

## Member Spotlight – Janet Steeper

I was asked to introduce myself to the society. I am a life member here at the FRRS. The first time I came to the museum, I wrote out my check. I felt in my bones, it would be a natural fit for some of my abilities and personality. I am still feeling my way trying to find my niche in the museum. Other members know so much, it can be a little intimidating, but they are wonderful about sharing their knowledge. Now serving on your board for the next three years, my job title is currently “den mother.” I just try in my way to keep folks communicating with one another, and helping out where help is needed. A bit of an ombudsman, if you will. I am glad that the membership feels it can come to me with questions and concerns, and I will try to direct those to the right place. Overall, I am a pretty good sounding board, and am happy to be so. On many weekends you will find me in the Operating Department running trains with all my buddies. Yes, like many of you, my social life IS the museum. We always welcome new volunteers, and would welcome our old ones back with open arms.



I am from Aiken County, South Carolina (my accent is pretty pronounced), I hold a B.S. and M.S. in Geology and a Master of Arts in Teaching and an Education Specialist in science education. I taught geology for the University of Georgia, Augusta State University and most recently for the University of Mississippi. I am a master jeweler and owned a successful jewelry business with twelve employees for 22 years. I became a certified locomotive engineer and worked two and a half years for the Mississippi Delta Railway, a short line with 60 miles of ex-Illinois Central track. I am a member of NARCOA and own a popper railcar, an ex-1946 M-19 from the Seaboard Coastline where my aunt, uncle, and great grandfather worked. My cousin and I had a rail passenger car repair shop in Atlanta, Georgia for thirteen years. It was a two-person operation (two 30-ton cranes helped) and we repaired Budd and ACF cars to Amtrak standards, doing everything from truck rebuilds to shower installations. We also ran charters.

I have filmed and chased Steve Lee through the plains as he piloted the UP Challenger. I have been privileged to ride and operate steam engines all over the world. Most notably QJ's in China on Jin Peng pass in Inner Mongolia, Garratts in Zimbabwe (the most comfortable engine you will ever stand on the footplate of) and NC-25's in South Africa where I owned a home.



*Janet headed to Swan Lake, MI in a leased Canadian National unit in summer 2016. All three of the MSDR engines were down for major repairs at the Mississippi Delta railway. MSDR was in the middle of a massive movement of storage cars, and had to lease an engine from Canadian National for about \$800 a day. The engine was very much like our QRR 1100. Temperature that day was over 100° humidity in the 90s.*

Currently I live in Dayton, NV and commute 90 miles each way to the museum, which I love doing by the way, (Hey it's the old NCO along US 395!) I serve on the boards of the Historical Society of Dayton Valley and the Mayo Educational Foundation, spend time riding the rails in my popper car, working at the WPRM museum, ripping through the desert at top speed in my convertible mustangs (no ticket yet, subject to change) and rock bashing on my ATV. Hope to see you all (y'all) at the museum. Again, volunteer, it's a blast! All the required information can be found on our easy to use website.