

Presidents Report

—Rod McClure, FRRS President

As you read this, a new year has started both on the calendar and at our Museum. I hope you all had a good Holiday season with your families and friends. With the New Year at the Museum, we continue to move forward with ongoing projects and yearly activities we all look forward to. We are starting 2015 in a better financial position than we have had in the last five or six years. For the first time in several years we are going to open the Museum with a well-stocked Gift Shop, fueled and serviced RAL locomotives and a reorganized Shop to work in.

Our final event of 2014 was the Santa Trains. I do not want to take away Steve Habeck's thunder on this as he has written an in-depth article on the event and all the people who made it happen. I will only say that we did better financially than any previous Santa Train Events.

2014 Railroad Days was also very successful with our model railroad displays in the shop and a live steam model operation out of the Dock arranged by Gail McClure. Once again, Life Member Chris Skow organized a special Amtrak train consisting of all privately owned passenger cars to come to Portola on Railroad Days. This brought many new visitors to the Museum as well as Portola itself. In this train were three former California Zephyr cars. The air conditioning blower quit working on the Silver Solarium on the way to Portola, which made the car very hot and uncomfortable for the guests riding that car (being at the rear of the train). Upon learning of this, I made available our pit track inside our shop for the cars repair if needed. So, on Saturday night upon the return of the short round trip to Keddie, we switched that car into the pit for them to replace the burned out fan motor underneath the car. This took most of the night to complete and our members stood by to help and provide any tools needed. After an all-nighter for some of our volunteers, we switched the cars back out to the UP for their trip back to Oakland. A good time was had by all

despite very long hours and just one example of how the WPRM is willing to help out other organizations when possible. I hope to have an article for The Train Sheet by the Car Manager, Burt Hermeijer when he gets the time to put it together. Once again, the slogan of "WP means Willing People" survives in Portola.

Many of you don't always know what is going on at the Museum because you can't make it up from where you live or don't have the time off to be able to make the trip to Portola. I realize that there is also another reason for this, and that is we don't always get the word out about what is happening. I have already begun pushing those who are around the Museum most of the time to start writing things for the *Train Sheet* and our Blog. I also have found that those of us who are able to devote a lot of time at the Museum are reluctant to "blow our own horn", if you will. I could write ad-nauseum that "I did this and Steve did that and Gail did this and Eugene did so and so." None of us are doing this for a pat on the back or for personal gain. That being said, we need to let you know more of the things we do on a regular basis that give us the ability to open the doors and share the WP with the world.

We have seen some new members this year join us at the Museum to learn how to be on the operating crew and a couple have interest in the Steam Program. We also extremely excited have a lady diesel mechanic who has expressed interest in working on our diesel fleet. We have seen the return of a few members who were absent for different reasons but have returned to jump right back in and we are happy to see them.

One thing that has been brought to my attention recently is the behavior of a small number of our Membership. All organizations have this same problem in one way or another. I recently read an article by Charlie Getz of the NMRA titled "A Few Bad Apples". In it he describes the problem with a small few members who are "disruptive, arrogant [and] boorish". He gives specific examples within their organization that cause problems remarking they need to have a procedure or process to expel these members.

The FRRS has these policies and procedures in place already and have unfortunately had to have been used in the past. We are ahead of the curve on this potential problem so that is not something we need to revisit. But, we need to end these falsehoods and rumors before they start if possible, but if we cannot stop them at the source, then we need to counter them with truth and facts. The bad mouthing and general unrest these members cause is unacceptable and counterproductive to our organization and goals. One sure way to solve these issues is to provide our members with answers to their questions. True and factual answers are available to you, the members, for any of the questions you may have. Please email any or all of your Directors (their contact information appears at the beginning of all Train Sheet issues), or me at lolunar79@gmail.com. You can also call me anytime at the museum and I will get the message.

I have been involved in the Western Pacific since I was seven years old and first went to work with

my Dad on a switch engine. He was with the WP and then UP for 54 years, and both his Uncle and Great Uncle both were involved in the early days of the Western Pacific. I want to see the history of our beloved railroad passed on to future generations. There is nothing more satisfying to me than to see children's faces light up when they see our equipment, or ride on our caboose train. This is not a job for me: This is a passion which I want to pass on to others. I know that I am not the only member who feels this way. I also like to see our volunteers enjoy themselves and laugh. Having fun makes this a better place for all of us. Next *Train Sheet* I will tell you about some of the winter time work that is happening and who is doing it.

Until next time...

WP Lives
Rod McClure



WP 709 and 708 sit at 9th and D Streets at the Tidewater Southern/Western Pacific Depot in Modesto, CA on August 10, 1977. The Depot is now gone, as are the tracks seen here.

—Greg Elems Photo