



Retirement Letter

Chris Burger sent us this "Retirement Letter" written by a retired C&NW locomotive engineer friend to another, more recently retired engineer. **Chris** thinks it sums things up pretty well – I couldn't agree more. Thanks, **Chris**, for this fine contribution.

Dear John:

It has been 6 years and nearly 8 months since my own retirement, but I understand you are taking a disability retirement around this time. So I want to take this opportunity to wish you the best of all the things that retirement has to offer.

At this time you will also reflect back on the many years you worked on the railroad and the relationships that grew from all the years of your labor. As the significance of the years worked fades into the past, the relationships associated with the work will have greater meaning. It is these relationships that I address here because in the end, that is all that ever counted.

The era we spent on the railroad was full of stress and changes, very much unlike the time that the railroad employees who preceded us enjoyed. Most often there were things we could not control, even though at times we tried very hard to do so. It is also important to note that while there were better times to be associated with railroading than the time we spent, it was not due to any failure on our part. Never lose sight of the fact that we held our industry together during very difficult times and we deserve a certain amount of credit for that too. Lesser men may not have been as successful as we were, so we will let the record speak for itself. We weathered some pretty big storms, fought the good fight and, against great odds, we overcame obstacles never dreamed about when we hired out. Those men who follow us on the railroad - they can only speculate as to our challenges. They can never fully appreciate what we did because they can never understand the difficulties we faced.

Each and every one of us contributed the best we were able in our own way. Or at least 99% of us did and the other 1%, well they will have to deal with that as their life unfolds. We each had our own place on the railroad in which we made our contribution and none was more important than any other. It took a number of good men, dedicated to their daily performance, to do what we did. And, all the while knowing no one would pat us on the back. To persevere without encouragement often takes the greatest courage of all and we were certainly experts in this department. So while your memory of the railroad slides into the past, keep your memory of the men who worked with you fresh in your mind. These men are the only ones who really counted. Enjoy your remaining years.

Sincerely,

I am no where near as good with words as the author of this letter, so I will paraphrase what he wrote and say it to all of our members:

So while your memory of the railroad slides into the past, keep your memories of the men and women who worked with you fresh in your mind. These people are the only ones who really counted. Enjoy your remaining years!