

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 109

Cal Poly

June 2002

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

I don't know where to begin. This has been the most difficult situation that I have encountered yet at the Swanton Pacific Railroad. A few weeks ago we were informed that a letter of complaint had been filed against the Swanton Pacific property because of operating a trailer park with 21 trailers and two occupied cabooses. This letter ultimately resulted in a red tag being placed against the property, followed by an inspection from a code enforcer. On Monday, May 13, I asked John Gilchrist, the planner that we had used during the washout procedure to assist in understanding the ramifications, and meet with me and the code enforcer. The outcome from that meeting was 1. No trailers are allowed on the premises [by this time all had already been removed] 2. All utilities, water and electricity around the campsites must be removed; and the sewer connections must be removed from the new cabooses and they are not to be occupied. 3. A final on the building permit for the construction of the roundhouse must be obtained. We had no idea that the roundhouse had never been finalized. The construction on this goes back some 17 years.

The following week, a letter was received from the County of Santa Cruz's Planning Dept. stating the code violations. The violations are:

1. Discretionary uses (public events, fundraisers, picnics, school visits, 4 H clubs, etc.) without a development permit.
2. Discretionary use [7 space RV park] without a development permit
3. Discretionary use [install 4 cabooses] without discretionary permit
4. Constructed an approximate 400sq.ft. equipment shed without permits.
5. Constructed a covered railroad station without permits
6. Installed 7 RV hookups, electrical and water without permits
7. Building permit on roundhouse is void
8. Building permit on caretakers mobile home is void

It states that these violations shall be corrected within 20 calendar days, which equates to June 3. There is no way in which we can respond in that time frame. However, we have taken action to correct some of the violations. We will continue to work towards resolving these problems and hopefully it could evolve into a positive formal plan for the Swanton Pacific Railroad in the future. However, this could be a long drawn out procedure where we need to maintain a relatively low profile.

Now on a positive note work as been accomplished on stabilizing the soils along the railroad tracks. Boulders have been placed and plantings are taking place adjacent to the horseshoe pits, and the track leading on to the Scott Creek Bridge. This coming weekend we can concentrate on site beautification, track maintenance and rolling stock maintenance.

We have a lot of work to do on the refurbishing of the 1913 and the 1500. These projects will move to the highest priority and that way our volunteers will not be diverted in other directions.

We all need to keep a positive outlook and work to rectify our problems. Chin up and see you soon!



Rock wall along track

Down Behind the Railway

With your president, air monkey, and carbarnist;
Reynold "Fitz" FitzPatrick
RGBFitz@aol.com 650.737.9584

My Fellow Swantoons:

A grand time it was at the Al Smith Day celebration. My thanks to all those who hosted the day and to all our guests for making those efforts worthwhile.

New Swantoonianians, and older ones as well, are curious as to what they may do down on the railway. Well folks, we need to know your interests and skills.

You may already be knowledgeable in terms of operating and maintaining a railroad or, like me, learning a new skill and practice. In addition to the rail, cars and engines we have all the normal overhead and housekeeping associated with buildings and facilities.

I've posted a task list on the white board by the machine shop and you can be a hero first class by making one of those your own. That does not mean you can't work on anything else, there's plenty to be done.

With the exception of Society Officers, who have areas of responsibility, we do not have formal supervisors or managers. For new members this means getting to know who is working on a project they would like to become involved in. For us older members this means learning about new members skills and desires and perhaps sharing your workload.

So come on over, bring your skills, desires, and new to us tales (always appreciated). We'll find something for you or you can create one of your own.

Teach what you know; learn what you don't.

Fitz



Building up the bank

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

June 8-9 Work Weekend
 June 22-23 Work Weekend
 July 13-14 Work Weekend
 July 27-28 Work Weekend

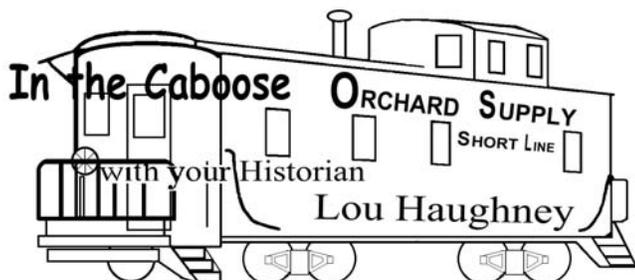
Board Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 9--open to all. Will try to have a dinner on Saturday night for those staying--but in order to better plan will need to know if you will be attending. Please call (805) 995-3659 or email ecarnegi@calpoly.edu on or before Thurs. June 6. Minimal charge for dinner will be \$3-\$5 to cover the costs.

OBSERVATION CAR By SPRR Volunteers

Anthony Pratkanis
Instructor General

Congratulations to Frank Smith for successfully completing the Swanton Safety Course. Frank has already started work on the Conductor & Brakeman course. Way to go, Frank!

For those interested in taking either the Safety or Conductor & Brakeman courses, please contact Tony or Anthony Pratkanis (peitho@cats.ucsc.edu).



OBSERVATIONS FROM RECENT TRAVELS CABOOSES, APPALACHIAN RAILROADS, MUSEUMS

1. Caboooses

A working caboose was spotted in April 2002 at the end of a Norfolk and Western (NW) freight train near Abingdon, Virginia. We were attending an Elderhostel week at the Southwest Virginia 4-H Conference Center in Abingdon, which is in the Holston Valley between the lines of the Appalachian Mountains. A retired NW fireman told the Elderhostel group about his experiences shoveling coal into the boilers of the NW steam locomotives in the 1940's and the early 1950's. When I asked him about the caboose, he replied that NW still uses cabooses on its local freight runs. However, the frequent, long freight trains that that went by did not have cabooses.

2. An Appalachian Railroad, the Abingdon Branch

Much railroading history is associated with the town of Abingdon. It is the northern terminal of the NW's Abingdon Branch, which ran 55 miles through the Appalachian ridges and valleys to West Jefferson, North Carolina. An author describes the branch line: "The grade approaching White Top, at more than 3,500 feet the highest point ever reached by regularly scheduled passenger trains east of the Rockies, ran for miles at an average of 2.2 to 2.5%, and touched 3% for two miles before reaching the station". (Thomas H. Garver, from following citation). In the mid 1950's, only a single mixed train made a daily round trip over the line. The locomotives were vintage M-class 4-8-0's. The trains had carried for years the name "Virginia Creeper Trains" because their maximum speed was restricted to 25 miles per hour over most of the line and to 18 miles per hour for 2 miles on the mountain.

Although it was discontinued in 1975, the Abingdon Branch has become more widely known in recent years because of two developments. First, the former roadbed between Abingdon and the North Carolina border, 34 miles long, has been converted in the "Virginia Creeper Trail". Winding back and forth over the tributaries of the Holston River, through fields and woods, the trail has become very popular with hikers, bicyclists, skaters, horseback riders, and just plain walkers and strollers.

The second source of information about the Abingdon Branch has been through the photographs and books of the noted railroad photographer, O. Winston Link. As photographer for the Norfolk and Western Railroad, Link took several series of photographs throughout that line during the 1950's. His book, *Last Steam Railroad in America*, has a chapter entitled "A Day on the Abingdon Branch", in which he portrays strikingly and skillfully not only the trains but also the crews, the passengers, the people and the animals living by the railroad.

(Reference for the above material on the Abingdon Branch is: *Last Steam Railroad in America*, photographs by O. Winston Link and text by Thomas H. Graver, published in 2000 by Abradale Press, Harry N. Adams, Inc. This book may be available in your local library.)

3. Railroad Photography in Art Museums

Also during our recent travels, we visited The J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, where we enjoyed a photographic exhibit entitled "Railroad Vision". This presentation, which occupied three rooms, shows photographs of railroads throughout the world from 1850 to the 1960's. The theme is the concurrent development of railroads and photography. Many railroads employed photographers to record their progress. In carrying out the assignments, several of them recorded also the cultures, the peoples, and the environments of the times. Notable photographers whose works are included are Edouard Baldus in France, William Henry Jackson and O. Winston Link in the United States. One of Jackson's photographs is of local interest; namely, a photograph taken about 1871 and entitled "Big Tree Station, Santa Cruz". The placard by the photo says it was located on the Southern Pacific route. Is there still any trace of it?

The Getty exhibit contains some of O. Winston Link's photographs. The exhibit's brochure describes his artistry:

"As modern diesel locomotives began to replace steam engines, a number of photographers attempted to record the final days of steam power. No artist was more successful in doing so than O. Winston Link. His passion for documenting the

Norfolk and Western Railroad in Virginia produced a wealth of photographs, films, and sound recordings, all made within a five-year period, 1955-60. For Link it was not just a simple task of recording the last great steam age, but an attempt to record a way of life that would soon change. His photographs were well-crafted, highly directed productions in which the locomotive was the leading star set against the backdrop of 1950s America. ..." (Anne M. Lyden, Department of Photographs, The J. Paul Getty Museum)

Link's photographs have recently become standard presentations in many art museums. For example, the Cantor Art Museum at Stanford University showed a traveling exhibit of 79 Link photographs in 2000. So, on your travels, you may find excellent presentations of railroad artwork in the conventional art museums as well as in the dedicated railroad museums.

(Note: the exhibit at the J. Paul Getty Museum runs from March 5 through June 23, 2002; most of the photos seemed to come from the Getty's collections.)
