

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD

Number 80

Cal Poly

January 2000

On Track

With your director,

Ed Carnegie



First, a Happy New Century to all of you! Just think, in fifteen years the Swanton engines will be celebrating their 100th anniversary. Time flies when you're having fun and we hope that all of you had some great holidays. Now we will settle back into the regular routines of working on the railroad.

Getting ready for the December work weekend, Tom Vertel and I borrowed a trailer from Cal Poly and brought up 60 feet of galvanized beams for the inspection pit. We hauled this up on the Thursday before the weekend. After unloading the materials we then proceeded to install the new roof on the storage shed as the showers came. We eventually had enough sense to come in from the rain. Friday the second coat of paint was rolled on the inside roof of the machine shop. It is now ready for new lights to be installed, as well as additional receptacles for welding and for machines.

Saturday brought an ambitious crew together;. Fitz, Randy Norton (aka Arky) and 'hop along' Andy McLean spent most of the day working on the hopper car, except for those times when I required additional welding assistance on the inspection pit. Progress is being made on the hopper car as the sides are starting to rise to what will be its full height. The crew was augmented by Bruce Sherman and Pete McFall on Sunday.

Bob Morehouse, Geoff Tobin, and Tom Vertel helped with cleaning out from the remodel of the machine shop, as well as getting all the leftover wood cut down to size and taken to the scrap pile. It was good to have Mr. Elmer Stone around again as his helpful suggestions are always appreciated and his stories are

always enlightening. Hopefully we will be seeing you many more times in the new year.

Randy Jones, along with three volunteers from the 2472; Don Micheletti, Kris Hart and Jim 'C', all began working on the mechanical restoration of the 1913 engine.

I concentrated on building the structure for the inspection rack along with help from Tom, Fitz and Bill Engelman. By New Year's Eve the pit should be ready for its first customer.

Bill McNab, Hart Fairclough, and Bob Morehouse took a truck and hauled all the potted redwoods to the McNab Redwood Grove. There they spent a good portion of the day planting and tending to the trees.

Sunday, a Board Meeting was held, and a summary will be given elsewhere in the newsletter to give an update on the general gist of what transpired or will be transpiring in the coming Millennium.

After the board meeting we loaded a passenger car to take back down to Cal Poly where some design students in the BioResource and Agricultural Engineering Dept. will be working on a handicap access device for that particular car. We will keep you updated on the progress being made by the students, as this project progresses during the upcoming quarter.

One of our latest adventures, is a joint venture between the Ranch and RR to restore the 'Cal' barn. For those of you unfamiliar with this structure, it is the building across the driveway from the Redhouse and next door to George's home. At one time it was attached to George's home. 'Cal' comes about since it was used by the University of California as an engineering field location. As we worked on the building observers came by and informed

us of various activities that have occurred in this building, e.g., that it was used as a community dance hall at one time.

Because it has a lot of historical significance actions had to be taken before age and weather would completely destroy the structure. The original building was built upon mud sills which had disappeared many years ago.

The week after the work weekend, Tom Vertel, Ron Mattheis, and myself started working on the restoration project. The first step was started by Jerry Kurz of the ranch to remove refuge from the backside of the building. Because this phase will take longer than anticipated we got the south wall ready for a new foundation. This required structural enhancements to the existing south wall to support lifting timbers to raise the wall off the decaying mud sills. The rotten wood was then removed and concrete forms were constructed to replace the deteriorated wood. Monday, around noon time, six yards of concrete arrived on site where Tom Vertel, Ron Mattheis, Jerry



**PUBLICITY
AND
EVENT COORDINATION**

Mary Ann Carnegie

Dates to mark on your calendar for the coming year:

Work days are the second Saturday of every month January through April.

The Sundays following all workdays make for a work weekend for many, so if you want to stay or work the entire weekend it is much appreciated. Al Smith Day is scheduled for Sunday, April 9, the Sunday following the Saturday workday.

In May we begin to have our two work weekends a month. They are the second and fourth weekends of each month. Workdays usually begin between 0800 and 0900 and continue for as long as one is willing to work.

Other dates/train runs to mark on your calendar

- July 8 Tentative BAGRS Day at Swanton.
- September Landtrust Run followed by RMC Lonestar the next
- October Cal Poly Day

Editor's note:

Ed and Mary Ann took some way cool photos that I left out due to the space-time continuum and deadline restraints.

RGBF

NEW MEMBERS

New memberships received last month:

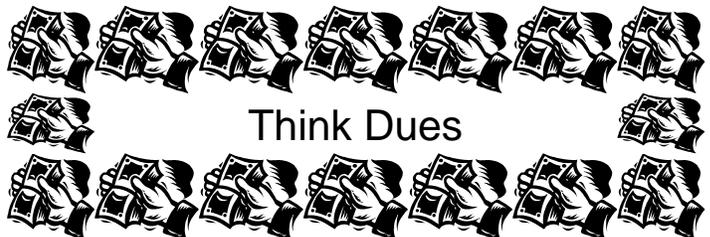
- Richard Ross Paso Robles
- Ron Ross Hollister

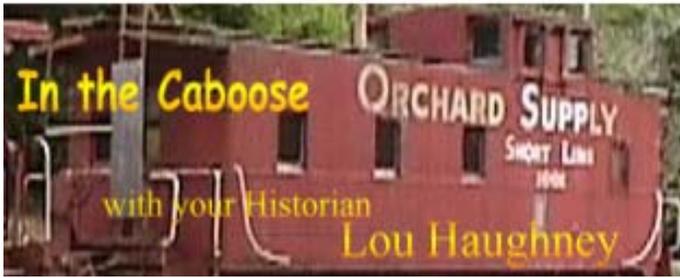
On behalf of the entire organization we welcome you into our "train family" and we certainly look forward to seeing you at some of our next events. Many of our members may not recognize you right away so please introduce yourself so that we can get to better know you

As other events come in we will keep you informed of dates to mark on your calendar.

I would also like to ask each of you to try and remember to encourage our members to participate.

If each of you could just call a member or a friend to come and participate, our circle of friendship would only grow. After all, who has more fun than all of us at Swanton. We welcome everyone to join in this camaraderie.





MORE ON THE JERVIS ESTATE SALE

Papers relating to Al Smith's purchase of Overfair Railway equipment from the Quentin Jervis estate sale have been found in his Los Gatos home by Guy LeMar. Among other items, the file contains the original bills of sale for the items bought by Al and by Neil Vodden.

Al paid \$5,500 for the #1914 Pacific locomotive and \$2,500 for the incomplete #1915. Neil paid \$8,500 for the #1500 switcher. Previous articles have told how Jervis and his two associates, Frederic Shaw and S. Franklin, acquired the Overfair equipment in November 1959 from Billy Jones at the Wildcat Railroad and how Al and Neil drove in a rented Lincoln Continental to the sale in March 1983. This discovery of Al's original file verifies and expands the information presented in the SPRS newsletters of August 1997 and March 1998.

A newspaper article included in the file gives more information about the events leading up to the estate sale. Quentin Jervis died suddenly of a heart attack on March 23, 1982. His incapacitated widow, Virginia, was under the guardianship of a conservator in the Los Angeles County's Public Administrator. The latter decided to sell at auction Jervis' collection of railroad and steam equipment, which consisted of the Overfair locomotives, a British narrow-gauge locomotive "Gwen", stationary steam engines, a tram replica of a Pacific Electric car, and several lots of miscellaneous railroading parts and supplies. The Administrator's office hoped to raise \$30,000 to \$40,000 by the sale to support Mrs. Jervis' care.

The auction was scheduled for Saturday March 23, 1983 at the Charles Lowe Company's warehouse and yard, 737 Channel St., San Pedro, where Jervis had stored most of the equipment. Jervis was a vice-president of that company. (The

nature of its business was not explained.)

The British "Gwen" and a few other items were stored nearby at the L. A. Diesel Parts, inc., 320 Lakme Avenue, Wilmington, CA. The auctioneers, Norm Sulflow and Sons of Sylmer, CA, sent notice of the "Locomotive Auction/Overfair Corp." to Al in mid-February, 1983. The newspaper article with text and photographs, dated Jan. 20, 1983, was included in the mailing to Al. (Unfortunately, the name of the newspaper was cut off the clipping.)

The auctioneering firm was a down-to-earth type of business. They merely folded together their notice of sale, the County Administrator's inventory list, and the newspaper clippings and then hand wrote Al's name and address on the back side of the outer sheet. Their business card lists the types of articles they auctioned; namely, antiques, estates, jewels, coins, furniture, general merchandise. Maybe they classified the locomotives in the "antique" category.

The original bill of sale shows that Al bought 10 "lots" of items. Besides the two Pacific locomotives, Al acquired a 5-tone whistle, several 4-wheel passenger trucks, two boxes of rail parts (switches and frogs), track, a rail bender, a tender tank without wheels, and a "partial passenger car". The cost of those items was \$9,740 plus \$654.87 tax, for a total of \$10,729.87. Neil Vodden bought eleven "lots". The #1500 switcher was his big purchase. His other items included a pressure gage, a pile of wheels, car parts, brake parts, couplers, bolsters, etc. Neil's cost was \$10,075 plus \$654.87 tax for a total of \$10,729.87.

Note that Neil paid \$8,500 for the #1500 switcher, which was probably in running condition since Jervis had operated it in the late 1970's at the Orange County Fairgrounds. Whereas Al paid a total of only \$7,000 for the two Pacifics. There is no record of Jervis' operating the #1914 nor, obviously, the incomplete #1915. It is interesting that the Public Administrator's inventory described both Pacifics as "...Unfinished W/Spare Parts." Now the #1914 is running routinely on the Swanton Pacific Railroad; and, the restored #1915 sits prominently in the lobby of the California State Railroad Museum. The #1500, however, was disassembled some years ago before the SPRS acquired its parts. Quite a

reversal of status.

The only other source of information about the sale comes from brief notes written on the inventory list by an attendee from the CSRM, who noted that the "Gwen" was sold to an unidentified person for \$3,100, much less than the "wanted" price of \$15,000. The fate of the tram replica car is not given; the CSRM observer wrote that the auctioneer's starting price was \$30,000 ("hah" was the comment by the observer). So, we do not know whether the sale's proceeds reached the goal of \$30,000 to \$40,000. The \$20,000 purchases of Al and Neil, plus the \$3,100 for the Gwen, would bring the gross proceeds to 3/4 of the lower desired amount.

Al and Neil were designated as "Buyers No. 3 and No. 4" respectively, and the purchaser of the Gwen was "Buyer No. 37". So, there must have been a good sized group of collectors at the sale. Whether or not the sale reached its goal would depend upon the amounts obtained for the tram replica and all the other miscellaneous parts and supplies. The CSRM observer's notes indicate that the auctioneer's starting prices, at least for the major items, were higher than was realized in the bidding.

An interesting sidelight concerns the identity of the "Gwen" locomotive. The newspaper article said "Gwen" has a twin brother named "Bill" in England. A letter of Frederic Shaw, dated 1/19/1960 gives information about the history of "Gwen". Shaw tells how he and his two associates, Jervis and Franklin, "last November (1959) bought the No's 1914, 1915, and 1500 ... and the little British 0-4-0 switcher GWEN from Billy Jones of Los Gatos". Yet, in his book Little Railways of the World, published in 1958, Shaw writes "Mr. Jones purchased from John Knowles of Burton on Trent, England, a most unusual 18-inch-gauge live steamer. It is a 0-4-0T beauty built in 1951 by the Hunslett Engine company of Leeds. She is named 'Queen'." --- Are the "Gwen" and the "Queen" the same engine? Did Billy Jones have one, two, or no British locomotives? Where is the "Gwen" now?

Thanks to Guy LaMar for keeping a sharp eye open as he rummages through Al's Los Gatos house.

Down Behind the Railway

With your president, air monkey, and carbarnist;

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

RGBFitz@aol.com

Voice: 650.737.9584

Fax: 650.737.9583

My fellow Swantoons:

Welcome to the zeroth year of a new century. Not the naught nor the ought year.

Zero is a beginning as well as a continuation. For me it is a continuation of my enjoyment of the railroad and a beginning as president and, while I didn't make any campaign promises, I do have some things I'd like to accomplish during my term. Things that require your help.

The most pressing item is the revision of our bylaws which, to comply with our existing bylaws, must be voted on by seventy members. The only time we have that number of members at Swanton is Al Smith Day, therefore (ergo, thus, hence, and propter hoc) there will be a general meeting of the membership on Al Smith Day, Sunday April 9, 2000. The agenda and special rules of order for that meeting will be published in the next three newsletters. The text, which includes strike-through of changed wording, is attached for members to peruse. You may also review it at <http://hometown.aol.com/swanton> if you have internet access (It's not pretty. I'm still learning this cyber stuff).

Next is **TIME**. That most valuable commodity in whose light even cash money pales. There are two hundred thirty some members of this society and I know most of you only by your mailing address as I mailed you a monthly newsletter for two years.

Come on down!

We have things to do, jokes to tell, teaching and learning yet to be done. Get your name in the newsletter, perhaps a picture as well.

Ed reports we're On Track with what we have done and are doing. I'll endeavor to present the things we need to do in my articles. I'm going to cajole, plead, rant (and I might even beg), anything, to get you to give the railway some of your precious time.

As an aside, I hope you enjoy my humor. I'm an old dog learning new tricks but, I'm not so good at unlearning old ones. I believe a groan is as good as a laugh (sometimes better) much to Pat's (my bride) dismay, and I'll share my slant on life with you for the next year or so.

Welcome to the new year.

Fitz