

President's Report – March 2017

– Steve Habeck, President

Unless you have been living these past few months under a rock, or blissfully out of touch with the news, you are aware that this winter showed up determined to make up for the mild ones we have had the past few years. While the snow we have received so far this year (it's only March) is more like a normal winter, the unprecedented rains we have seen in the higher elevations (as well as in the valleys) are what made the news. After receiving a decent amount of snow after our successful Santa Trains (there's another article to write), the warm rains came, and amounts were measured in feet, not inches. The rain has been followed by more snow, which is again accumulating. The heavy rains, combined with significant snow melt, caused a lot of flooding in Portola and Quincy, as well as closing Highway 70 and the UP's ex-WP line through the Canyon for over a month. Fortunately, when the WP was built through Portola, the surveyors chose to construct the main line, yard, and support facilities well above the river's expected flood stages. The WPRM has benefited from this in that we have had no flood damage to any of the facilities on campus, while directly across the river from WPRM, the Sleepy Pines Motel and Highway 70 were flooded, with water a foot deep on the highway. The only issues at WPRM are the water that gets into the shop building every year, and significant damage to the access road where it comes down towards our front gate. The shop building is built at grade level, and the snow that accumulates on the north side of the building, which never gets any sun in the winter, melts into the building through the doors and the foundation on that side. With over 3 feet of snow accumulated when the rain started, a lot of water came into the building, and will continue to do so, at a lesser rate, until all the snow has melted. The resulting water floods the WP Store, kitchen area, and the Board Room the worst, as well as the Ops Office, electric room, and other areas on the north side of the building. I have to acknowledge the continuing efforts of many volunteers who spent a lot of time with squeegees and the shop vac to try and stay ahead of the encroaching water, including Directors Charlie Spikes and Greg Elems, as well

as Duane VanderVeen, David (Fritz) Elems, and Ethan Doty. The tally from the shop vac is well over 200 gallons by now, and counting.

The heavy precipitation this winter has kept us busy simply maintaining access to the building. Ethan Doty and David Elems have spent a lot of time on the backhoe trying to open up a path, and keep it open, so we can get in. This was one of the reasons we decided to cancel the February Board meeting. We also had problems with the backhoe getting stuck in the deep slush, ice, and snow. I went to Les Schwab and bought a set of tire chains for the large drive wheels on the backhoe (we already had chains on the steering tires), which was a great help in maintaining traction. Unfortunately, there is insufficient clearance between the drive tires and the backhoe frame for the chains, and they got worn severely in a short time. At least we got the access we needed.

Due to the issues with the weather, and my inability to predict work times due to UP's service outages in California and Nevada, taking down the Santa Train lights has proven to be difficult. At this writing, Ethan Doty and Loren Ross have completed much of the work to take down the lights off the train. I have been saddled with a persistent sinus and chest congestion issue that I can't get rid of (over 6 weeks now), which has also limited my ability to get over to the Museum. Fortunately, my family was able to get the decorations down in the diner and baggage car before the worst of the big snowstorms hit, but we have not been able to move things around to facilitate the mechanical work that Fritz wanted to get to this off-season because of the deep ice-encrusted snow on the tracks. With this recent warm-up, we may finally get the opportunity to get the switching done, and still have time for some of the mechanical work.

You may have seen on the website some photos and reports of the long-range planning meeting held in Davis, CA, and attended by the FRRS Officers, Directors, General Superintendent, Webmaster, Acting CMO, and Patty Clawson from Big Fish. I felt that this was a good new step for us to take, and many issues were discussed. Plans for the short term were firmed up, and

guidelines for the long term were established.

Another issue we have been dealing with for some time now is our banking. The FRRS has been with Bank of America since we started out, but things have changed. First, B of A closed their Portola branch in 2015, forcing us to go to Quincy, Truckee, or Reno for our banking (deposits, etc.). While inconvenient, we made it work; I made deposits approximately twice a week during the season in Quincy, less often in the off-season. Then, B of A closed their Quincy branch in November of 2016. With the nearest B of A branch now in Truckee (the B of A branch in Lemmon Valley in North Reno will never see me darken their door again), we opted to change over to Plumas Bank, a local bank headquartered in Quincy, with branches everywhere we might need them (Quincy, Portola, Reno, etc.). This has proven to be easier said than done; after delays, and jumping through lots of hoops, this process is about complete. All the Plumas Bank accounts are now open, and as soon as we get the electronic services (like PayPal) and the point-of-sale transferred over, I will close the B of A accounts, and transfer the funds to the corresponding Plumas Bank accounts. We already have the new deposit slips and a new check stamp in the fire safe; Susan Scarlett has ordered and received new checks, and also has deposit slips and a check stamp for her use. This has turned into a six-month ordeal, mostly for me. My thanks to Alyssa at the Portola branch of Plumas Bank for guiding me through this process.

Attached to this report, for the Board meeting, is my statement of donations to the FRRS for 2016. I also want to acknowledge the contributions of Duane VanderVeen, who also submitted a report of donations he made in 2016. I have written an acknowledgment letter to Duane in recognition of his contributions. I know almost all of you have given freely of your time, as well as donations of goods, and it is hereby recognized, and very much appreciated. I will acknowledge, in writing, any lists submitted. This will also facilitate the documentation needed for your taxes.

Don't forget to sign up for the 2017 Convention in Reno, from May 4-7. Eugene has

done a fantastic job setting this up, and it promises to be a fun-and-fact-filled time for all. My wife and I will be in attendance for the entire Convention, and all special events, and look forward to seeing everyone, and enjoying the atmosphere. Please feel free to hunt me down with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have regarding your Society. This is a great time to engage the Officers, Directors, and Department Heads in one-on-one or group discussions; I, personally, look forward to it. Good or bad, make your voice heard. I can't guarantee your satisfaction with my answers or my take on an issue, but I can guarantee you'll have my attention.

President's Report – April 2017

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After a winter that will be talked about for quite some time, we have finally begun seeing a large, bright ball of light moving across the sky during the day, bringing with it longer days, and warmer temperatures. Mostly due to weather issues, we were unable to clear the shop for the Mechanical Department until the middle of March, but once we gave them some shop space in which to work, CMO Bil (1L) Jackson, asst CMO David (Fritz) Elems, and able helper Ethan (Zeke) Doty got right to work, and as I write this, the QRR (SP) 1100 and the Kodachrome (SP 2873) have been serviced and released for duty. WP 917-D has had most of it's servicing completed, but a rusted, frozen power contactor (S13) is keeping it out of service (but not for long).

Also, Ethan Doty and Loren Ross braved the elements earlier this year and got all the Christmas lights off all 7 cabooses (and the engine) while I was dealing with work issues and a stubborn congestion problem. This work facilitated moving the cabooses out of the way, so the passenger cars from the shop could be placed on track 3, out of the way of the Mechanical Department.

One of the reasons we were delayed was access to the Museum, or lack thereof. After the Santa Trains, we got around 3 ft of snow, and then the rains came. Then it got cold, everything