departments over the years and needed a serious cleaning, inventory and reorganizing. After pulling out nearly the entire contents of the car onto the dock, the car was swept out and metal shelves installed. We then called in Norman Holmes and Doug Morgan to help us identify what some of these items were. This was a big help since some of this stuff was acquired a long time ago and we had no idea what some of it was. But Norm was able to identify some old artifacts while Doug identified old locomotive parts and tools. While we didn't throw much away, tools and restoration parts were moved to where they belong, cables and wires were moved to the material storage area, some things were moved to the archives storage area and the stuff that went back into the car is much better organized.

09.29 Jeff Sanders and John Walker constructed more metal shelving to use in other car cleaning projects. Kerry Cochran was working in the area and stopped by the museum. Kerry sorted through some old radio parts that were found in the baggage car and spent time in the office catching up on paperwork and record keeping.

10.02/03 Ed Powell checked caboose heaters and sorted through various electrical cables, hoses and tools found in the baggage car. Rick Edwards did various mechanical work and record keeping. Bill Parker sanded on the Pullman Troop Sleeper and helped John Walker and Rick Edwards assemble more metal shelving. Steve Habeck serviced batteries. Board of Directors meeting with Treasurer Dan Brady attending. Dan also worked with John Walker on gift shop ideas and financial reports. Rod McClure, Frank Brehm and Gail McClure serviced the derrick in preparation for upcoming use. Rod McClure and Rick Edwards also serviced several locomotives.

10.06 Steve Habeck and John Walker switched the east end of the museum for three hours in preparation for Santa Trains.

10.07 Steve, John and Rod McClure switched the west end of the museum for another four hours, digging out ballast cars and boxcars used for storage.

10.09 Alan Hirasawa, Gunther, Seth Adams, Brittany K, and Heather replaced fire rings on 4 cylinders of the UP 849, reinstalled heads and cleaned up the block. Don Bordan ran RAL's and worked on the Lounge car. Jay Sarno, Ken Iverson, Gail McClure and Eugene Vicknair did electrical work on the volunteer lounge car. Phil Schmeir over hauled the dump truck. Matt Parker helped John Walker with various projects. Frank Brehm and Gail McClure worked on the Hospital Building. Dwight Wolfinger worked on various projects. A severe thunderstorm complicated outside work.

10.10/15 Keith Smith and his son David came out from Utah and worked on various projects. Keith and David caught a small leak in the shower car and repaired it, cleaned up the paint section, electrical room, shower car and overhauled all the engines and cars on the model railroad. Rainstorms and some of the first snows of the year overshadowed the entire week.

10.16/30 Slow days with marginal weather. Charlie Spikes comes in once a week to work on various projects around the building and grounds. Rick Edwards has been reorganizing the mechanical shop area. Rick has begun a serious effort to clean up the shops, reorganize the storage and work areas and the shops are looking better all the time. Rick's efforts will result in not only a cleaner shop, but also a much more productive work environment next season. Alex Amarel of Portola has been helping on a lot of projects including sorting through the shop's copious collection of nuts and bolts, screws, nails, washers and miscellaneous metal brackets, fixtures and parts. Under the direction of Assistant CMO Rick Edwards, and in cooperation with other department heads, all of the museum's "material storage" has been moved into the first bay next to the tool room. "Material Storage" is various nuts and bolts, cable, rope, hoses, insulation, wiring, etc that is not assigned to any particular department but may be used by anyone for any project. It has taken several months of work to gather all of this stuff together in one spot. Hopefully, after we sort and organize this material, anyone needing these supplies will be able to find what they need in this area.

10.31 The museum officially changed its hours for the year to 11:00 to 4:00 daily, weather permitting. A visit from member Brian Challender who works for the Sierra Northern Railroad at their McClellan Park facility in Sacramento. Eugene Vicknair and crew came up for a weekend and worked on the Silver Hostel. Tony Azevedo delivered two antique pieces of horse drawn fire equipment, which used to operate in Oroville about a hundred years ago.

11.01 A formal visit from several CSRM officials who were guided around the facility by Eugene Vicknair and Rod McClure. Doug Morgan, Steve Habeck and John Walker worked on various projects including repairs to the Simplot RS32 4004, which has been sold and is being prepped for shipment to the San Diego Railroad Museum. After setting up an after hours tour with a California Conservation crew working in the area, John Walker was able to secure the service of a four man crew from the CCC to help clear brush away from the hospital property up on the bluff overlooking the museum. With the help of Norman Holmes, Charlie Spikes, and Portola resident Phil Zavella, John Walker and the crew cleared nearly an acre of dead brush and piled it into several large burn piles. Alex Amarel, who falls timber for a living, brought up his huge chainsaw and trimmed several trees and cut up large branches. Alex also helped cut up many nasty old Mansanita and Chaparral bushes that stubbornly defied removal by hand tools.

The hospital was broken into around Halloween. Presumably, this was done by local kids who were looking for ghosts. Imagine their surprise when all they found was pigeon crap and broken glass. Still, Norman Holmes, Doug Morgan and John Walker had to make repeated trips up to the hospital to secure doors and windows and check the property for vandalism.

Doug Morgan helps out nearly everyday on winterizing

equipment, repairing freight car doors, helping with shop reorganization and putting things away for the winter. Steve Habeck delivers mail, checks batteries and supervised the beginning of work on Santa Train decorations. Jim Halliwell got an early start on the Santa Train decorations this year, Jim almost single handedly ran the cabooses and fence lights. Seth Adams has been working on sprucing up the SP SD9 4404. John Walker has been going to train shows, preparing a mail order catalog, handling walk-in RAL's, mailing RAL gift certificates and cleaning up various areas of the museum in preparation for winter. John spent several days on the roof of the building, shower car and volunteer lounge car sealing loose screws and patching holes. Charlie Spikes also helped seal up some holes in the roof of the volunteer lounge car. Rod McClure delivers supplies, drained and moved the water trailer, works on vehicle maintenance, switching and administrative matters. Phil Zavella pitched in and helped on several cleanup projects around the museum and hospital. Alex Amarel helped install a wood-burning stove in the gift shop that was donated by Howard Hanson. The weather was pretty good through most of November. Temperatures between 30-60 degrees. Visitors were sparse but we ran some RAL's and made a lot of progress on winter preparations and the Santa Trains.

Thanksgiving Weekend. A nasty cold front passed through the area blanketing the entire region with 9 inches of snow. The snow was not too bad in and of itself. But the cold front caused a temperature inversion, which literally froze the snow into a solid block of ice. Gail McClure braved the treacherous road conditions (picking up John Walker who is a noted coward when it comes to driving in snow and ice) and freezing weather to come up to the museum to begin decorating the baggage and lounge car for the Santa Trains. Rod McClure also made a special four-wheel drive trip (again picking up John) to deliver supplies and get some work done at the museum in preparation for Santa Trains.

12.03 Last minute Santa Train preparations. Charlie Spikes, Rod McClure, Steve Habeck and Doug Morgan used the derrick to unload the newly acquired Tidewater Southern Bunk Car in below freezing weather after the truck finally arrived after dark. Charlie and Steve also got the SP 2873 and UP 6936 watered and started up to warm them up for Santa Trains operation. Jim Halliwell finished decorating the SP Rotary snowplow.

12.04 Board of Director's meeting and Santa Train! Another spectacular effort for the Santa Train! Besides the work done by Steve Habeck, Jim Halliwell and Gail McClure, Heidi Miller and Brittany Knudson decorated the three Christmas trees inside the baggage cars and helped out with other last minute decorations and food preparations. Snacks and cookies were thoughtfully provided by Gail, Heidi, Brittany, Charlie Spikes and his wife, Linda Knudson, Brian and Nicole (didn't catch their last name) Mary Ann Vicknair (Eugene's Mom), Louise Dunbar and Joanie (didn't get her last name either). Gail also cooked up three pots of homemade chili and Heidi Miller supplied a pot of great tasting Clam Chowder, which kept the crews warm.

The Santa Train crew consisted of Loren Ross, Norman Holmes, Steve & Mary Habeck, Jim Halliwell, Spencer Walker, Eugene Vicknair, Frank Brehm, Hank Stiles, Pat Watkins, Dave Epling, Kerry Cochran, Craig Simmons, Jack Zyger, Gail and Rod McClure, Heidi Miller, Brittany K. Jason Krois, Breanna

Ward, Kathy Habeck, Daniella and Ashley Culbert, Caitlin & Ashleigh DeMartile, Marcy Kidder, Jay Knudson, Alex Amarel and Phil Zavella. Santa and Mrs. Claus made an appearance in the form of Dave Rudolph and Linda Knudson. Great job everyone!

12.05/10 Another storm dusted the museum with three inches of snow but blew the inversion layer out and the museum warmed back up to 30-60 degrees. John Walker, Phil Zavella and Doug Morgan cleaned up a mess caused from a broken water pipe in the shop area. Phil, Alex and John worked on snow and ice removal. Steve Habeck, Charlie Spikes and Rod McClure watered and restarted locomotives and got things ready for the second Santa Train. Jan Breitweiser donated the printing of free Santa Train tickets, which John Walker delivered to the local elementary school and local businesses.

12.11 Second Santa Train with Ed Powell and Pat and Linda Brimmer joining the team. Another outstanding effort with lots of smiling children. A great show!

12.12 A nice warm day. Several volunteers pitched in to take down and pack up the lights and decorations. In previous years, everyone skedaddled home after Santa Trains and the decorations often didn't get put away for weeks or months after the event. A special thanks to Pat and Linda Brimmer, Jim Halliwell, Ed Powell, Heidi Miller, Phil Zavella, Norman Holmes, Craig Simmons and Steve Habeck for successfully getting everything put away right after the event! Dave Epling, John Manter and Spencer Walker began demolition of the old model railroad in the gift shop to make way for the construction of a new layout.

12.13/20 John Walker continued cleanup of all the paper cups, plates, wrappers, tape, food and other trash left over from Santa Train. John, Doug and Phil cleaned out a recently acquired WP boxcar. Steve Habeck, Rod McClure and Doug Morgan did a final switch of the museum, drained locomotives and the water system. A final pickup of the garbage was arranged, last minute gift certificates, mail orders, phone calls and other business was finished up before closing the museum for the Winter on the 20th.

## End of Year Museum Manager Report

By John Walker

It's hard to believe that it has been 18 months since I came up to Portola to work as the Museum Manager. Despite my weekend involvement in the museum over the last twenty years, the day to day operation of the museum came as a bit of a surprise to me.

For most members and volunteers, the weekends are a great way to get out of the everyday "rat race", travel up to the museum to get some fresh air, hang out with friends and have fun watching and running trains or pitching in and helping with repairs or restorations. Even today, weekends around the museum are usually fun filled and relaxed. There is something about the camaraderie of friends and doing something fun that makes the work go easier and quicker.

But on Monday morning, the "rat race" begins again, whether your in Sacramento, San Francisco, Reno, or Portola. The daily chores have to be done. Trash has to be hauled out to the dumpster, bathrooms need cleaning, floors need to be swept

and mopped, counters and tables need cleaning, things that were left out over the weekend need to be put away, inventories need to be taken, supplies ordered or picked up from suppliers. And even though the volunteers have gone home after the weekend, the museum is still open and the visitors are still coming in. In retrospect, I suppose that it was natural, as a former "weekend warrior", that I never really considered what happens at the museum during the rest of the week. I even have to confess that I halfway expected the weekdays to be rather slow and even more relaxed than the weekends. Boy, was I wrong!

I've spent most of my lift in the retail/wholesale business. This was never my intended career field but I fell into it and I'm not ashamed to boast that I was pretty good at it. I was lucky to learn from some very smart business people the finer points of running a successful business operation. My experiences in business, the military and semi-military organizations such as the fire service and law enforcement have given me insight into various types of management and managers.

We all know the horror stories of some newly hired jerk that comes into a company and tries to change everything overnight. Knowledgeable, productive people get fired, good reliable equipment gets replaced, new software gets installed, policies change and soon the company is screwed up so badly that people don't want to work there anymore and customers take their business elsewhere.

I'm not that kind of manager. Despite my previous involvement with the museum, I didn't want to come in and start snapping my fingers and changing things the first day. I knew that I had to watch and learn why people did the things they did and why they did them that way. Firmly imprinted on the front of my brain, is the knowledge that this is not "my" museum, it's "our" museum. And the Board of Directors didn't bring me in to chop off heads and change everything overnight. By watching and asking questions, I learned that a lot of the things that are done at the museum are done that way because "That's the way we have always done it". Or because that's the best way to do it given the equipment and facilities that we have to work with. And this is not necessarily a bad thing; it's just the way it's done. Some things work very well and some things didn't. Some things worked but it was time to try something different.

One of my first concerns was security. The museum has always had an informal open door policy. The first person who arrived at the museum in the morning opened the gate and the building and it stayed open until the last person left for the day (unless that person didn't know they were the last one out and left everything open all night). The tool room, operating office, gift shop, display room, storage areas, the shower car, locomotives and cabooses were left wide open most of the time. It took some doing but one of my first objectives was to establish some regular business hours. Unless you're running a 7-11 convenience store (which I did during college), you just can't leave the doors open 24 hours a day. There are many daily jobs at the museum like cleaning bathrooms, taking out the trash, sweeping and mopping, painting, cleaning, taking inventory, ordering supplies, banking and answering overnight phone calls that are best done when visitors are not present. Some people argued that they were afraid that we might turn some visitors away. But I contend that there is no reason to try and accommodate visitors at 7 am in the