On Track

With your director,

Ed Carnegie

Two weeks before our scheduled work day, so we're taking your memories back to March 25/26. Fitz, Randy, Jim Sutherlin and one of his friends, along with myself, worked on installing treated water for our steam engines. The weeks prior to that Randy researched and designed our water treatment system, hoping to have it installed prior to the Al Smith Day. In order to meet the deadline we all met on Saturday to dig and install the pipeline necessary to bring the treated water from the roundhouse to the water tanks. Most of the pipeline was dug with our backhoe mounted on the rear of a flatcar. I am boot down the drain. A

There was, though, still only one small mishap in that we thought that an electrical conduit was a water pipe that needed to be intercepted so that when Fitz cut it, sparks flew rather than water. You may want to ask Fitz about his new notching tool that was produced that day.

We spent about half the day trying to find where the pipes were and the other half of the day digging ditches. Jim Sutherlin was a great help as an experienced "watcher." The only problem was that he could not distinguish between a sewer and a water pipe. Unbeknownst to us the water line we were trying to find was directly below Fitz's feet. By early Sunday afternoon all the pipeline was in and was pressure tested between the roundhouse and the water tower. I am very happy to say that this is the first time that we have dug a ditch and NOT accidentally hit a water pipe. See our president "in the trenches" looking for a water pipe and finding the sewer line.

The following week Randy came in after the reaction tanks were delivered and installed the manifolding and put the tanks in service. Our next task to finish this project is to build a permanent structure around the water treatment tanks. Hopefully someone would like to take this on as a project and we would like to have it completed before next winter?

Safety Simon Says:
Please wash your hands with soap and warm water before returning to work.
The Friday before Al Smith Day, April 7, you would have thought it was a work day. Several of our volunteers (eleven) from near and far showed up to do some clean up, fix up, and general getting ready for Al Smith day. Mist insulation and siding was installed in the roundhouse, clean up and weeding was done on the grounds, and engines maintenance was performed. A big thank you goes to the work crew of Tom Vertel, Marty Campbell, Ken Peterson, Bill McNab, Bob Wilkerson, Fitz Fitzpatrick, Hal and R.E. Hunt, Hari Fairclough and Ed and Mary Ann Carnegie. On Saturday, work continued with general cleaning up and getting ready, and as a result a dress run had to be made since our truck kept getting filled with stuff. A whole bunch, in fact, a total of thirty-five (35) of our volunteers participated on Saturday. At times it was like watching a three ring circus with everyone busily taking care of chores. A fresh coat of paint was put on the wall in the roundhouse. A whiteboard was installed on the fuel storage shed. A table saw and band saw were assembled. Site beautification was continued. At the end of the workday on Saturday, everyone who stayed enjoyed an evening of good food and conversation in the red house, along with a surprise birthday party for R.E. Hunt.

The next day was Al Smith Day and it was a great success. We had a little over 200 people participate. It was a joint venture between the Swanton Pacific Ranch and Railroad. The ranch crew provided transportation between the parking areas and College Park; they conducted two train - a walking tour in the forest, and a riding tour of the range and ranchlands. At the end of the day a sheep dog demonstration was presented to those who wanted to stay and see the dogs work.

The railroad crew provided a full day of train operations using two of the steam engines in a "pull-me, push-me" type of arrangement where there is one engine at each end of the train. Train crews for the day were as follows: engineers - Marty Campbell and Randy Jones; firemen - Tom Vertel, Geniff Tobin, Ken Fischer; and Bill Engelman; conductor/brakemen - Steve Hufstetter, Como DiFrancesco, and Station Master was Anthony Pratikakis. The BBQ Crew was headed up by Jim Matheny, with assistance from Gil and Jennie Diaz, Bernita D'Ambroso, Adolph Lopez, Cristy Matheny, Mike McDonald, and a full serving crew of Swanton volunteers. In the tradition of Al Smith, family and close friends provided an assortment of delicious "sweet" deserts. Al never thought a meal was complete without something sweet. Our sales booth was staffed by Frances Stone, Martha Neilson and Maxine Hufstetter. Registration was manned by Linda and Molly Engelman and Mary Ann Carnegie.

Towards the end of the day the Cal Poly Logging Team upon returning from a National Conclave, where they placed third in the nation, entertained us with a demonstration of logging skills. It was very interesting to watch these young students perform with superb "excellence" and sawing techniques.

We were very pleased to have a large contingent from the Al Smith family in attendance. It was also nice to have two retired Deans from the College of Agriculture. Remarks and updates were presented by Mark Shelton, Associate Dean of Agriculture; Wally Mark, Director of Swanton Pacific Ranch, Fitz Fitzpatrick, President of Swanton Pacific RR Society, and myself. Good times, and good weather was enjoyed by all. My thanks to all of you though for making this a very successful and memorable Al Smith Day.

Tuesday after the Al Smith Day, Tom and I went to Richard West's home to pick up a trackload of trees which he has donated to the Swanton Pacific Railroad and Ranch.
New Members

New membership received over the last month were as follows:

Larry Allison - Scotts Valley
Lucy Carter - San Luis Obispo
Gregory De Silva - Pebble Beach
Jan Green - Ben Lomond
James Holmes - San Jose
Bob Hunt - Rancho Cordova
Robyn Jones - Santa Cruz
Thomas Knapp - San Francisco
John Mandell - Austin, TX
Rose Nice - San Jose
Ray Phillips - San Mateo
Stan Smith - Los Gatos
Milton Thorley - El Dorado

On behalf of the entire organization we welcome each of 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 yourselves so that we can get to better know you and vice versa.

Redhouse Reservations

The Ranch Director has been working with the Railroad to ensure that we have some space available at the Redhouse for our workdays. However, I do need to know at least one week in advance whether room reservations are needed or not. That way I can better coordinate with Wally Mark to make sure that things move smoothly. If you do not call in to reserve a room you may not have a place to stay.

THE BYLAWS ARE RATIFIED!

The fifty-four members present at one of the world's shortest General Meetings all voted in favor of the bylaw changes.

Our thanks to the Bylaw committee, Ed Carnegie, Mark Cooper, Fitz, and Bill McNab for a comprehensive proposal, to three different Executive Boards for fine tuning, to Ed-Ski Przemidolski and friends for rounding up the ballots cast, and to Pat FitzPatrick for helping register members, validate and then tally the ballots.

PUBLICITY AND EVENT COORDINATION
Mary Ann Carnegie

Calendar of events

Saturday May 13-14 Work Weekend
Saturday May 27-29 Work Weekend+Monday
Saturday June 10-11 Work weekend
Saturday June 24-25 Work weekend
Saturday July 10-11 Work weekend
Saturday July 24-25 Work weekend

Beginning this month you will notice that we are having two work weekends per month. That means we will be here at Swanton on both the second and fourth Saturday/Sunday of each month. If any of you want to contribute time, other than on the work weekends, you are more than welcome to come when it best fits your schedule. Just be sure to let the Director, Ed Carnegie, know that you will be on the premises. We would also advise each of you to wear your nametags so that other personnel will know that you are officially affiliated with Swanton.

SATURDAY NIGHTS LIVE

Also, at the last board meeting we discussed having very informal dinners provided at the end of a Saturday workday on site. The menu and costs will vary, contributions for the meal will always be accepted. We will try this for a while and see how it works out. It is not only luck, even though we may have a pot (stew or whatever), as we do not want to rely on luck. We would like to plan it so if you wish to assist see/call Mary Ann prior to the workday so that plans can be made accordingly.
vegetable and cut flower gardens with a greenhouse. Concealed behind its park of trees and shrubs, the old McDermott place gradually became neglected and thickly overgrown with vines. It remained intact until it was leveled for temporary housing for WWII.

Charles McDermott’s farmhouse derived from San Francisco Real estate. His son Louis “Mac” McDermott, a gifted mechanic, devoted himself to producing perfect replicas of railroad equipment – of a scale that allowed adults and children to ride on miniature track.

Plate 35: The McDermott Estate in the 1880s. The most enduring of the early large homes in West Oakland is soon here with two of Charles McDermott’s children, Louis and Florence, posing on the gravel driveway. An 1878 newspaper description places the home in the center of four long walkways that meandered in a natural but artistic fashion through groves of oaks, pines, and pepperwood trees, and under vine-covered arbors and rose-covered trellis work. "One may look in vain for any plan to produce a striking view of the house from the street, all efforts in that direction being for the benefit of the residents, rather than the public at large. (Oakland Times, Aug 10, 1878) The McDermott’s estate appears on the Snow & Roos 1870 bird’s-eye view, occupying an entire block along Seventh Street from Center to Cypress. The owners were fairly self-sufficient, with water tanks on the tower at the far left, and a stable for the Aldey Cow and Humboldtian mare, not to mention

Plate 36: Front Parlor of the McDermott Home in West Oakland. In its details and in the overall arrangement of its furnishings, the parlor of the McDermott house follows the fashion that Queen Victoria had established with Osborne House on the Isle of Wight in the 1840s. The West of Market Days recalled in a conversation vernacular of the 50s, “Remember the grand show-oozes at the McDermott house.”

Plate 37: Rear Parlor of the McDermott Home in W. Oakland. The polished brass fender and intact marble of the fireplace would have reflected the cheerful glow of the wood fire in the family room, where carefully dressed diets.
have their portraits taken in the children’s fireside chairs. Family pictures cover every surface, as do favorite quotations and poems expressed in calligraphy and preserved in Chinese silk embroidered frames. Against the back wall is the complete home office of a type that so fascinated gadget loving Victorians. A writing desk in the center is framed with pigeon holes for bills to be paid and letters to be answered; glass doors protect the sets of elaborately bound volumes of uplifting biographies and encyclopedias that detail information for would-be world travelers. All of this organized activity is topped with three useful lockable drawers, and at least two rows of shelves display treasured souvenirs. The furniture in the back parlor is an eclectic combination of satin from China (also popular in France); what appears to be an American walnut console, or game table with drawers; an upholstered platform rocker; and simple, bookcase-back rocking chairs with cane seats. The walls are stenciled with leaves and fern fronds for an indoor garden effect, and the wood carpet has a formal sea shell motif. . . the back parlor gives the impression of a decidedly feminine collector who could afford her taste for . . . oriental embroidered silk art objects.

Acknowledgements: The photograph of the MacDermot mansion is from the Vernon J. Sappington collection, which is now in the archives of the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association (BAERA) at Rio Vista. The photo appeared first in the report entitled West Oakland: A Place to Start From, Volume 1: Historical Archaeology, that was prepared by the Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State University. Mary Praczek, Operations Manager of the Center, was Editor of the report. Nancy Leigh Olmstead collected and wrote the historical text pertaining to West Oakland. Much of the text and captions was obtained from interviews with Vernon J. Sappington. After much searching, Ginger Hellmann of the Anthropological Studies Center found the negatives of the MacDermot mansion photos that were used in their report, and she graciously provided copies of the photos to us. Ted Miles, from the BAERA, gave permission to reproduce the photos. Our sincere recognition and thanks to all these persons for their kind cooperation in gathering this information and in allowing us to use it in our collection of MacDermott family history.

The ornate language used to describe the formality of the mansion and the child’s paradise of the outside gardens seem to reflect the discrepancies of McDermott’s life. Inside the house is a small boy’s nightmare with rigidity and breakable trinkets everywhere contrasting with the freedom of the outside. Even the name has changed since the 1860 Oakland Times printed the two T’s McDermott. There is no record of when the change was made. These and many more questions still abound about this family. Tune in next month to our historian’s new mystery story of the McDermotts.

### Down Behind the Railway

With your President, Air Monkey, and Carbonrist:

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### Stars!

Ah sweet May. Do we remember Maia, that bright star of the Pleiades, or Vulcan’s groupies? The old gods keep their secrets. I prefer the Vulcan, hence metalworking and fire. Speaking of remembrance and stars - to all of you who worked so hard to put on our Al Smith Day celebration and to you members who ratified our bylaws at the general meeting - well done!

In our spare time, while we’re reading, there are a few things we can do.

The round house needs a little more insulation and paint. A good workday should finish that part right up.

Randy Jones can use some help with getting the 1913’s boiler ready to be shipped out for inspection and refurbishing. Once that is done we can start on the frame, engine tracks, steam chests, drivers, and all that.

Over in the machine shop there are parts and pieces to place on shelves - see Geoff Tobin, with a plan.

In the car barn Ed-Ski has raised the roof on the Keystone car and is about ready to make patterns. If you are a woodworker, or just good with being another pair of hands, come on over.

Andy and I are adapting Keystone arch-bar trucks to Overfair bolsters and can always use an extra hand.

Then, down at the OSH historical caboose, mounting racks for the display of pictures and such need to be installed and four more panels need to be assembled.

There is more on the list of “Do-U’ts” and we now have an project board at the fuel shed for all to see. Gold stars are awaiting, come on over and join in the fun.

I’ll see you Saturday May 13th.
Hi Swanton Railroad Society,

I found your names via a friend forwarding your news letter to me. I built a steam car years ago as part of my Navy and disassembled most of it. I’ve been trying to get back to working on it after four cross country moves and have finally given up. I hope to find someone that would be interested in the engine and boiler. The specs are listed below. Steam Engine 2 cylinder, double acting, 90 degree V, 2.5” dia pistons with spool valves.

Boiler: Tube type, pancake boiler, once sized at 10 Boiler HP. Last hydro’d 1972, 1500 psi.

If you know anyone that is interested please forward this to them. I am moving cross country again end of July. I need to find a new home for this equipment or else I have to dispose of it.

Thanks for any help,

Dave Vickerman
Pleasanton, CA
925 484 4967

Anyone who may have any interest in any of Mr. Vickerman's equipment may contact him directly at the above telephone number.

DONT BE SIDETRACKED.

TRACK WARRANTS ARE ISSUED TO CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SOCIETY

Warrant No. 1999
Dated: May 5, 2000
To: 1999 members
At: Swanton siding
Track No 1999 is VOID
This authority expires at May 5, 2000
Track bulletins in effect: Warrant No. 2000
Other specific instructions include use of valid membership card to receive newsletter and future bulletins. Valid card required to clear siding and enter main track without fouling.
Signed: Yardmaster (aka) Vera McLean, Secretary.
For more information, check the cover sheet for membership applications and renewals.