



From the President's Rider Car -- By President Frank Van Bree

Goal: Bring in at least one new member

It does not seem possible that another year has already passed and it's time for me to report to you on the State of the Society. A lot of good things happened, most of which have been reported to you in detail in News & Timetables as they occurred; but a brief recap is appropriate, accompanied by some comments and observations.

The financial state of the Society is always reported first and this year the news is good, but that doesn't mean that our need for funds has diminished. All it means is that we have cash in the bank sufficient to think about investing some of it to generate interest income.

The reason for our relatively strong cash position should be obvious to those of you who carefully watch what we are doing, and from one perspective we haven't been doing very much. That's not true as we will later discuss, but it is true that we have had no big ticket expenses in the past year. No decision has been reached on how best and most economically to place the archives in electronic format and no historically significant rolling stock has become available for acquisition, restoration and display. Therefore we are accumulating our funds for the time in the near future when we will need them. We know that whatever system is chosen to preserve the archives, it will be expensive.



FRANK VAN BREE

We've had some personnel changes which will modify how we do some things. Joseph Novosel, our new Treasurer, in his other life is the CEO of a manufacturing company, which among other things produces the Society's first G gauge cars. He is familiar with accounting and tax procedures and is accustomed to dealing with governmental agencies. His first priority is to get our old bookkeeping system updated to reflect accepted accounting principles now that we have to make periodic reports to several state agencies and pay sales tax. This will make it easier for his successors in office to assume their duties without first having to figure out what is going on. So please be patient as we make this transition.

Kevin Heggi is now in charge of the Equipment Acquisition and Maintenance committees which have been merged into one Committee. Kevin is one of our younger committee chairmen and brings a lot of enthusiasm to this Committee. His priorities include getting the caboose interior at Linden finished, the box car repaired and the flat car completed. This will mean recruiting and motivating volunteers to help with the required work.

The Society has demonstrated that it can get the job done. All you have to do is look at our caboose at the ITM at Noblesville to see what our members are capable of accomplishing. This is particularly important this year inasmuch as the Linden Depot will be celebrating its centennial and we want to project our best image to the visitors. A huge start was made last year when Pam and Tom Rankin assembled a group of volunteers on several occasions to clean up and beautify our Linden Headquarters. Please volunteer to help us complete these projects so we can all be proud of our Society's Headquarters property. Check the website for work dates.

Our annual Convention at Indianapolis was a success, both financially and in the quality of the events presented. The silent auction was again successful in producing income from the sale of a number

of Monon-related items, all of which were donated. This will probably be a regular feature of future conventions. For many the highlight of the convention tour was the visit to Amtrak's Beach Grove Shops where major car and locomotive repairs and rebuilds are done. For others it was the visit to the ITM and the opportunity to ride on the restored Monon wide vision caboose being pulled by Monon's first diesel locomotive which ITM volunteers have restored.

Bob Schultz, a Monon Carman who spent most of his career on the Monon at South Hammond Yard, but also at the Lafayette Shops, commented that while Amtrak's facilities were bigger and the machines used to make repairs and upgrades more modern, there was nothing that they can do that the Monon didn't do at Lafayette. Made me kind of proud.

Bob was also our after dinner speaker who held everyone's interest while reminiscing about his days on the Monon. He has an amazing memory and personal records of his work. Bob is also an accomplished modeler who scratch builds in O scale, which brings me to another request.

We have many talented modelers and photographers in the Society, yet the modeling and photography contests do not get many entries. How about starting work on a model now or searching your personal archives for an entry at Bloomington.

Speaking of Bloomington, that's the site of our Annual Convention this year. The dates to mark on your calendar are October 3, 4 & 5. I'd like to see as many of you there as possible, particularly if you ever worked for the Monon. We plan to dedicate the Employee Memorial which the Society commissioned and which will be located at the site of the downtown passenger station alongside the Monon Trail which follows the right-of-way through the City. As this is being written, we do not know if the Trail will be completed to the memorial site, but the dedication will take place in any event.

I think it's important for as many members of the Society as possible to be present for this event. We are the only organization being allowed to place anything along the Trail and want to demonstrate our appreciation to the Administration. It will also be a great opportunity to attract new members to the Society.

As we enter the new business year, I believe our goals must include obtaining younger members for the Society. There appears to be a renewed interest in history generally so we should promote interest in railroad history, particularly Monon history. Make it your personal goal to attract one new member. One of the best ways to approach this is to volunteer to put on a presentation to a club or group you belong to. VP Ken Weller can furnish a Power Point program for you to use as a basis for your talk. We cannot continue to exist without increasing the membership base. You found something to interest you in the Society, so build on that to promote the perpetuation of Monon's history and MRHTS.

There you have it. Another year of doing what we could to preserve Monon history. Join us at our Board meetings and Email us with your suggestions as to how the Society can be improved. Your comments and suggestions are most welcome.