

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD

Number 93

Cal Poly

February 2001

On Track

With your director, Ed Carnegie

The first workday of the New Year started off really great--only 44 degrees in the morning with no frost. The sun was out and by afternoon the temperature was in the mid 60's with clear skies and no rain. We had eighteen hardy souls participate in the various activities carried out during the day. The track crew consisted of Dennis and Eric Johnson, Dick Toulson, Bill McNab, Bob Wilkerson, Geoff Tobin, the entire Pratkanis family, along with myself. We spent most of our time clearing the track past the first switch at the wye. In the morning, the hand crew cleared the first mudslide. By the afternoon we loaded the skidsteer loader onto a flatcar and proceeded to the large slide at "McNab Redwood Grove". Having this piece of equipment made the work easier and faster. Our thanks go to Geoff Tobin who loaned the railroad this piece of versatile equipment. The skidsteer loader, augmented by a few hardy souls, made quick work of the years of accumulation of mud and debris at that site.

Meanwhile, Fitz led Andy McLean, Edski, Cosmo, and Mac Gaddis in efforts on removing interior and exterior parts on our "new" cabooses in order to ready them for a paint job. When done, they will include a bedroom with bunk beds, a sink, closet, toilet and shower. In the living room/kitchen area there will be room for a dining table, couch, kitchen cabinets, and a pot bellied stove. Other amenities will include a couple of burners, a small refrigerator and sink. The two cabooses will be connected by an open deck from which one will enter the cabooses and will be able to enjoy the scenery.

Our historian, Lou Haughney kept himself very busy pruning the roses, cleaning up around the carbarn, and diligently organizing all the new incoming historical papers in "Al's Caboose".

Marty Campbell and Randy Jones worked in the roundhouse. Marty concentrated on the 502, while Randy concentrated on the electrical work within the building.

Sunday morning started off with our first board meeting of the New Year, after which crews went diligently back to work. The crews remained pretty much the same as on Saturday except that Pete McFall was able to join in all the fun with the track crew. By the end of the day, most of the mud and other debris were removed from the wye. We now have only about fifteen more feet to go and we should then be able to proceed around the wye.

On Monday, a holiday for some, Dennis and Eric Johnson, along with myself, worked on the cabooses straightening out some of the bent shades around the various windows.

Though there was no scheduled workweek for the fourth Saturday of the month, I was pleasantly surprised to find Marty Campbell, Jim Scott, Edski, Randy Jones and Dick Toulson at Swanton when I came up to just drop a few things off. Each of these members came over to do extra work on various projects from cleaning up the front entrance to installing lights and cleaning up equipment.

As you can see, much has been accomplished already in the New Year from just our first workday/month. In February we hope to continue our work on the cabooses, the wye, and other track

maintenance. Now that we have regained our track route we have also discovered that many ties will need to be replaced soon. So, as you can see there is always a "list of things to do" and we welcome all of you, along with any of your friends, to come on out and help on these projects. Many hands make the job go faster--as well as make for enjoyment of Swanton camaraderie. See you at the February workday Saturday the 11th and Sunday, Feb. 12.

Down Behind the Railway

With your president, air monkey, and carbarnist;

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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My Fellow Swantoons

Just a short note this month. Your dues mostly cover the cost of this newsletter, so send them on in.

Get your reservations in for the Al Smith work-week, March 31st thru April 8th. They are not going fast, but they are going. It'll be a grand time entirely.

Dwight - we're working on track now. Jim has the grader running and EdSki cleaned the fuel tank and the like.

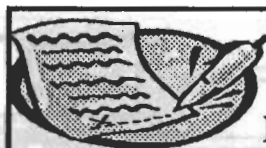
Bob - we haven't seen you for a while, track work to be done.

Jesse - we've contracted out painting the caboose. Lou would like to see you.

Ann, Ken, Gail, Bill, SueAnn, Rich, Dave - opportunity and fun await your attendance.

Ken - we need some help with the forklift.

Plenty of work for all hands. See you down on the railway.



PUBLICITY
AND
EVENT COORDINATION
Mary Ann Carnegie

Last year we tried to offer our volunteers very informal dinners on the workday weekends. However, in order to somewhat try and better plan for these informal dinners it would always work best if we would sort of know who, or how many were planning on participating on the Saturday evening dinner following the workday. Better planning for these dinners is based solely on YOUR RSVPing--and hopefully by the Wednesday, prior to the workday--not the day of or one day before the event. We feel the dinners provide a great time to visit, save all of us from driving into town, and are just a lot of fun for all of us. However, if you don't respond, then we can't plan too well, so, it will be up to each of you to call in your RSVP or email me by the Wednesday prior to the workday.

Calendar of events

In last month's newsletter the entire year's was printed listing the workday and run day schedule, as we knew it to be then. We have a few modifications to make since some RSVP's for run days have been received since that printing. Please note these changes on the schedule and mark your calendars accordingly. Calendar Modification:

RUN DAYS:

April	8	Al Smith Day
May	19	GOB (good ole boys Cal-Poly)
July	28	Golden Spikes Day
September	23	Land Trust
September	30	Cal Poly Day
October	6	Lonestar Company Picnic
October	31	Halloween
December	31	New Years Eve



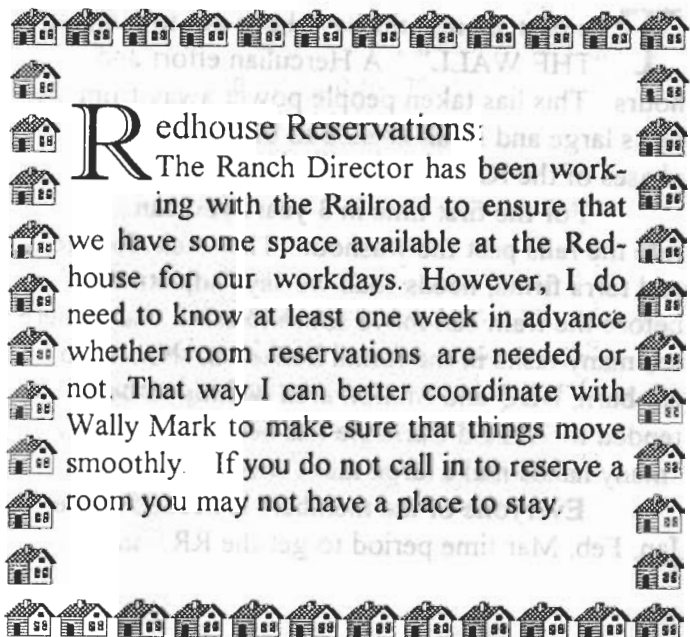
NEW MEMBERS

New memberships received last month:

Mike Robinson

Milpitas

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 we can get to know you better and vice versa.



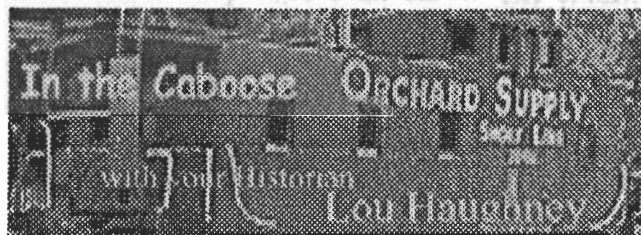
Redhouse Reservations:

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.



Don't let this happen to the 1913!

Your help is needed to reassemble Swanton Pacific 1913 to her former self. 2nd weekend of every month. Parts need to be cleaned, sorted and reassembled.



MacDermot and the North Pacific Coast Railway

In the December 2000 issue of the SPRS Newsletter, I mentioned that more information about Louis MacDermot in the post-exposition years had become available with the publication in Live Steam of Micheletti's article on the Cagney locomotive at the San Francisco Zoo. Now, another article found by SPRS member Bob Parkinson tells of a MacDermot "dream" in that period for further use of his Overfair Railway. The story appears in the Oakland Tribune of Jan. 25, 1959 (page 6-M). It gives a brief history of MacDermot's construction and operation of the Overfair Railway and a very short account of his later years. The significant part of the article is as follows:

MacDermot had one more dream left - to use his equipment on the 78-mile roadbed of the obsolete North Pacific Coast Railway between Point Reyes Station and Monte Rio. The president of the N. P. C. R. said later he would have agreed to the plan had he been approached. However, MacDermot had by now lost faith in his dreams.

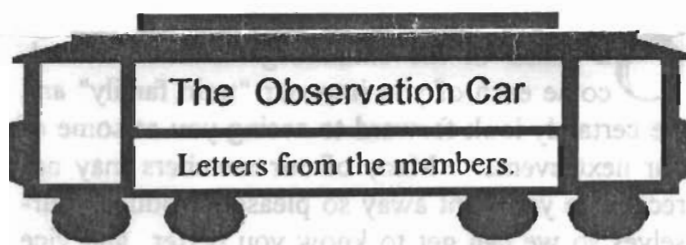
There are a few puzzling points about this statement; such as, the dates, the distances, and the particular railroad. According to A. A. Fickewirth's book, California Railroads, an Encyclopedia of the

North Pacific Coast Railroad Company in 1882 was extended from Sausalito, Marin County, to "Duncan Mills [on the Russian River], Sonoma County in 1878. Distance 75.25 miles." Then it was sold to the North Shore Railroad in 1902, which was soon merged into the Northwestern Pacific Railroad in 1907. So, there is a question whether or not the North Pacific Coast Railroad, as such, still existed with a president in the 1930's or 1940's. Unfortunately, the dates of MacDermot's dream and of the railroad president's statement are not given. Furthermore, a 78-mile roadbed between Point Reyes Station and Monte Rio would have been quite a circuitous route through the coastal plains and hills between the Tomales Bay and the Russian River. The straight line distance between the two towns is about 28 miles. The topography of that region is not severe as to require a roadbed almost three times the direct line distance.

The newspaper article concludes with a quotation from Frederic Shaw's "just published" book "Little Railways of the World". Indeed, when one compares the newspaper article with Shaw's Chapter II, "Exposition Pike, Overfair Ry.", one may well believe that the unidentified newspaper writer based his account of a person in Oakland's history on material in that book. In that chapter, Shaw expands upon MacDermot's dream of taking over "the 78-mile right-of-way of the former narrow gauge (3 ft.) North Pacific Coast Railroad from Point Reyes to Monte Rio". If Fickewirth's dates are correct about the successive merging by 1906 of the original North Pacific Coast Railway into eventually the Northwestern Pacific Railroad, then Shaw must have been referring to the president of the latter railroad, who may have been looking for someone to take over an obsolete and abandoned right-of-way. I have not found any other mention of this particular "dream" of MacDermot to reestablish the Overfair Railway in the Tomales Bay-Russian River area. It is not mentioned in any later articles of Harre Demoro in The Oakland Tribune, who wrote extensively in the 1960's and the 1970's about MacDermot.

As related in previous SPRS newsletters, Shaw took great interest in the Overfair equipment after MacDermot's death in 1948 although that equipment was

then owned by Billy Jones. Shaw's publicizing MacDermot and the Overfair Railway in his book and other shorter publications did preserve for us much original and firsthand information. In the 1950's, he tried to persuade Walt Disney to use the equipment for the Disneyland that was then being planned. His interest became proprietary when he and Quentin Jervis bought the two Pacific locomotives, #1914 and #1915, and the #1500 switcher from Billy Jones. Jervis and Shaw promoted many "dreams" of their own to operate the equipment in the Los Angeles area. The only known operation was of the 1500 switcher in the mid 1970's at the Orange County Fairgrounds. Some time ago, a reader of our newsletter wrote that she had heard of Jervis' proposing an operation in San Bernardino. However, I have been unable to obtain any further information about that venture. Perhaps, some of our "Live Steamer" friends in Southern California know more about the Shaw-Jervis Overfair Corporation's plans and operations.



Thanks to Bill McNab for the following:

The past six months have been put to building "THE WALL". A Herculean effort and hours. This has taken people power away from the tasks large and small needed to be done on all phases of the RR.

For the first time in 3 years you can now ride the rails past the washout. The track, foliage, and terra firma, needs shall we say "adjustments" before the train can move south to track end. There are many tasks in the round house, machine shop, car barn, BBQ and Station area waiting to be attended to. As Ed Carnegie has been heard to say "many hands make large tasks small."

Everyone of the members is needed in the Jan, Feb, Mar time period to get the RR and envi-

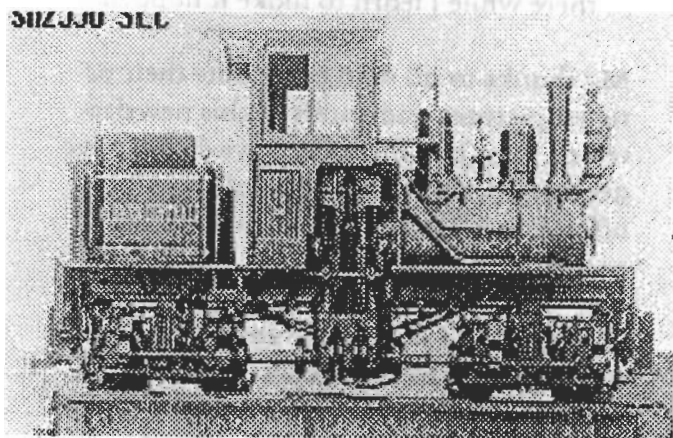
rons ready for April Al Smith Day. Please come on out, bring you Can Do attitude, join the fun and for the thanks get an ATTABOY or GIRL, whichever fits. Pride in your accomplishments show in many ways.

If the day is cold or wet then head for the roundhouse or machine shop with their wood fired pot belly stoves and volunteer your help in there. A word to the wise for the entrant to the roundhouse—when you open the door you will hear in unison from the occupants “Close The Door!!” It is their greeting to all brave enough to attempt entry.

DID YOU KNOW..?

RR Trivia from Pete McFall

The 19" gauge track that the Swanton Pacific uses is not that uncommon, Lima Locomotive Works built a 2 truck Shay for use on 19. 3/4 inch gauge in 1912. The engine was shipped to Puerto Rico



Built: 03-13-1912 **Class:** 13-2 **Trucks:** 2
Cylinders: [# - Diam x Stroke] 2 - 6 x 10 **Gear Ratio:** 3.077 **Wheel Diam:** 22"
Gauge: 19.75" **Boiler:** [Style - Diam.] ST. - 27.5" **Fuel Type:** Coal
Fuel Capacity: 0.5 Ton **Water Capacity:** 400 Gallons
Empty Weight: As built 23,128
Owners: Fox Brothers & Co., (D), #2, San Juan, Puerto Rico **Disposition:** Scrapped

READERS PARTICIPATE!!

by Bill McNab

At the December board meeting, retiring secretary and newsletter editor, Vera McLean asked if anyone reads the newsletter? Everyone there spoke up YES, and that it is our communication to and from the members. Vera said she was wondering about readership as for the year she has not received one comment – good or bad about the newsletter.

Well, folks, now is our chance. Let's all send 3x5 card, post card, whatever and with comments to Swanton RR. The cards will be bundled together and presented to Vera. Let's shoot for at least 100.

The reason Vera is retiring as Secretary is that she has a very serious back operation coming up. The pre-op, op, and post op are going to put her out of circulation up to several months. We all wish her well.

UPDATE ON VERA:

I spoke with Vera today (Saturday, Feb. 3) and she has had her surgery and is now home. She seems to be doing better than expected at this point and is very glad to be home rather than in a nursing home. We won't be seeing her at Swanton next week, but perhaps in March she will be able to visit. She will be in a brace and her activities (like stair-climbing) will be limited for some time. Expected "recovery period" is 4 to 6 months.

Linda

REMINDER:

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE SWANTON PREMISES PLEASE BE SURE TO FILL OUT THE WORK LOG KEPT IN THE MACHINE SHOP NEXT TO THE PHONE. This is the best record we have to keep track of your volunteer hours.

Notes from

THE RADIO GUY

By Bill Engelman

Some of the members have been urging me to write an article on my experiences this last year when I was researching the interference that we were experiencing on the radio frequencies we use for the Railroad. We use radios at the SPRR mainly for safety communications among the train crew when we are operating, and to keep in touch when work crews are out on the track, so I was concerned when I was hearing interference more and more on the frequencies that we are licensed to operate on at Swanton.

Although I have installed mobile radios in the locomotives and on the motorcar, the majority of communications is between low power hand held radios running between 2 to 5 watts. The signals from the portable radios are picked up by our repeater on a hilltop which then rebroadcasts the information over a wider area of the ranch to extend the range. In this manner, we are able to stay in contact through varying terrain that prohibits "line of sight" communications.

Even though we are down in a valley, shielded from most radio frequency energy, I was hearing some very strong competing signals that were occasionally causing problems. Since radio has been an interest of mine for some 37 years, I set out to find out who the other station was, where they were, and if they were "legal" or not. My first stop was to check all of the available frequency databases to determine who in the area is licensed to operate on our frequency "pair". I did find that due to recent changes in frequency allocation policy by the Federal Communications Commission, the frequencies we have held are now being opened up to more and more businesses, however there is still an attempt to coordinate the allocations to minimize interference. I checked out all of the legally operating stations and found that none of them were the culprit.

My daughter Molly and I read the "Encyclopedia Brown" series of books together,

where a young boy solves mysteries of all types by being observant and following clues. We figured that this was a mystery for Encyclopedia Brown to figure out, so we started gathering clues. While listening to the other station over a period of several days, we heard frequent references to a golf course, pro shack, security guards, various employee names, and one report of having some cattle getting out onto the road. We took some quick direction finding readings and started out to locate the culprit, thinking it would be child's play.

Next month: Part Two, How would "Encyclopedia Brown" solve the mystery?

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Hello, and welcome to my first effort at producing the newsletter. I agree that it looks more exciting when there are color pictures and I am hoping there will be some in the near future. For now, I am only able to do black and white. Hang in there while I learn to make it happen!

My thanks to all who contribute their articles, pictures and letters to this newsletter, to Vera and Fitz who have helped me get started, and to Pete McFall who has offered to help me produce this project each month.

Sometimes we don't have enough letters or columns to fill the pages. This is your chance to be a Columnist or write a letter to the Editor. Feel free to send articles, letters, pictures, ideas, etc. to be included in the newsletter. I will do my best to include them and look forward to hearing from you.

Linda