

Cash Donations

The following people have made generous cash contributions to the FRRS:

Mark Acuna, Grant Allen, Mike Anderson, Kirk Baer, Paul & Sandi Bonderson, Joe Bunik, George Comer, Phil Gosney, Gary Griffin, Harry Jamason, Sam Jenkinson, Jim McCombs, Porter Meroney, John C. Miller, Clark Nary, Albert Novak, Steve Paluso, Leo Prescott, Ken Ritz, Gilbert Rogers, Robert Sarberenyi, Daniel Smith, Eugene & Louise Walker, Dan Wheeler

New Life Members

The following people have just joined the ranks of FRRS Life Members. Thank you all.

Carol VOSS from San Jose CA

John Harlan Heward from Reno NV

Brad Fick from Atherton CA

Bill Magazin from Kaysville UT

B.C. Van Vanatta from Chugiak AK

Georg Wahl from Ferndorf Germany

Jack Cogan from Goleta CA

TRAIN Convention

We and the Nevada State Railroad Museum are sponsoring the Tourist Railway Association convention in Reno, Nevada, November 4-8, 1992. The event, known as "Silver State Train '92" will start off with a one-half day bus trip to the Portola Railroad Museum. On November 5, 1992, there will be an all day bus tour to Virginia City to ride the V&T and a tour of the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City. On Friday, November 6, 1992, following the Board of Directors meeting, there will be seminars on Americans with Disabilities Act, Railroad Crossing signals and Festival Planning and Gift Shop suppliers. Saturday, November 7, 1992 will have seminars all day including FRA rules update, coping with FRA rules, Hand car racing, Museum Assessment Program, Diesel-electric troubleshooting and battery maintenance, EPA Hazardous Material regulations and how to live with these regulations. In the evening there will be the general membership meeting and banquet. The guest speaker will be John Bromley, media representative, Union Pacific Railroad. Registration for the convention is \$55, rooms in the convention hotel, the Reno Hilton (formerly Bally's) are \$59 + tax. For a registration form or for further information, send your request to our FRRS mailing address.

Preservation Column

...Professionalism

By David Dewey

There is much discussion at the museum of "Professionalism," but what is professionalism, how do we get it and do we really want it?

Many people define professionalism by the quality of work produced. My father used to tell me that the difference between the Professional and the Amateur was that the Professional was paid for working. This definition worked for my father because he only knew of one standard of quality; to do anything less than a professional worker would do made no sense to him (I remember him ordering some cement for a gutter we were building and the cement plant said, "5 sack cement?! Only the State orders 5 sack!!" His response was, "Well, if it's good enough for the state, I guess it'll be good enough for me."). In reality, what my father taught me was that it is the standards by which one conducts himself or herself that defines professionalism. This is especially true in the museum world where most of the population are volunteer workers.

What are these standards? The California State Railroad Museum is often looked at as a prime example of a "Professional Museum," with its pristine collection of displayed and polished engines and cars. However, this display itself does not make it a professional museum. The display is only one part of that museum, they also have equipment that looks used, and is operated regularly as part of their interpretive display. They also have a collection stored out in the elements, that is being vandalized and is deteriorating. We at Portola have a collection, some stored indoors, some outdoors; some of it is used on a regular basis, some isn't. We also have some vandalism (although our remoteness does seem to spare us the metal scavenging vandalism others face). Don't these differences make us less professional?

No.

What makes a museum "Professional" is the manner in which it cares for and uses its collection; and how this reflects upon its attitude towards its collection and the public. One definition of museum is that of an entity that exists to collect, preserve, and share objects for the illumination of present and future generations. To this end basic standards of care for the collection of objects and public access have evolved. Basically these standards state that the museum must protect its collection from deterioration and damage, and utilize the collection to educate others as to its significance and importance to society.

None of this says that you cannot have fun at a museum, or that objects in a museum cannot function as they were originally created to function (provided that this action is not destroying the object). We'll talk about the standards of preservation and public access further in a later column. For now, let's conclude with a typical museum "buzz" word definition; so when it's used, you'll be clued in.

Artifact. These are the objects a museum collects. They can be as big as a locomotive or as small as a uniform button. In reality, the Engine House building at the museum is an artifact, although we may choose not to define it as such so it may be modified to suit our housing needs. Artifacts are also referred to as "stuff," "things," "goodies" and "junk(!?!)."

The Train Sheet thanks Steve Habeck for his help in publishing this issue.

Membership Report

as of August 19, 1992

147 Associate

79 Life

204 Family

14 Sustaining

570 Active

*Total FRRS membership is 1,014.
...of these, 31 are Charter members.*