

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 108

Cal Poly

May 2002

ON TRACK with your Director  
Ed Carnegie:

The big event of April was our annual Al Smith Day. This no doubt was one of our most successful events. We were blessed with wonderful weather, a good representation of the Smith family, a broad spectrum of Al's friends, students from forestry, animal science and BioResource and Ag. Engineering all involved in projects associated with their respective majors. In addition, the ranch personnel coordinated with the railroad providing interns that helped with parking, shuttling our guests, tours, and a forest milling and sheep dog demonstrations. In addition to our normal activities, Swanton Pacific RR Society honored the following members with a lifetime membership for a contribution of over one thousand hours of volunteer effort: Marty Campbell, Ed Carnegie, Fitz Fitzpatrick, Randy Jones, Richard Mehr, Andy McLean and Geoff Tobin. Frank Mumford,

Executive Director, Cal Poly Foundation assisted in presenting the awards. Others that participated were: Michael Barr, Director of Advancement from the College of Agriculture, Mike McCall, Cal Poly University Advancement, representing the Smith family, Steve Spafford. The oldest graduate attending from Cal Poly attending the event was Leonard Frame, class of 1938. When asked what Cal Poly was like back then, his immediate response was "No degrees, NO GIRLS!" With over 350 attending the event, we used two engines with 9 cars, and made 7 roundtrips. The Al Smith daffodil field was in full bloom. Riders were encouraged to pick all the daffodils they wanted.



Awardees with official lean tos



Daffodil Pickers on Al Smith Day

The "Daffodil Runs" have become a two year tradition for Al Smith Day, along with the LONG tradition of family and friends supplying a cornucopia of sweets to end the meal. And, as usual many thanks to Jim Matheny and his proficient BBQ

Crew for an excellent meal that is always delicious, well served and without delays.

For all those that participated on the Sat. prior to the run, a spaghetti feed was provided along with movies by Randy Jones showing the early life of the SPRR.

Weeks before the event a group of dedicated volunteers spent the best part of a week expanding the loading platform, cleaning up the grounds,



Paver Crew -expanding the loading platform

tuning up the equipment, and making sure everything was in tip-top-shape for the event. The engine crew performed a hydra test on the 1912 to make sure that all would function properly. The car-barn crew cleaned and checked all the cars and their brake systems. The machine shop crew was busy producing parts that were required by the other crews. The grounds crew spruced and tidy the grounds and gardens. As usual a lot of interest was shown in the Swanton Pacific Historical Display that Lou always organizes so well. Infact, during Saturdays setup, the Hirst Family dropped by to see if they could find some photos of their grandparents who worked as an engineer on the Overfair RR in 1915 during the Pan Pacific Expo. in San Francisco.

The weekend preceding Al Smith Day, the Swanton Pacific Ranch had a Husqvarna Training Class where the railroad was invited to participate. Ten of our volunteers, along with about 50 foresters participated. At the end of the program all participants loaded onto a train and proceeded south toward Cosgrove to see the instructor fall and accurately place a tree.

Since everything this month centered around Al Smith Day, the week after the event was Poly Royal at Cal Poly. The Swanton Pacific Ranch and the Railroad

combined forces in a booth depicting the many opportunities that exist at Swanton Pacific.



Class participants watching tree falling demo



Swanton Pacific "POLY ROYAL" Booth

After was said and done, April was a very successful month. I extend my sincere gratitude to all of our volunteers that participated and helped make it so. I look forward to visiting and seeing many of you in future months. Next month we will once again commence with the two work weekends each month, the second and the fourth weekends.

**REMINDER:** BEFORE LEAVING SWANTON'S PREMISES, PLEASE, BE SURE TO FILL OUT & **SIGN** THE WORK LOG FOR HOURS YOU WORKED. THE WORK LOG IS IN THE MACHINE SHOP NEXT TO THE PHONE.

#### **Redhouse Reservations:**

I 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.

**NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTERS** received over the last month were as follows:

Wendy Morehouse	Castro Valley
Arleen Watkinson	Mill Valley
William Frame	Clovis
Larry Pezzolo	Palo Alto
Bill Vanderbeek	Los Altos
Martie Way	Castro Valley
Auron Theisen	Castro Valley
Logan Theisen	Castro Valley

On behalf of the entire organization, we welcome each of you into our "train family" & we certainly look forward to seeing you at some of our next events. Many of our supporters may not recognize you right away so please introduce yourselves so that we can get to better know you & vice versa.

### UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

#### Mary Ann Carnegie

May 11 Saturday Workday  
 May 12 Mother's Day-call home  
 May 25-27 Memorial Day Work Weekend  
 June 8-9 Work Weekend  
 June 22-23 Work Weekend

NOTE--May begins the two work weekends each month.

### CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DUE FOR 2002

If you haven't paid your contribution for 02 then you "ought to".

### OBSERVATION CAR

#### By SPRR Volunteers

This is the old redwood tree  
 Continuing Saga (Part IV) Trees, Trees, Trees  
 by Bill McNab

Seedling trees were about all potted from around the railroad buildings to the point that we couldn't find additional. It turns out that Hart Fairclough had a solution. Al Smith and Hart were old time friends clear back to Boy Scouts when they were in the same troop and camped at Swanton. Hart was younger and as a Tender Foot he looked up to Al Smith as a senior

member. A few hijinx by Al including many trips from the camp spot up Little Creek down to the Swanton Scout hut for striped paint which Hart remembers well. The two became lifelong friends.

The seedling solution was, back in the fifties, Hart and wife Betty bought a house close to Mt. Diablo and wanted to plant some shade trees on the acre and a half that came with the house. Hart got a hold of Al and was given permission to take redwood seedlings plant at the Mt Diablo house. Now the many trees have grown to where they are giving off seeds. So Hart along with Betty set to work and rounded up sixty seedlings, potted them and delivered the grand seedling offspring back to Swanton.

Meanwhile Matt Zemmy , fellow member and Soquel High School Ag teacher set to work and rooted redwood cuttings so we had solved the seedling number problem.

Those seedlings were grown another year and made up the big tree planting push for fall 2001 to complete the 100 trees.

The redwood planting area is basically complete. There are memorial trees, family trees, friendship trees, special trees, and some just trees.

It has been a project involving basically all of the railroad volunteers and *many friends along the way*.

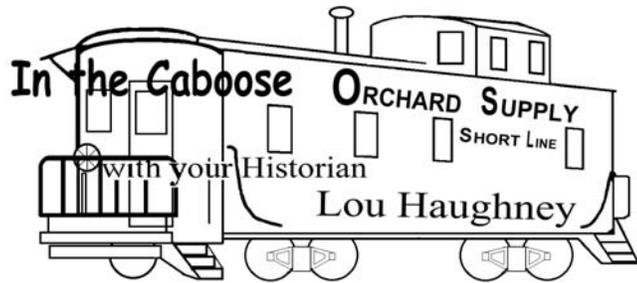
While the redwood project was going on, many of the railroad hands pushed hard to complete projects for railroad improvement and upgrading .

Next time you are at Swanton, take a look around at all the improvements that have taken place and the ones that are ongoing. It takes a lot of people power, don't be bashful come join the group.

There are still same potted seedlings available so if you find the urge to plant a redwood along the railroad environs please let us know and we will supply the tree.

1994 -2001 with 100 redwoods planted and growing.  
 Oh yes did we mention the poison oak .

We want to special thank Andy McLean for all the water tank runs and the brush removal with the new brush cutter on the hillsides;



## BUILDING THE OVERFAIR PASSENGER CARS

Two old photographs found in Al Smith's files show the activity in the back yard of the MacDermot mansion where Louis MacDermot was fabricating the rolling stock for the Overfair Railway. In the first photograph, passenger cars are being constructed next to a corner of the house. Two carpenters are working within the lower body of one car. Next to them are laid out frames for the bottom of the cars and then a locomotive boiler.



The second picture continues the scene to the right. The boiler is at the far left of this photo; then four sets of body frames lie in the foreground. The background shows a two story building. Attached sheds on its left side seem to be work and storage areas; the right side of the building is a garage with a 1910's automobile inside. The second story holds rooms with many windows. Was this second

building the servants' quarters over the stable and garage? Or, was it the machine shop and design office built by Louis MacDermot?



Another intriguing aspect of these photographs is that construction of the passenger cars took place on the grounds of the MacDermot estate. Reports published in the 1950's and the 1960's state that the cars were built in a large building elsewhere in Oakland. (Frederic Shaw in his book *Little Railways of the World*, and Harre Demoro in his newspaper articles.) A picture in the *Oakland Tribune* of 1/5/69 has this caption by Demoro:

"The assembly shop for the Overfair Railroad's 60 passenger cars and 5 freights. MacDermot's crew of cabinetmakers set up a production in an unused building of a cotton mill on 23rd Avenue in East Oakland."

Perhaps, MacDermot started the car construction in his backyard; but, soon, he realized that much more space, and covered space, was needed for that job.