

River Rail Society was a smart choice. Members came from all over the country with one couple coming all the way from British Columbia Canada. The Operating Department graciously surrendered time with their families to run caboose trains all weekend to the delight of the children, and thanks to Gail, we not only had numerous games and activities for the children, each of them walked away with a prize and had a great time. The highlight was to be a "Rubber Chicken Launcher" made from two old high stand switch stands and surgical tubing. Though the launcher presented many logistical problems, folks had a lot of laughs trying their luck as we got it dialed in and working great on Sunday. A good time was had by all attempting to launch "fake fowl" all over the picnic area. Wayne put on a great spread in the diesel shop and after a day of coordinating fun and games, it was actually relaxing to spend the evening on the barbeque grill with Wayne cooking delicious tri-tip, chicken and hotdogs. Thanks again go to Gail for prepping the delicious food; I don't know what we would have done without her help and patience during numerous frantic phone calls to the McClure household leading up to the event.

To see the membership filling one end of the Diesel Shop and the Board of Directors standing before them was pretty rewarding, but the real treat was listening to these folks talk about the history of the museum, the connection with the Western Pacific and their plans for the future of our museum. I came away from the 2008 Members Appreciation Day with a renewed spirit of the future of the Feather River Rail Society and I sincerely hope the rest of the membership did as well.

The 2009 Members Appreciation Day is already in the planning stages and is going to be a two part event this year. The festivities kick off with a Barbecue and Membership Meeting on June 6th at 5:30pm, where the 2009 Board of Directors election results will be announced. September 26th will mark the return of "Railfan Photographer Day" in conjunction with Members Appreciation Day. This year, Railfan Photo Day will be open to members only. What that means to our non-member fans is that they are still welcome to attend and partake in the activities, however, they will need to purchase a membership to the FRRS. Activities and details will be announced in the near future on our website at: [www.wplives.org](http://www.wplives.org).

I encourage every member of the Feather River Rail Society to come on out for both membership events in 2009, Western Pacific Railroad's Centennial year, to enjoy YOUR museum. It promises to be a lot of fun and we look forward to meeting you.

## DEPARTURES

*Sadly, the last half of 2008 has proven to be a difficult one for many long-time members. After announcing the passing of two volunteers in the last issue, we now have the loss of two more, as well as the news, to be covered more in the next issue, of the passing of prominent Western Pacific historian and Society friend Virgil Staff.*

*To the family and friends of our departed members and volunteers, the FRRS family extends its deepest condolences.*

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Director **Merrill Thurman** of Fulton, Missouri passed away at the age of 53 at the St. Mary's Hospital on Friday, November 14, 2008. He was born August 19, 1955, in Modesto, California, son of the late Gordon and Joyce (Hartliep) Thurman. On December 27, 1975, he was united in marriage to Rita (Hall) Thurman who survives at their home.

Merrill was a self-employed Computer Interface Analyst. He worked for the Community Health Systems of Nashville, Tennessee for many years. His passions were his grandchildren, umpiring fast pitch softball and modeling railroads. His home-grown HO pike was the "Missouri Western Pacific", a fictional midwestern division of his beloved WP. He enjoyed duck hunting, fly-fishing, goose hunting, working on his 18-wheeler, traveling, camping and was a Ham Radio Operator.

He was a Life member of the Feather River Rail Society and was appointed to the Board of Directors early in 2008. Despite living in Missouri, Merrill was a strong supporter and advocate of the Society, regularly attending the WPRRHS Conventions and coming to Portola to volunteer when work and family permitted. Merrill's father, Gordon Thurman, who passed away in May of this year, was a former Western Pacific engineer and inspired Merrill's love of the WP. The Z-Scale Western Pacific layout was saved and brought to the museum largely through his generosity. He was also an advocate for WP SW1 501, the railroad's first diesel, and set-up a fundraising effort on its behalf.

In addition to his wife of thirty-two years, he will be sadly missed and lovingly remembered by son Merrill Lee Thurman and his wife, Melissa, of Hillsboro, Missouri; daughter Victoria Christine Thurman of Fulton, Missouri; two grandchildren, Hayden Thurman and Baylee Hash; several aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and numerous friends. His parents and a twin brother, Edgar Lee Thurman, preceded him in death.

Memorial services were held on Saturday, November 22, 2008, at the Southside Baptist Church in Fulton, Missouri, with Reverend Ron Baker officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the Central Missouri Food Bank or to a College Trust Fund set up for his grandchildren, Hayden and Baylee. The FRRS is also accepting donations in Merrill's name for the restoration of Western Pacific SW1 501.

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**Clyde Roger Lippincott** passed away on Friday, November 28, 2008, in Newport, Washington. He was born in Oakland, California, on February 13, 1944, to Vance and Agnes Lippincott. He moved with his family to Carson City, Nevada, and lived there until 2007. He was, along with his family, the owner of Frontier Enterprises of Carson City.

Over his life, he was active in various Masonic Bodies, being Past Master of Carson Lodge #1, Carson City, NV; Past Master of Douglas Lodge #12, Genoa, NV; Eminent Commander, E.C. Peterson Commander #8, Carson City, NV. He was also a member Lewis Chapter #1 Royal Arch Masons of Carson City and a past member of Esther Chapter #3, Order of the Eastern Star in Carson City. He was currently attending Newport Lodge #144 and Zillah Chapter #111, Order of the Eastern Star in Newport, WA. He was also a member of the Family Motor Coach Association; National Model Railroad Association; National Rifle Association; Northern Nevada Railway Foundation; Carson City Rifle and Pistol Club, and a long-time member of the Feather River Rail Society.

Clyde is survived by his wife of 32 years, Linda, daughter Lisa Hunter (Will) and 4 grandsons, son Roger Lippincott (Michelle) of NV, Uncle Forest Thayer of CA, and a large extended family.

A memorial service were held on Saturday, December 6, 2008 at the Colbert Presbyterian Church, 1211 E. Colbert Rd., Colbert, WA. In lieu of flowers you may make contributions to The New Hope Resource Center, 1211 E. Colbert Rd., Colbert, WA 99005 or the Northern Nevada Railway Foundation, P.O. Box 339, Carson City, NV 89702-0339.

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## REMEMBERING...

Some of you may have never met Frank Beavers or Clyde Lippincott. But, if you've ever been up to the museum, you probably benefited from some of their handiwork. These two were active in the FRRS for many years and had a big impact on several members.

Frank had a brief career with the WP, living in an outfit car in the middle of the Nevada desert before going on to work in the Logging industry near Lake Almanor. Some would describe Frank as a fussy "old coot" with strong opinions and "a bone to pick" with just about everybody. But around his friends, Frank always had a smile on his face and a good word of encouragement. Frank worked hard around the museum helping to prepare for special events and woodworking in the carpentry shop. He was a model railroader and historian. And wherever Frank traveled, be it at a model railroad show, another railroad museum or just around his home in Westwood, he was always talking up the museum. Frank would distribute flyers and was a great ambassador for the museum. He embraced the WPRRHS and volunteered many hours sorting and arranging items in the Archives. Frank was also the chairman of our very successful WPRRHS convention in Reno and made provisions to have his private collection donated to the WPRRHS upon his death.

Clyde was a huge, giant of a man with a booming voice and ideas and opinions that were just as big as he was. But while some sat back and complained about him and his opinions, Clyde himself was busy working around the museum - putting his back and his money where his mouth was. Clyde and his wife Linda worked hard on many projects around the museum, including the shower car, repairs to the SN1632, moving the Ingersoll Rand locomotive to Portola, as well as numerous building and grounds projects. And when the museum did not have, or could not afford, the correct tools and equipment to do the job right, Clyde and Linda would show up in their RV with a huge trailer full of tools! When weeds and brush began to reclaim our property, he would spend several days on his tractor making the museum look better and eliminating dangerous fire conditions. At the end of the day, tired and sore, he always had a smile on his face and a friendly pat on the back for his coworkers. More recently, Clyde and Linda were always present for the annual Railroad Days celebration with the Gandy Dancer Model Railroad Club.

*They drew a circle, and shut them out.  
Heretics! Rebels! - A thing to flout!  
But Love and I, had the wit to win.  
We drew a circle - And took them in.*

- Edwin Markham

Thank you guys. We will always remember your valuable contributions to our success. But most of all, we will simply miss having you around.

- John Walker