

President's Report – June 2017

– Steve Habeck, President, FRRS

It has been a very trying and disappointing start to our operating season in 2017. I simply cannot keep up with the non-stop demands and requests for forms, reports, and whatever from at least 5 state and federal agencies in our efforts to get assistance in repairing the access road. At this point, I do not expect to get any assistance from any agency for access road repair. I can't jump through all these hoops with everything else I have to do around the Museum, support my job, and try and maintain my health.

I have prepared a report to the General Superintendent and Roadmaster on the track issue we have on the balloon, and repair plans are in progress. We do not have an estimate yet as to the return-to-service date.

We have suffered a sucker punch to the gut with WP 1503. While preparing it for opening weekend service, a rupture in one of the older radiator cores (NOT the ones we replaced) was discovered, taking the engine out of service indefinitely. I am extremely disappointed in this discovery, to say the least. I had planned on expanding use of the 1503 this season, until now. New cores will set us back around \$10,000, plus the time and labor involved for the work.

Thanks to Charlie Spikes, who found a guy online that came to Portola and relieved us of most of our junk batteries, and paid us \$800 to boot. This gets rid of a very nasty eyesore on the property, which I had been concerned with for a long time. I had to intervene to keep them from taking my display batteries in the shop!

Although our finances are not where we want them, Leisa and her crew in the WP Store are making great strides in improving our income. However, I will need to order fuel very soon if we intend to continue to operate.

Also on income, I am working with Eugene and Patty from Big Fish to set up a fundraising catered dinner at the Museum in the very near future, to generate funds for the Steam program, and for moving the Carr-bell plow from the mill in Chester to Portola. We still may have an

opportunity this summer to get a crew from Wasatch (Steve Lee's group) to put in some time on the 165, if we can get the funding.

I have also spent a lot of time in applying FRA Part 224 delineator striping on various cars at the Museum, at the behest of UP, to get cars we need to store on the West Pass into compliance. This project is almost completed for what has to be done immediately, but more work is ahead. As part of this, I have ordered a case of 3M California-legal glue remover to facilitate removing the glue residue from the 1503 and other equipment that will need it (so the 484 can be re-done properly, for example).

Finally, kudos to CMO Bil Jackson and the Mechanical Department for the reliability of the RAL fleet so far this year, and for the quick turnaround of the 1100 this week, getting it back in service. Their plans for the rest of the fleet continue as time allows.

Enjoy the Annual Meeting, and the new grill Charlie Spikes obtained and set up. Let's see what the attending members want to see and have to say on how we're doing.

President's Report – July 2017

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This has been an unbelievably busy month since the last Board meeting. I feel as though I have been living at the Museum, which isn't too far from reality. We ordered, received, and dispensed 3000 gallons of diesel fuel, keeping our thirsty RAL engines going. We still have some on hand, but we may need to buy more before the season is over, the way we're selling RAL's. We also bought 4 barrels of lube oil (2 of which were paid for by Seth Adams, related to his WP 501 project), for WP 2001's oil replacement. The Mechanical Department should have a detailed report on the litany of problems being addressed on the 2001, and why it's become a shop queen. We will need to buy more lube oil for makeup stock, and for placing any other engines in service.

Our long-time friend Doug Morgan has passed away. Within a week of his passing, his daughter

and son-in-law from Minnesota, as well as Doug's attorney, Brian Whipple, showed up at the Museum and demanded access into Morgan's boxcar. After being denied by us, they attempted to get into the car with keys they got from Whipple. The car, however, was on UP's West Pass, and they were trespassing on UP property, so Vice-President Elems contacted UP's RMCC (Risk Management Control Center), and notified them of the trespassers attempting to break into a boxcar. This resulted in a heavy response by law enforcement, and a hasty departure by Mr. Whipple, leaving Doug's daughter and son-in-law to fend for themselves. They told the officers that they got bad information from their attorney, and were told to leave. I have a copy of the sheriff's report, if anyone wants to see it. Doug's daughter then posted for sale on Craig's List the UP 849, the boxcar, and a hi-rail truck (location unknown). I was astounded that Whipple allowed her to do this, as he is fully aware of the status of this equipment, and the state of the litigation. The listing was pulled after a few days. Due to repeated attempts to contact us by Morgan's son-in-law, which were getting nastier, I responded to him in a message I sent to all the Directors. He responded with another attempt to get information on the legal proceedings, which I have ignored. Once the legal proceedings are concluded, I will contact him as appropriate.

I have researched locomotive batteries, and have established contacts with the regional rep for Crown batteries, and the sales rep for Dyno batteries. Dyno batteries are made in Seattle, and were recommended by Roger Stabler, as they are used on the Yolo Shortline. Battery prices have dropped dramatically since I last researched them 3 years ago; I can now buy a full set of batteries from Crown or Dyno for around \$7000, including shipping. Prices for single batteries or uni-packs are nearly the same, so we can get what we need, depending on what the locomotive requires, without having to spend too much. The Board needs to determine how we are going to make these purchases of fuel oil, lube oil, and batteries, or the end of the operating season may result in complete shutdown of the facility. The 1100 is still on life support, and may be OK as long as the weather stays hot; after that, failure is

virtually guaranteed. WP 917's batteries are also showing signs of their age; sudden failure has been the norm with the batteries in the 917, due to its hard-starting characteristics. I will no longer cobble batteries together from various engines or locations to get something running; moving batteries around is hard on the batteries, and the chance of damaging and/or dropping a battery while moving it is always there, and is very detrimental or fatal to the battery.

We have had initial discussions about the possibility of obtaining a loan for various projects and needs around the Museum; I will defer the details to other reports. I will say, though, that thinking outside the box here is essential to the future growth and needs of the Museum. Last week, I took Ethan Doty and Fritz Elems with me to Chester, to photograph and measure the Carr-Bell plow at Collins Pine in Chester. We obtained just about all the data we needed to provide to the truckers to obtain quotes for the move. Ethan did a great job creating a file with photos of the plow, overlaid with the dimensions we obtained, that I was able to send to the truckers. Of course, I had to take these two to lunch as part of the deal, but it was worth it. I have just received an E-mail from Rushway Trucking in Newcastle; and they now say they cannot move the plow (don't have a trailer big enough). I have sent the dimension info and a quote request to SRT Trucking in Sparks, and to Taylor Heavy Hauling in Roseville, for their input. This may result, however, in requiring us to hire cranes to load the plow at Chester, and unload it at Portola, adding significantly to the cost. SRT works closely with Bragg Crane in Sparks, and Taylor has their own cranes, according to their website. We've worked with Bragg and Taylor in the past; we'll see what they come up with. I may have more information at the Board meeting.

Vice-President Greg Elems and I met with 4 representatives from FEMA, Cal-OES, and other agencies a couple of weeks ago, laying the groundwork for our damage claims due to the storms last winter. By the time of the Board meeting, I will have met with the on-site FEMA inspector, inspecting the damage we claimed on our access road and on our balloon track, and will have more information on the results of that

inspection. Related to this, track work on the damaged balloon has been severely hampered by the extremely hot, dry weather this summer. Every day seems to be in the 90's, little or no wind, and no clouds, making track work essentially impossible after about 10 AM. Several of our diehard volunteers have attempted to get work done, despite the hot conditions, such as Greg Elems, Bil Jackson, Charlie Spikes, Loren Ross, and Ethan Doty. Don Nelson just spent a long week with us, running the backhoe every day, most of the day, and again in the evening, digging out trenches for old tie removal and new tie insertion, and actually removed most of the bad ties, and got all the staged new ones inserted. The amount of work he got done was phenomenal, especially given the brutal conditions. I want this effort recognized, and everyone made aware of it. On top of that, he plans on coming back near the end of July/early August to do it again! With what Don got done, there's plenty of setting/spiking/tamping/aligning for the rest of us to get done before he comes back; see Roadmaster Greg Elems for the work plans and times. I would like to see us get the railroad back in service by Railroad Days, if at all possible. Pray for a break in the weather.

Speaking of Railroad Days, I am already attending regular meetings of the Railroad Days Committee, planning for the event on August 25-27. As in the past, we will run trains on Friday, 8/25, as normal (admission and fares charged), and on Saturday and Sunday (8/26 – 8/27), with free Museum admission, and normal fares for train rides. We are also holding a raffle for the custom quilt on display in the WP Store, with the drawing on Railroad Days. Raffle ticket sales, however, have been very slow. We plan on having model railroads set up in the shop, Gary Van Treese back on the dock with his live-steam G-scale, and a demonstration of Fairmont one-cylinder engines (one-lungers) out front, by one of Fritz Elems' instructors from the Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC). We also need to provide the "Kluge" as motive power for the people-mover tram between the Museum and the City Park. It looks like the Portola Firefighters and their Auxiliary may provide most of the manpower for the tram this year, at least so far. We should also have UP Heritage units

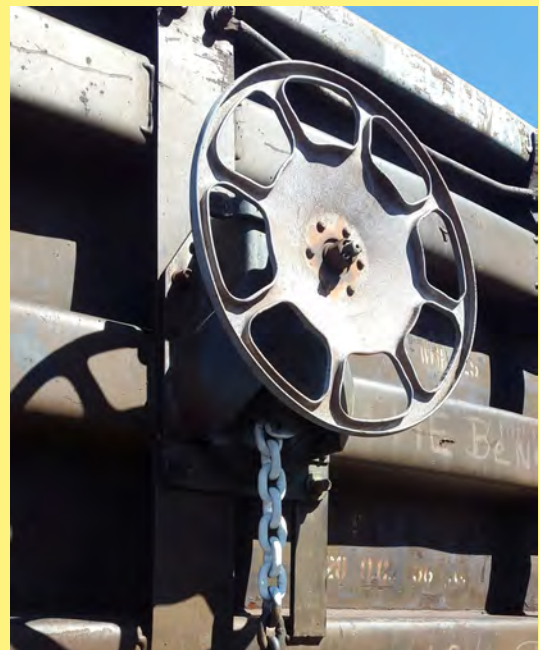
Fritz On The Job



Sunday, 29 April 2017, saw a slightly breezy, cool day at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum. The day's task: apply paint to the handbrake chains of select museum equipment to allow crew to easily determine whether the brake is tied.

In addition to the handbrake chains, other safety appliances were also painted bright white to assist with visibility.

Above, we see Fritz applying bright white paint to the cut lever of a gondola, with his signature expression. Below, the finished product.



UP 1983 (WP) and UP 1989 (DRGW) on display at the Museum; location to be announced later.

Museum Web Page Update – April 2017

–Paul Finnegan, Webmaster

Largely due to the high number of RAL's, including the surge at the end of June to beat the price increase, income through the WP Store has been good. I will defer the details to Director Wesch; but I have been able to allow the Mechanical Department to buy what they need, for the most part, to accomplish the work they're trying to do. Some of that work included shop time for the WP 805-A, in preparation for a special RAL on July 3 by Mark Bluth, a Life Member from Saratoga, CA, and a very generous donor. When tested on July 2, the 805-A performed as expected, but on the morning of the 3rd, with Mark ready for his RAL, the 805-A decided that its brakes weren't going to work correctly. After Fritz worked on it for quite some time, I suggested bringing the 917-D down and MU-ing it with the 805-A, to see if the brake problem would be mitigated with 917-D in control. This was successful, so Mark and his friend did the RAL from the 917-D, with the 805-A trailing, in the afternoon, after the regular caboose trains, and they were happy. After the RAL, Fritz and I put the F's away in the west end of the yard, to be out of the way for the July 4th caboose trains. That evening, Fritz asked me if we were going to run the F's for the 4th; I hadn't even given it a thought. The next morning, however, I had Fritz fire up the F's, and we swapped them onto the caboose train for the day, 917-D flying appropriate flags (see Greg Elems' videos, edited by Webmaster Finnegan). The F's developed a minor MU glitch, but we were able to work through it for the day. Good job, Fritz!

This has been a long report, but there's been a lot going on. In closing, I want to thank everyone who has been spending multiple days at the Museum, working RAL's, maintenance, track work, or whatever needs to be done (or doing what I ask them to do). I'm proud to have this group of Willing People busting their butts at this facility day after day, and, I haven't forgotten the people that are working just as hard from home on innumerable projects. It all counts.

I decided I would use the "off-season" to work behind the scenes on the web site and related topics. I spent most of the January ~ April time frame creating documentation for myself and future webmasters and cleaning up the code on the web site. In creating the documentation system, I wanted it to be essentially auto-updating, so I created a weekly site audit tool that explores all the web pages on the website. In addition to creating the documentation for the webmaster, it does things like making sure there are no broken links, all the photos referenced really exist and it does a spell check on every page. It also checks the syntax of the HTML code that comprises the web site.

As the audit tool developed, it found a surprising number of issues throughout the web site that I have gone back and fixed. The audit tool now reports an (almost) clean web site. It flags a few pages that are still under development, but all the public pages are clean. The web pages were previously rendering and looked OK, so why do we care?

I knew that some of the web pages looked different on different browsers; some of this was caused by the different browsers looking at our mangled HTML code and "fixing" it for us in slightly different ways. Now that we have no syntax errors, the pages look much more uniform on different browsers because the browsers don't have to guess what we really meant to say.

Another advantage of a clean web site is that the various search engines allegedly use a scoring system to rate your web page before displaying search results. A cleaner web site supposedly ranks higher, so people searching may find more results directing them to wplives.org now. That can help our society.

A big side effect for us is since I had to re-code almost every page on the web site, I used this as the opportunity to create the missing mobile friendly web pages for our collection pages. We made significant progress towards being a 100% mobile friendly web site. For the period 4/20/16 to 4/20/17 67.75% of our web visitors used a