On Track

With your director, Ed Carnegie

I am happy to report that more and more members are taking the initiative in finding projects that meet their unique interests. We find these dedicated individuals spending many hours on non-work weekends. Randy Jones has spent many hours installing electrical circuits and lights in the roundhouse and machine shop. Marty Campbell and Jim Scott have spent numerous hours updating, repairing, and keeping our engines and equipment functioning. Edski and Richard have joined in and assisted in projects on their own, and then we have Dick Toulson who wanted to improve the looks of the front entrance and decided to do something about it. If you haven’t been to Swanton lately the entrance has a new look. See the photo.

Dick Toulson with “Lightfoot” his dog

For our regularly scheduled work weekend in February, between all the rain showers, we actually had a pretty good turn out of volunteers. Saturday morning it rained most of the time so the majority of the work crews worked inside the cabooses. There they worked on removing all the interior wails, cabinets and other “stuff.” New members Diane Marley and her son Kevin worked along with Dick, Cosmo, Bob Wilkinson, Edski, Dennis and Eric Johnson and myself. As you can see from the photo, a “few” improvements will still need to be made in order to make them more livable. However, we have come a long way from what they originally looked like when they first appeared on the premises. All in due time—good things come to those that wait.

After having lunch around the nice warm stove in the roundhouse, we had a break in the weather and so we took advantage of doing outside work. The Marleys, Johnsons, Pratkanis, Richard, Bob, Dick Toulson, Geoff Tobin, and I all climbed aboard the work car and proceeded down to Windy Point. A spot many of our newer members have never seen. There we began to tear out the old ties, smoothed the ballast, laid under-layment, placed ties, and spiked the rail in place. In less than three hours we had repaired a little over a hundred and twenty feet of track. We had just returned to the station when the rains came back so our planning was just right. Good track is now past mile marker 4 and you can see in the following photo that the crew is admiring their work efforts of the day.
For the last couple of months Jason Stenchfield, a NRM student from Cal Poly has been working on his Senior Project, studying the re-vegetation on the live cribwalls north of the bridge and the new site at the washout. Jason and his friend Jason finished up the re-vegetation and erosion control on the existing cribwall at the bridge site. It is beneficial to both the students and the railroad to have projects such as this.

We recently received request for information from Ca. Fish and Game officials in Sacramento about the effectiveness of a live crib-wall in creek stabilization.

I am sure that Jason's Sr. Project will be of significant importance to evaluate the future uses for these types of crib-walls in and around creeks.

NEW MEMBERS

New memberships received last month:

- Robert Basso Alamo
- Martha Bedal Santa Cruz
- Brian Fischer San Luis Obispo
- Howard Swann Scotts Valley

On behalf of the entire organization we welcome each one 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 know you better and vice versa.
Back at the Ranch

By LaDonna Seeley, Ranch Supervisor

Another 2.5 inches of rain this weekend and did we need it! This brings our annual rain total to 16 inches, which is still below the annual average of 32 - 34 inches. I hear some of you saying, "everything is green and lush and the creeks didn't flood and there were no washouts, you should be happy." We closely monitor the rain flow for a couple of reasons. One being for our range conditions. The precipitation is needed to fill our stock ponds and to insure good growth of the grasses.

Next week we will be receiving 600 head of stocker cattle. These calves are born in Hawaii then flown to Canada for two months while waiting for our grass growth, then trucked here to the Swanton Pacific Ranch. These 350 pound calves will stay on the slopes of our coastal prairie until July or when the grass withers and the ponds dry up. From the SP they will be trucked back to a feedlot in Idaho to finish their careers being fed a growing ration. These are traveled animals! The next time you see them, would be in your local meat market as choice graded beef?

We have a ‘weight gain contract’ with the owner of these animals, a Cal Poly alumni. For every pound of gain made the ranch benefits. 25 cents for the steers and 32 cents for the heifers. So, if they come in at 350 pounds and ideally leave at 700 - 750 pounds, well you can do the math! There are 13 Cal Poly students that alternate weekends to help feed, repair fence and ‘work’ the animals. These students are part of the Swanton Pacific Ranch stocker enterprise project. They will earn a small sum for their efforts from the project. Also, a study on different anthelmintics (dewormers) will be conducted by an alumni intern and their effectiveness. For this study the ranch will be receiving grant money which will help defray the costs of our new hydraulic squeeze chute and new working corrals.

Another project that is ongoing at the ranch is a paired watershed study that is being conducted by Dr. Brian Dietzeuck. Keven Ann Colgate, Senior Forestry major, is implementing the survey of the geomorphologic features of Little Creek. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of sustainable harvesting and the impacts that timber harvesting has on watershed resources. Ryan Hilbarn and Brooke Akers are two graduate students that are living at the Staub house and they are conducting water quality testing as part of the paired watershed study.

We know that our rainy season is nearing an end. The daffodils are blooming and the apple buds are bulging. There are 14 new-born Barbados lambs jumping in the field across from the office. At the next work day, go for a walk up Little Creek and enjoy the beauty and history. Little Creek road was once the right of way for the lumber company that hauled logs by narrow gauge out of the forest. Or bring a picnic down by Casa Verde and watch the lambs play and feed Nik-Nak the Llama.


COME JOIN US!

The track crew [a.k.a. Swanton Athletic Club] lifting weights.

MARCH 2001
Down Behind the Railway

With your president, air monkey, and carhonenist:
Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick
RGBFitz@aol.com
Voice: 650.737.9584
Fax: 650.737.9583

It was brought to the Executive Board's attention that we may need a formal policy regarding the use of the Recreational Vehicle (RV) spaces at Swanton, especially in light of the current cost of electricity and the use of electric heaters in RV's parked at Swanton in the periods between workdays.

The Board decided, in the interest of all those who use the facilities, to solicit opinions from the membership at large before crafting a policy. In that regard, please consider that formal policies require enforcement and fees require collection, accounting, and disbursement.

In particular the Board would like your opinion on, the use of electric space heaters in RV's while members are not in attendance and how long a member may leave their RV at Swanton in relation to how many workdays they attend.

Currently folks leave their RV's at Swanton if they attend almost all workdays, which become work weekends, which is convenient for them (having quarters available other than the Red house) and a benefit to the Society as the time spent transporting, setting-up, and breaking-down is expended in maintenance and operation of the railway.

Some find it necessary to have an electric heater operate to prevent mold growth in the damp environment at Swanton and while this is understandable, the increasing cost of electricity places an anticipated burden on the Society's funds. The thought of metering electric usage was suggested, however the installation and maintenance costs seem to be prohibitive as well as requiring that whole fiscal structure that goes with collecting fees, besides which I don't believe anyone volunteered to join the Swanton Pacific RV Park and Clambake Society.

And this leads to the question of how long an RV may be left at Swanton without the member attending a workday?

You are entitled to my opinion that the Board should establish guidelines to be enforced by the honor system as we are all adults here. RV's requiring heat to prevent mold/mildew should use an alternate fuel e.g., propane, where practical. If electric heat is the only practical means then the member should make a donation to the Society commensurate with their usage (keep in mind rural electric rates are higher than in the city). If a member is not going to be at Swanton for a month or longer they should take their RV with them as they leave.

Please reply to myself or any other Officer prior to the April 7, 2001 Executive Board meeting ad hoc.

Remember Al Smith Day is April 8th with a work-week just before.

In the Coldcase
Ostoroga Supply

1866 SURVEY OF THE SWANTON ROAD AREA

In early 1866, a U.S. Deputy Surveyor made the first official survey of the Agua Puercas y las Francas land grant. This grant covers the land now occupied by the Swanton Pacific Ranch and the other landholdings along the Swanton Road. The survey was made to define the boundaries of the original land grant made in 1843 by the Mexican governor to Ramon Rodriguez and Francisco Alviso so that the latter's claims on the property could be declared legitimate by the U.S. District Court. A copy of the survey has been found among Al Smith's files. This copy is attached to a Bill of Sale, dated...
Lot numbered Thirty-eight in Township nine South Range four West Mount Diablo Meridian.

In WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name and caused the seal of the said office to be affixed at the City of San Francisco, this 23rd day of August, A.D. 1866.

L. U. PUSON (S E A L) 1st. S. Sur. Gen't.

Matty interesting questions arise in trying to correlate this description made 135 years ago with identifiable landmarks of today. Does the present Swanton Road follow the route of the 1866 "Santa Cruz to Pescadero Road"? Is there still evidence of the "Ranch House" that was visible from the shoreline and of "Sinner's house"? Are any of the redwood "A. P. #" markers posts still existing? The references to Townships and ranges provide clues for identifying some points on the USGS topographical maps. The magnetic north declination of the compass has changed very slightly in 133 years, from 150 40' North in 1866 to 150 30' North in 1999 (USGS topo map for Davenport).

In 1990, Al Smith prepared a brief "History of Swanton Pacific Ranch", reprinted in the October and November, 1997 issues of this newsletter. The opening paragraph gives Al's interpretation of the grants's Spanish name and also his explanation of the ambiguous term "Serra" as used in the survey report. On November 2, 1843, Ramon Rodriguez and Francisco Alviso were granted a "square league of land", more or less, by Manuel Micheltorena, Mexican Gover- nor of California. It was described as running from Arroyo Puerca to the Canada de Las Trancas on south and north, to the Sierra on the east, and the Pacific ocean on the west. On March 1, 1887, President Andrew Johnson issued a patent confirming the ownership. The grant was named Rancho Agua Puerca Y Las Trancas. With all the beautiful Spanish language to choose from, it literally means Hog water and the Bars. Agua Puerca probably refers to the stagnant water in the stream which comes out at Davenport Landing, the original southerly boundary, and Las Trancas refers to placing poles for a gate or barrier in a narrow canyon just south of Waddell Creek. An interesting sidelight is that in the translation of the description to English, the Transcriber recognized the word Sierra and left that as the easterly boundary instead of using "mountain ridge". Some smart lawyer could have laid claim to a strip through Modesto.

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Al was very interested in the history of the Swanton Road area. His files contain several items from local historical books and articles that describe in more detail than the above the successive settlers and the land transactions in this region. The complete texts of the survey report and of Al’s history, together with maps from the USGS and the county tax assessor, are available at the historical material located in Al’s caboose for anyone who wishes to retrace the boundary. Comments and corrections from the local historians and residents will be welcome.

The Executive Board has presented Lou Haughney with a Certificate of Recognition “in honor of your dedication to the mission of the Society as Chair of the History Committee.” It also reads, “Your proficiency in obtaining and archiving pertinent historical materials, creating exhibits, and authoring monthly articles is truly commendable and an honor to the Society.”

PUBLICITY AND EVENT COORDINATION
Mary Ann Carnegie

This last workday Martha Nielsen and I found it much too cold and wet to work on the Swanton grounds so we fixed a hot meal for all the volunteers that stayed over Saturday night. Approximately 12 people ventured up to Al’s house where we enjoyed a nice hot meal and good times together. We would very much like to continue offering these dinners, so please let us know if you will be coming to the workday, staying over and would like to join in all the fun of getting together for dinner. Though the dinners are very informal, some planning must still be made. So, again we ask that 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 RSVP— 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. 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.

Al Smith Day:

Invitations for the upcoming Al Smith Run Day have gone to the printers and are being nailed out. Enclosed is a copy of the invitation so be sure and fill out for yourselves. However, if you have friends that you would like to invite and did not forward me their address, please copy this and pass along to them.

As for all our events we will be need the assistance of all our volunteers. If you have a particular desire to help out on something specific, call and let me know so that I can assign you to that task. If not, you may be volunteered where assistance will be specifically needed and no one has signed up there. Areas where assistance will be needed are as follows: Parking, hosting tours of railroad facilities, serving on BBQ line, sales, setting up for the event, helping host the history caboose, and especially cleanup. Remember the success of any event depends on being organized.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

March 10–11 Work Weekend
Clean Up, prepare for Al Smith Day
Work on Track
Continue to work on cabooses,
Work on car barn,
Finish electrical in roundhouse,
April 7–8 Sat. Work Day Get ready for Sun.
Sun AL SMITH DAY
BBQ, Train Runs, etc., etc., etc.
April 21-22  Poly Royal
Open House at Cal Poly

Poly Royal:

This event, as many of you know is Cal Poly's "Open House" to showcase the University, and will feature the rebirth of Poly Royal and the centennial of Cal Poly. In years past, the Swanton Pacific Historical RR Society as hosted a booth on campus for the two-day event. We plan on doing the same this year, but ask for any volunteers that would be willing to help out with either "hosting", setting up and/or tearing down our display, to contact us and let us know how and when you would be willing to help out with this endeavor.

Presently we are planning on displaying the new, modified handicap car that has been a senior class design project.

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Jr. Swantoon's Corner

by Molly Engelman

Dear Jr. Swantoon,

Since there are several kids from 8 - 12 years old, we should have some kinds of club. We also need to start our own projects. I have the idea to build a miniature caboose for the railroad. Also we could fix up the shack by windy point (it looks like it could use some work!). If you have friends that might want to help, bring them! If you have neighbors that might want to help, bring them too!!

Because we need all the help we can get. If you have more ideas PLEASE let me know!!!

NOTE: Let's get together next work week-end.
TIME: At lunch.
PLACE: At the station in the meadow.
ANOTHER NOTE: We can elect board members and talk about things.

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Notes from THE RADIO GUY

By Bill Engelman

(Part two of a series)

In last month's article, we began the search for the source of interference on the SPRR radio frequencies from an unlicensed repeater. Molly and I started out in search of a golf course, since all of the clues to date indicated a golf course operation. It is amazing how many golf courses are to be found within a radius of 50 miles line of sight of Swanton. The most logical golf course to suspect were in the Santa Cruz area, but after a day spent visiting all of them, it was evident that our quarry was not to be found there. The next week we spent another day touring the golf courses in the hills around Felton and Bonny Doon, but once again, although we could occasionally hear them from that location, they were not situated there either. We were able to determine from the top of Skyline however, that they were not in the San Francisco Bay area, but more South West. By the next week, we went out again and had visited every golf course on the maps, but no luck. It was becoming obvious that this particular golf course was not on the maps and no one seemed to know anything about it.

The inability to pin down the source of the intermittent transmissions was really starting to bug me by now, so the next weekend that we visited Swanton, I took some more sophisticated radio equipment along. We got more clues from that endeavor and I was finally able to decode the "squelch code" (a subaudible tone or digital code that is used to unlock and gain access to a repeater system) for their repeater, so I programmed one of my radios to their specs, and found to my surprise that I could bring their repeater up while I was parked in the meadow at College Park! No wonder we were having a problem, the strength of their signal was at times stronger than one of our hand held radios down the track!
Some more clues to the mystery: it is an 18 hole golf course with a pro shop, guests are escorted, one of the employees is heard to brag to another that he can talk directly to them with his portable radio while sitting in his front yard in Santa Cruz, and a guest needs a cold Coors out on the fifth green.

Next month: part three, getting warmer.

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.

TO: THE MEMBERS OF SPRS
FROM: LINDA ENGELMAN, SECRETARY

The following is a summary of the items discussed at the Executive Board meeting held February 11, 2001. Detailed minutes are available upon request.

1. Capital Outlay Plan and Priorities for the coming year. This includes many large projects. Several large projects need to be finished:
   - cabooses
   - Cal Barn
   - light, heat, remodel of Roundhouse
   - heat, light, remodel of Machine Shop
   - grease traps, Roundhouse
   - pave remaining area in front of Roundhouse

Also, the following new projects were discussed:
   - Design of maintenance away facility
   - Pump house
   - Station addition - begin permit process
   - Control Tower
   - Stone Crossing (cement, etc.)

The amount of time required for each project and the costs were discussed. In some cases, the plan is to begin the permit process but not the actual construction this year. Many unfinished smaller projects were also discussed.

2. April 8 will be Al Smith Day. Many volunteers are needed to make this event a success. Please contact Mary Ann to SIGN UP for a duty for that day. Price of BBQ has to go up due to increases in costs and price “at the door” will be higher. See her column for more information.

3. Discussion and reminder that tools need to be returned to proper places. Also, be aware of other projects and don’t cause the other person problems by moving parts, pieces, tools, etc. from that project. Time is lost finding all of the necessary items that were moved from the prior work time.

4. Several options were discussed concerning a policy for RV parking. Decision will be made at special E-board meeting April 7. Please give suggestions to any board member. See Fitz’s column for more information.

5. Work WEEK will precede Al Smith day.

6. Special commendation to Lou Haughney in recognition of his dedication as Chair of the History Committee. THANKS FROM ALL OF US, LOU!!

7. Andy McLean was chosen as the most qualified of all the applicants for the new position as caretaker. Congratulations, Andy!

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.