

THREE TOTAL votes. This election you had the option of voting for the 3 incumbents OR writing in up to 3 different people OR some other combination adding up to 3. One ballot had votes for all 3 plus 3 write ins. That ballot had to be disqualified. Again, the instructions were clear on this.

In summary, now that I am aware of how the system works, it is not as intimidating as I initially thought. This coming year will be easier. Among the changes I intend to make for 2007 is to get the ballots out sooner and have the deadline to return them well before the day of counting to accommodate the stragglers. But more on that later.

## ERIC'S BIG ADVENTURE

- Eugene John Vicknair

During late July-early August, some folks traveling around the West were treated to a bizarre sight. Rolling down the highway was a big Fleetwood RV with a nose painted in silver, orange and black and sporting some logos that are quite familiar to our members. Riding this rattling contraption were three FRRS members (and one non-member) set on fulfilling an old dream while trying to help others.

FRRS Life Member Eric Stephens has been battling an inoperable brain tumor for much of the past 2 years. A member since 1990, he helped repair a great deal of the wiring in the diesel shop, as well as the Office and Shower Cars. He worked on The Zephyr Project and was instrumental in the design and wiring of the Silver Debris volunteer lounge. Unfortunately, the symptoms of his battle with cancer have included paralysis of his left side and a loss of coordination and motor control, leaving him dependent on a walker and wheelchair.

In November, 2005, we began talking about replicating a trip we first took in 1990. We had traveled from California to Denver and back in one week to help a homeless friend, railfanning

all the way. With such a quick trip, much was missed. We had often talked about a repeat, but the time was never available. Now, we realized it would have to be sooner, rather than later.

As we planned the trip, the scope grew until we were covering ground in 8 states over 3 weeks. It also grew into something larger than just giving a friend a grand vacation. We realized that this trip could be used to speak for something larger. With help from Eric's mother, Julie Stephens, we made contact with the National Brain Tumor Foundation and Jennifer Neale, herself a brain cancer survivor. We decided to make the trip a benefit for both the NBTF and the FRRS. With help from friends and family, my girlfriend, Wendy Holtz, and I bought a broken down RV and renovated it, modifying it to accommodate Eric. FRRS members David Epling and Tom Carter pitched in, while other members donated to the cause. Tom's father Rick donated use of a powered scooter, easier to handle than Eric's bulky wheelchair. We painted the RV in WP silver and orange, while Express SignCraft of San Jose provided fantastic, full color decals for the body, including FRRS heralds and WP passenger wings for the nose.

A future article will fill in details of the trip and provide thanks to everyone who helped, but in the end we raised several thousand dollars for the NBTF and as well as receiving donations and providing publicity for the FRRS. Thanks to many fine people who helped out, donated or just cheered us on, as we set out to prove that life doesn't end in the face of such tragedy.

*The Eric's Big Adventure team would like to acknowledge Ken Meeker, another FRRS member who is struggling with his own serious illness. Our thoughts are with you and your family, Ken.*

*Eric visiting with Durango and Silverton 482 in Silverton, CO.*

*- photo by Eugene John Vicknair*

