Can you believe that in the last two months our hard working track crew has replaced approximately 600 ties and driven in 2 kegs of railroad spikes, for a distance of 875 feet of track?! May I remind you that a keg of spikes is 200 pounds and a little over 1100 spikes all driven in to replace 875 ft. of track. Stretch those muscles, and work those tummies by coming out and joining the Swanton Athletic Club!!

For the March workday we were anxious to get started on track work. However, when we arrived on the Friday before, we found our access blocked by a large Bay tree just south of the bridge. Bill McNab brought two chain saws from home, and Andy and I joined Bill in the task of removing trees. We were plagued with chain saw problems, as the railroad's chain saw froze up after the second cut, and one of Bill's saws wasn't running at all. So, in the mean time, we borrowed a saw from the ranch and sent Mary Ann to town to go shopping--- for a new chain saw. By the end of the day we had removed ten other trees along the track and were working on another very large bay that had fallen in the circle drive. Fortunately, most of the RV's had been moved out the area for the winter. The Englemans were especially happy that they had moved their RV and were not "uprooted" by the bay.

After our "Logging Exercises" we moved into our aerobic "Gandy Dancing". As we replace track in and around the wye, three culverts will be built to handle the runoffs from winter storms. In the past, the water has run over the track, leaving rocks, sand and soil behind. Removal of this debris requires a lot of work. By designing the culverts with a removable track section seven feet wide, this will facilitate clean out and hopefully minimize track damage in the future.

For Al Smith Day (April 8) the track was operational to the wye. This area has not been accessible for three years, and was completely overgrown by brush and small trees. A small John Deere tractor with a flail chopper was borrowed from the ranch enabling us to remove the brush from the tracks around the wye. In addition to the track crew, other volunteers were busily cleaning up, sprucing up, straightening out, polishing, repairing and making dump runs all in preparation of Al Smith Day. By the end of the day, we were all pretty exhausted, but Bill and Gloria McNab had prepared a wonderful spaghetti feast, with dessert and all for everyone. A
meal we all appreciated very much. Al Smith Day was a great success. The weather started off as a worry, as it was sprinkling at eight in the morning, but by nine the skies cleared, the sun came out and it turned out to be a very nice, cool, but at least a dry day. We had over 350 attend, which is the largest attendance that we have ever had for Al Smith Day thus far. Among the special guests that were introduced were several members of Al's family. The University was well represented by President Baker and his wife Carly, Dan Howard Greene, Executive Assistant to the President along with his son, and Director of the Foundation Frank Mumford and his wife. Recognition was also given to all the Swanton RR volunteers who participated in the reconstruction of the wash out. Between taking tours of the ranch, and/or train facilities and riding the trains all day, two special daffodil runs were offered. Here our guests could pick all the daffodils that they wanted to pick. These daffodils had been planted by Al several years ago, but come back every year as a welcome sight to us all to welcome Spring.

A contract to paint the cabooses was issued. Prior to Al Smith Day, the primer coat was sprayed on all four cabooses. After the weather cleared the final coats were applied. On future workdays we will be installing the windows, painting exterior trim, and remodeling the insides of the two newer cabooses.

Many members have been busy on numerous repair jobs such as installing a new engine in the crane truck, manufacturing a copper head gasket for the motor car, installing bearings in the transfer box for the 502, as well as doing other important tasks that need to be done to keep the cogs running.

The ranch and railroad combined their effort to put on an informational booth for Poly Royal. For alumni and friends of Cal Poly this year's event was especially noteworthy in that it commemorated the hundredth anniversary of Cal Poly and the reinstatement of "POLY ROYAL". The railroad featured their newly constructed handicap access car designed and built by the BioResource and Ag. Engineering Senior Design Class. Over forty people signed up for additional information and to be placed on our mailing list for future events. Many others
stopped by to view the displays, ask questions, and watch or participate in demonstrating the operation of the handicap car. We actually had a visitor in a wheelchair roll on to the platform and was lifted on to the car. It was interesting to note that the railroad car was hauled down the street, in the rain, by a forklift. It seems like this year preparations for most of our events have been in the rain, but for the actual event, the weather has always cleared. Special thanks to Bob Wilkinson, Richard Mehr, and Dick Toulson for coming down to San Luis Obispo to help with Poly Royal.

Robert Basso  Alamo
Martha Bedal  Santa Cruz
Brian Fischer  San Luis Obispo

NEW MEMBERS

New memberships received last month:

Howard Swann  Scotts Valley

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.

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.

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.

TWO WORKDAYS A MONTH START IN MAY

Reminder that with spring, daylight savings and thus longer daylight hours to burn, come
two workdays a month. The second and fourth weekends are now in effect. So, if you can't make one, hopefully you can make the other. We especially hope that some of our newer members will be able to come to Swanton to participate in all the "athletic" activities, as well as to enjoy the camaraderie that develops with the nicer weather allowing evening BBQ's and campfire gatherings. Be sure to mark your calendars with the following dates:

Projects To Do:

May 12 Sat. Workday Work on Track, continue to work on cabooses, work on carbarn, finish electrical in roundhouse,

May 13 HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL YOU MOMS!!

May 19 Sat. RUN for the Good Ole Boys from Cal Poly
May 26 3 day work extravaganza continue and finish some projects
27 ditto
28 ditto

June 9/10 Work weekend contact committee chairs
June 23/24 Work weekend contact committee chairs

SIDETRACK

September 1,2,3 of 2001 the Sierra Railroad introduces the IRON HORSE ROUNDUP which will be a steam locomotive festival. This is the Labor Day weekend and Karl Hovantz, owner of Silverado, and a Swanton member will be taking one of his buses to the event. He will start out from San Luis Obispo, but said he could also make a pick-up stop at the Salinas RR terminal As of this printing costs had not been finalized, but will be forthcoming. If you are interested let us know as these tours fill up fast and it is first come first serve.

Locomotives confirmed to show are:
2467 a 4-6-2 Baldwin So. Pacific, Shay #11--Pickering Lumber Co. from Mt. Rainier; Pacific Coast Shay Sespe #1,--0-4-0 Porter--from Fillmore and Western RR, Yosemite lumber Co. #4

Possible Others that were invited include the following: Sierra RR #28 2-8-0 Baldwin from Railtown SHP-Jamestown, McCloud #25 2-6-2 Baldwin from McCloud, So. Pacific 2472 4-6-2 Golden Gate RR Museum, Mason County #7 2-6-2 Baldwin from Redwood Timber Co.-Willits

This should be a fun-filled weekend with lots of steam, smoke and photo opportunities. Mark your calendars and call in your reservation to Karl at 1-800-478-4287.

PUBLICITY AND EVENT COORDINATION

Mary Ann Carnegie

Calendar of events

Safety Simon Says:
always remove a jack handle
ACCOUNT OF ELMER STONE'S RAILROADING CAREER

A tribute to Elmer Stone appeared as the feature article in the Winter 2001 edition of *The Santa Clara Block*, the quarterly publication of the South Bay Historical Railroad Society (SBHRS). The article gives an excellent account not only of Elmer's railroading career but also of changes in railroading operations that occurred during his 40 years of dedicated work. Our thanks to the SBHRS for this review of Elmer's service with the Southern Pacific Railroad and of Elmer's contributions to the SBHRS museum. The article is reprinted below.

Elmer Stone started his railroad career with employment on the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad in 1943. In 1945, he moved on to the Northern Pacific Railroad. He was employed as a laborer in the Building and Bridge (B&B) gangs on both railroads and lived exclusively in the company-provided maintenance-of-way (MW) outfit cars. Living in the railroad outfit cars was free and three meals a day were provided for a nominal fee.

In February 1949, Elmer was hired by the Southern Pacific as a maintenance-of-way laborer. He was assigned to MW Section 102, the Los Altos Branch. Section 102's territory ran from Mayfield Junction to Mile Post 44 at Azule (near where Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road crossed the tracks in Saratoga). This MW section was headquartered in Los Altos.

Elmer and his bride lived in the divided "section foreman's quarters" with another MW laborer's family in the other half. (This building had once been the depot at Los Altos for the Peninsular Railway.) There were a total of five laborers and a section foreman (J. M. Wilson) assigned to this Branch.

In 1949, there was a single daily commuter train running Monday through Saturday from and to Los Gatos, as well as one local freight, the Permanente Local, running from Santa Clara to Mayfield Junction and down the Branch to the Kaiser Permanente cement plant above Cupertino and south to Vasona Junction six days a week. According to Jim Holmes, a signal maintainer was assigned to the branch even though there were no signal lights. His job was exclusively to "wind up" the road crossing warning bells at all crossings on the branch.

As historical background, the Los Altos branch was built in the early part of the 20th century, with the intent of shortening the mileage and travel time to Watsonville via the Los Gatos - Santa Cruz Connection. Under the Harriman regime, plans were laid to electrify the Peninsula line from San Francisco to San Jose as well as the Los Altos Branch to Vasona Junction. Vast funds were expended on the Bayshore Cutoff Project, but further capital improvements were cancelled after the Colorado River burst its banks in 1905 and created the Salton Sea. Money and materials allocated for the branch...
were reallocated to the Colton - Yuma right-of-way and keeping it above sea level. Thus, the Peninsula and Los Altos tracks were never electrified by the SP, and the Los Altos branch remained a pastoral oddity to the uninformed. (for further details, see Prune Country Railroading by Norman Holmes, pages 58 - 64.)

In August 1949, the Maintenance-of-Way Workers' Union negotiated a contract with SP in which their work week was shortened from six to five days, and their wages were increased by eight cents an hour. In order to balance the books, the SP furloughed many of the MW workers. On Section No., 102, three of the five laborers were furloughed. Elmer missed this first layoff.

Since the track had to be patrolled daily, the task was divided between the two laborers. Elmer was assigned a velocipede brought in from the Colma Branch and the other maintenance man had a small motorized inspection car that was big enough only for him and his tools. Elmer said that he used the velocipede for about one week before he was laid off in the second reduction. This velocipede was used on the Los Altos Branch for a total of four weeks during this time period. All maintenance-of-way workers were recalled 15 October 1949, and the velocipede was returned to the South San Francisco MW section.

Numerous Section Gangs
Elmer had always worked within the Coast Division as seniority back then was only held within a railroad division. In the early 1950s, there were numerous MW sections on the northern part of the Coast division. There were two sections at Mission Bay, two at Bayshore, one each at South City, Millbrae, San Mateo, Belmont, Redwood City, Palo Alto, California Avenue (which was also known as the Los Altos Branch), Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, San Jose, San Carlos Street (Los Gatos Branch and Vasona to Azule), Lick, Coyote, Morgan Hill, and Gilroy. After 15 October, 1949, Elmer continued to work as a track laborer on the Los Altos Branch until he was promoted student foreman in 1953. After his apprenticeship, he rose to a position of assistant foreman and then to a relief foreman. With his promotions, which consisted of roving job assignments, he and his family moved into the MW outfit cars. He became the foreman of Extra Gang 15 - a steel gang laying new rail on Santa Margarita Hill - and finally foreman on Extra Gang 11, beginning in 1955. At this time, Elmer established his wife in an apartment on the Peninsula so their school-aged daughter could have uninterrupted schooling. He visited them on weekends.

The end of steam operations on the SP Coast Division in early 1957 brought significant changes to traditional railroading practices. Wide, sweeping changes reached the railroad's MW Department as well, when railroad management realized there could be large reductions in manpower (and associated cost savings) since diesels did not produce the wear, tear and pounding to the rails, joiner bars, and ties that steam locomotives had produced.

MW Sections Abolished
In January 1958, 90 years after the SP had established its original MW sections on its San Jose to Gilroy trackage, all MW sections were abolished. In their place, management created the "roving district MW Gang". Numerous laborer and foremen jobs were eliminated. In addition, many MW section tool houses were demolished as they were redundant and were a tax and maintenance liability. Some MW tool sheds did survive to serve as storage units, while others were appropriated by other railroad departments for their uses.
Elmer Stone remembered the last MW foreman for the Santa Clara Section as being Leandro Lorenzi. The Santa Clara MW shed survived because it was taken over by the SP Signal Department and was used to store a signal maintainer's truck at night from 1971 until 1991. During the 1958 reorganization period, Elmer was able to transfer to the railroad's Engineering Department. Over the next five years, he held varied jobs, including Class D draftsman, estimator, rodman (surveyor) and cost analyst. In 1963, he was promoted to track foreman, and in 1964 he advanced to track supervisor of the Peninsula portion of the Coast Division. In 1967, he was elevated to General Foreman, and in 1970, upgraded to Roadmaster.

**Local Line Changes Made**
Coincidentally during this period, several local line changes occurred. In 1959, the rails were removed between Los Gatos and Vasona Junction. In 1964, the tracks were removed from Simla Junction to Mayfield Junction., In 1966, the Oakland to Santa Clara main was rerouted around the north end of the Santa Clara yard. In 1977, Elmer was promoted to District Maintenance Manager.

This position oversaw the operations of all the subordinate maintenance support areas, which included Mechanics, Track, Signal, Building and Bridges, and Welding.

Elmer Stone retired in 1983, after 40 years of railroading and serving the SP for 34 of those years. His career spanned the steam locomotive into the second generation diesel years. He aptly demonstrated his ability to be flexible and adapt to the changing times.

**Active in RR Groups**
Elmer was active in supporting railroading history long after he retired. He was known at the Golden Gate Railroad Museum, as well as active at the Swanton Pacific Railroad. He first came into the South Bay Historical Railroad Society scene when our museum was first starting to growing 1990. He invited me to

display his velocipede at the depot on a permanent loan basis; I picked up the velocipede at his home in 1991. The display track for it was built in 1992. This velocipede is the same one used by Elmer on the Los Altos Branch in August 1949. He said that he "rescued" the velocipede from a South City MW shed in 1968. Prior to its disuse, it had been used by the track maintainer assigned to the San Bruno Branch, which then ran from South City to Colma (part of the original San Francisco - San Jose railroad line built in 1863).

The velocipede and other MW tools Elmer placed in the museum over the years are all appreciated as very unique, and add significantly to our organization. Sadly, Elmer passed away in February 2000, but his railroading experiences and preservation efforts remain to be shared by coming generations.

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NOTE: The SBHRS website (www.sbhrs.org) presents much more information about their Museum and their programs. "The SBHRS provides a railroad-related museum free of charge to the community. The museum consists of three major areas: the historic buildings, railroad artifacts, and operating scale model displays. For members, we also have an extensive library of railroad related books and video tapes." The Museum is open Tuesday evenings from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM and Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. It is located at the Santa Clara Caltrain Station, 1005 Railroad Avenue, Santa Clara; that is the historic Santa Clara Depot of the former Southern Pacific Railroad, next to the SP (now UP) freight yard.
It’s the Swanton version of May Day celebration and we’re having a dance down at the wye.

Well, a gandy type dance with picks and shovels, jacks and tamping bars, and the like. Ed cleared most of the dirt off the rail with the help of John Deere so we’re ready to raise the track and replace the ties. We’ll have a grand time.

While the dancing is going on there is welding to be done on the ballast car and trucks to be assembled in the car barn, holes to be drilled in the 1913’s boiler (see Randy), and over in the machine shop Geoff is working on the flail mower attachment for the car mounted back hoe.

Party Time. As with all things at Swanton it’s not the party expected, but rather a survey party needed to determine the best location for a maintenance-of-way building and associated layout of the track.

Come on over, we’ll have fun learning and sharing.

Share what you know. Learn what you don’t.