On Track

With your director, Ed Carnegie

The Swanton Pacific Ranch and Railroad coopperated in a display for Cal Poly's annual Open House Celebration on April 15. We had a very good, centrally located booth on campus so there was hardly ever a time that someone was not asking questions either regarding the ranch or the railroad. My appreciation goes out for all the assistance from Wally Mark as well as special thanks to our volunteers that helped man the booth - Mark and Joshua Cooper, and Jonas Arnold.

In May we started having our two work weekends per month, and though they each fell on special weekends (Mother's Day and then Memorial Day) we still had a small but hard working crew show up and much was accomplished. A concentrated effort has been expended on the "restoration" of the Cal barn.

Hopefully we will have that project basically finished by the end of June. All of the roof trusses had to be rebuilt, as over the years they had sagged or succumbed to age and the walls were being pushed out 2 to 3 inches on each side. With jacks and "come-alongs" we were able to put the truss back to where they should be and thus the sag in the roof and bows in the walls were gone. Our volunteer force for that weekend consisted of Rutch and Bill Floyd, Dick Toulson, and Bob Wilkerson. On Friday before the workday, Ivan Mielkey, a ranch employee and recent Cal Poly graduate helped me get ready for the weekend. It was quite interesting watching all of our volunteers acting like monkeys, climbing around, building and straightening up the trusses in the barn. After it was all done the mid-supports that had been holding the barn up for the last twenty years were removed and we now have a fully supported, full span (36'x36') barn.

When this project is completed, the Cal Barn will make a nice addition to the ranch and railroad as it will be a functional, general purpose meeting area.

Randy and Marty were busy that weekend working on the Pacifics and in particular washing out the boilers and making sure that all the tubes were cleaned. Randy talked a friend into coming to Swanton to assist with the electrical work in the machine shop. This allowed Randy to work on the operational engines and develop a work plan for the 1913.

In the carriage Andy, Fitz and Pete McFall worked on the arch bar trucks. The garden crew was busy weeding, and Bill McNab and Bob Morehouse worked on the McNab Redwood Grove. There they removed some downed trees, sprayed weeds and watered the newly planted trees.

The Memorial Day work weekend more progress was made on the Cal Barn where all the old flooring and timbers were removed. The west wall was stabilized and readied for an upcoming concrete pour; new shingles are being applied to the outside surfaces of the Cal Barn. The Cal Barn crew consisted of Matt Zemny, Bob Wilkerson, Bob Kubiatowicz, Tom Vertel and myself.
On the Tuesday following Memorial Day the concrete arrived and we poured nine yards of concrete between the Cal Barn and the track area in front of stalls two and three of the roundhouse. Labor was provided by Tom Vertei, Bob Kubiatowicz, and myself, the ranch also supplied three helpers - Ivan Mulkey, Sarah Fastablen, and Wally Mark. I decided for this pour to hire a concrete finisher.

New Members

New memberships received over the last month were as follows:

Jim Lyons      David

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.

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.

Safety Simon Says:

Now that summer is here and we are scheduled to have many runs days, it's time for a reminder that the whistleblower, crossing guards, and conductors have responsibility for the safety of our guests and children. Keeping arms and legs inside the cars ensures they will stay attached or at least be spared a bad case of poison oak orettle rash. Please teach your children the basic safety rules and be prepared to enforce them if you see violations. We would like to keep our railroad accident free.

A special thanks goes to Matt Zemny and Sequo High School for the donation of several new plants that will add both color and delight to the meadow for all to enjoy.

For the last year we have been relying on gravity feed to water the trees that we have planted and I decided that two hours to empty the tank was taking too much time so the society purchased a new Honda water pump. We can now water all of the trees and empty 300 gallons of water in a matter of fifteen to twenty minutes. So we now have more time to do other things!
Calendar of events

Sept./Oct is filled with several run weekends so mark your calendars.

Sat/Sun June 10-11 Work weekend
Sat/Sun June 24-25 Work weekend
Sat/Sun, July 8-9 Work weekend
Saturday July 22 Work day/run Golden Spikes to honor Elmer Stone
Sunday July 23 Work weekend, continued
Sat/Sun August 12-13 Work weekend
Sat/Sun August 26-27 Work weekend
Saturday Sept. 9-10 Work weekend
Saturday Sept. 23 Work day
Sunday Sept. 24 LAND TRUST RUN
Saturday Sept. 30 prep day for Oct. 1
Sunday Sept. 30 LONE STAR RUN
Saturday October 7 prep day for Oct. 8
Sunday October 8 CAL POLY DAY

Beginning in May you will have noticed that we started having two work weekends per month. That means we will be here at Swanton on both the second and fourth Saturday and 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.

We will also be having very informal dinners if RSVPs are received prior to the workday. If we have no response we will have no meal at the end of a Saturday workday. SO THE LESSON IS RSVP!

The menu and coosta will vary, contributions for the meal will always be accepted. It is not potluck, even though we may have a pot (new 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.

Down Behind the Railway

With your president, our monkey, and carboonyst:
Reynold Fitz Fitzgerald
RGBFitz@ix.netcom.com
Voice: 650.737.9584 Fax: 650.737.9583

EGAD, The CAD

Our Historian, Lou Haughney, is arranging to have copies made of MacDermot's engineering drawings that were donated to the California State Railroad Museum by Al Smith. Aside from their historical value to us, they are necessary for the restoration of the 1913 and 1500 locomotives.

Even though we are an operating museum and some of us are museum pieces (I won't mention names if you won't!), current technology has replaced the drafting table with the computer. The question is, can we convert MacDermot's drawings to those points and vectors used by machines? There are several reasons why, vellum (the old standard for records) is pricey stuff, CAD drawings can be easily scaled up for those of us that need bifocals for the fine print or we need a 1:1 scale for a part; distributed copies are more secure than an original in Sacramento and one copy here as we have the occasional earthquake and fire; searching through drawings does not leave greasy fingerprints, and it allows us to e-mail specifications to a contractor if we need to have parts made - perhaps straight to CNC. Are any of you skilled in this field? Or perhaps you work for a company that has this capability. What I know is from the age of the 286, ancient history to the current Pentium (the 786 or 886?). Let me or Lou or Ed...
know if you can help with this, or if it is even possible.

Want to learn about the parts that make up a locomotive? Now's your chance. We've a handful of parts that need to be cleaned, inspected and labeled. See Randy in the Roundhouse next week on the 19th.

As always there are chores to be done, some more fun than others. See the assignment board at the file desk. See you on Saturday, the Carbianist President - Fitz

More Mementos of Al Smith's Student Days at Cal Poly

Al's great nephew, Ben England, has found two mementos of Al's student life at Cal Poly. One is Al's student identification card. The other is a card good for attendance at ten weekly dances held on the campus. Back in those early 1940's, the Big Band era was in full swing, and schools' gyms and assembly halls became ballrooms for the evening. Al seemed to attend regularly the dances at this and another similar card found earlier indicate.

The railroad lantern used by Al when he worked part-time at the Southern Pacific yard in San Luis Obispo has been found in his Los Gatos home. It appears to be an Atchake type, also called a Conger model. A large dent on its bottom suggests hard use. There is some speculation about the origin of that dent. Was this the lantern Al was using when he had the accident on a moving train?

Those two items symbolize Al's busy, extracurricular activities. A surviving "Blue Book" from his classroom work signifies that he was also an excellent student. This Blue Book was used for a test on October 28, 1940 in his Marketing 2 class. (Water smeared on the cover obscures partially the date and the course number.) With his clearly legible handwriting, Al set forth organized and logically developed answers to the lengthy questions about marketing of agricultural commodities. He earned an "A" for his grade. His conclusion to a question about efficiency of marketing may reflect his father's experiences with orchards. An excerpt follows:

"I would recommend that the cooperatives engaged in the marketing of agricultural products would get together and form a master Cooperative Marketing Association and market through agencies in all big cities. In the largest markets such as Chicago and New York, they could buy, through their combined purchasing power, a market there. However, some cooperatives have found through experience that dealing through brokers is more satisfactory."

Also, I would say that stricter Gov't regulation of packers, jobbers, wholesalers, and commission men and brokers would benefit the producer. They should not only regulate commissions but should require enough auditing to avoid hidden commissions in the form of expenses. However, the regulations should not be as expensive as to require additional expenses..."

These keepakes from Al's college years show his many interests and talents. Moreover, they demonstrate that Al was a preservationist. What next will be found? Our thanks to Ben, Guy, and many others of Al's families for their continued discoveries.

MORE DONATIONS

Thanks to Mark Cooper for his donations of three railroading books and nineteen railroading videos. The books will be a welcome addition to our small, but growing, collection of books and journals. Their titles are: "National Museum of Transport, Catalog of Collections", "Steam, Steel & Stars; O. Winston Link photos"; and "Zephyr, Henry Kisor".

The videos will be available for use by the SPRS members as soon as an accessible location is provided for them, probably in the roundhouse or the machine shop after renovations, replating, etc. have been completed.

Tune in next month to this same station for more anecdotes and fascinating history by our historian and detective extraordinaire, Lou Haughney.