

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 133

Cal Poly

July 2004

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

So much is going on during our work days it is hard to keep track of it all. Today we are having so many self starters that jump right in and start to work, one needs to decide what team you want to work with. A lot of effort is going into our grounds and right-of-way. Ernie, Frank, Martha, Mary Ann and others are making great strides keeping the weeds under control and planting new plants that make the place look great. Down the track the two redwood groves are growing and expanding. The McNab Grove got a weed trim job, watering and a few more trees. The Redwood Square just north of Cosgrove was expanded both North and South by removing the dead Alders, downed trees and the undergrowth. We now have room for more trees and this month planted some 20 trees. With the additional trees the watering system was expanded and a pipe tap was installed to channel some of the spring water into the grove.

The track crew has been very active removing the mud ballast from the lead from the turn-table and replacing it with new ballast by Pete, Stan, Richard, Edski, Fitz, McNab, and myself. Pete, Andy and Richard before the work day moved the North switch leading into the Cosgrove Siding. It was a real surprise to see the switch moved, ballasted and tamped. This past weekend the track crew, consisting of Ernie, Pete, McNab, Aaron, Matt, Eric, Dennis, and myself all lent a hand in extending the siding track, aligning, leveling, ballasting, and tamping, so it is ready for traffic. Having such a great group of volunteers certainly made the job go quicker. The expansion of

Cosgrove gives us more room on the siding which makes it safer when two trains pass at Cosgrove.

Bob, Edski, Richard and I have been dabbling in being mechanics by pulling the engine of the motorcar and working on the "Chinese bulldozer".

Randy and Pete have covered their projects later in this News Letter.

Hope to see many of you, along with your families and friends on the upcoming Family Fun Run Day, Saturday, July 10.

Down Behind the Railway

With your President, air monkey, and carbarnist.

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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My Fellow Swantoons:

To start this summer off we're having a Fun Day on the 10th of July. This is a run day just for members and close friends where we have the opportunity to enjoy the operation of the railroad without having to cater to some other group of folk. Additionally this is your chance to operate a steam locomotive, under supervision of course, and perhaps interest you in progressing through our training to become an engineer. Therein lies the ulterior motive - education.

Our run days, such as Cal Poly Day, require many more than just the train crews and so it seems that everyone has plenty to do. However we truly do need more engineers and to get there you have to be a conductor and fireman first. That seems tedious but these Fun Days give you a chance to feel and see up close what the reward is for all that effort.

Sunday the 11th the Executive Board will have a meeting (9:00 to Noonish) and you are welcome to watch your officers in action.

So come out and enjoy a day of railroading, without having to worry about parking or setup or whatnot, and spend some time in a cab.

Fitz



Swanton Buckeye's in full bloom

In the Roundhouse with Randy Jones

May and June were good months for work on the SP's rolling stock. The 1500 got good attention from Mark Cooper and Clinton Barr, as they focused on fitting up the rear cylinder heads to the cylinder block. They performed the last bit of honing in the cylinders and cleaned the threads on dozens of cyl. head studs with threading dies. The mating surfaces on both the heads and cylinders were thoroughly cleaned for proper fit, as these parts must make a steam-tight seal without the benefit of a gasket. The job came out very well, and Mark returned in June to begin the installation of the crosshead guides, which bolt up to the cylinder heads. Mounting holes and surfaces were cleaned

and/or reamed, and the guides got a good cleaning and a tough layer of rust removed. There was some severe pitting from water being trapped between the crossheads and the guides, so the guides have been sent out for plating and surface grinding. In the meantime, I was able to discover the causes behind the spring rigging being tighter on one side than the other. Some parts were oversize while others were bent, but with some persuading all is now well. Work continues on the 1913, with the trailing truck complete and installed in the frame. After cleaning up many old parts and making some new pins, the spring rigging is now complete. June has seen much of the valve gear spread out on the workbench for cleaning and rebushing where necessary. The engineering of the boiler is proceeding with no problems found as yet.

Progress is being made on the P.A. and Emergency Brake system for the cars, with contributions from Pete, Ernie, Geoff, Fitz, Logan Theisen (who is learning some welding and sheetmetal fabrication skills in the process), Marty, and myself. I hope to have several cars ready to test soon. Thanks for all the help!

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

July 10	workday & Family Fun Run Day
July 11	Sunday AM SPRR Board Mtg.
July 24	Golden Spikes Run/Potluck
July 25	Sunday workday continued
Aug. 14/15	Sat. & Sun. workday
Aug. 28/29	workday and BAGRS weekend

Well it is great to be back amongst so many of you good people and to share in the fun times of Swanton again. This last weekend we had a great turn out for the Mexican taco buffet dinner down in the meadow area. Also, a big thanks to Arlene, and Marti for their assistance. For the Family Run Day we will provide, at noon, cold tri tip sandwiches, salad and beans. We are asking all Dutch oven gourmet cooks to bring their ovens to bake pineapple upside down cakes for the desserts. We will get those started in the morning, and let them cook while ALL have fun. Everyone else planning on coming, including your family and friends should bring a potluck dish of sorts, to contribute to the festivities for all. Remember this is a FAMILY

FUN DAY so we're trying to keep food planning & cooking to a minimum. We look forward to ya'll coming and having fun, fun, fun.

Remember to mark your calendars the BAGRS event coming up in Aug. I am sure that Bob Wilkinson will be bringing us all the details on this grand event in the next newsletter.

From Pete

"On the Air" – Yes, Radio Swanton is now operating on 104.7 FM. The railroad now has its own radio station operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Its primary function is to provide a narrative on the railroad when members are not present to conduct tours.

What started out as away to hear the stereo around the house when gardening blossomed into an information source that was tested here at Swanton. My small transmitter was placed in the round house and I bravely climbed to the top of the semaphore signal to mount the antenna. We then hooked up a laptop computer with a repetitive sound file running. We could hear the signal at the top of the drive way and we could stand on Carnegie Bridge and pick it up.

The new transmitter has more power and can be heard on Swanton Road by the CDF Fire Station. As well as at Mile Post 1, the test crew was on foot and didn't want to walk any further. If you walk the track, take a radio with you, reception reports are appreciated.

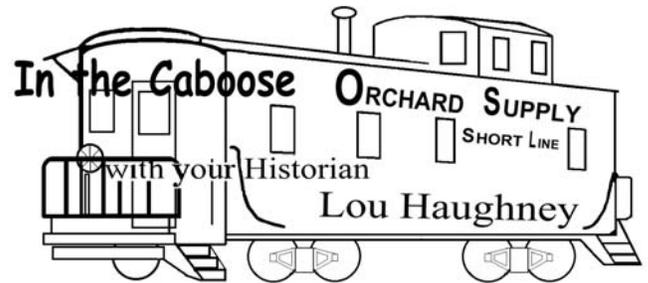
The transmitter site is now located in the ATSF caboose in the Meadow Area.

Signs are being prepared that will instruct visitors to the railroad to tune their radio to 104.7 FM for information. These will be posted at strategic places on the property.

It's nice to say that we have completed another Swanton Project and just have refinement and maintenance to do.

With the help of Andy, Randy, Bill and Marty the antenna was mounted and wired using the existing radio piping on the ATSF caboose.

Tune in and enjoy your Radio Swanton station manager and Secretary Pete.



MacDermot and Overfair Railway Move to Oakland Zoo, part 3

The June 2004 issue of the SPRS Newsletter reprinted the *Oakland Tribune's* account of moving the Overfair Railway equipment out of the MacDermot's estate in November 1940. Then, a story in the July 15, 1941 edition of the newspaper described the final preparations for starting operations at the Zoo in August, 1941. The article is reprinted below.

From the *Oakland Tribune*, July 15, 1941.

TINY TRAIN TO TOUR GARDENS MINIATURE CARS AND ENGINE, USED LONG AGO, TO 'WORK' ANEW

The clang of sledge hammers on steel spikes rings even louder these days at the Alameda County Zoological Gardens than the clamor of the animals in their cages.

They're building a railroad out there in old Durant Park, a real, honest-to-goodness line with locomotives and passenger cars, tank stops and stations.

And from the look of things today, the first locomotive will tug its seven-car train around the grounds about August 1.

COMBINED VENTURE

The project is the combined venture of Sidney Snow, director of the gardens, the Alameda County Zoological Society, and L. M. MacDermot, veteran Oakland machinist, who laid out this same railroad 25 years ago for the Panama Pacific International Exposition.

After the 1915 fair, MacDermot moved the little engines and cars back to his shop at Eighth and

Center Streets. And he kept them there for a quarter of a century, refusing to sell them or give them away.

NEARLY FINISHED

Last Fall, he and Snow were chatting and they conceived the idea of setting up the railroad at the zoological gardens, thus providing transportation around the park for the picnickers and sightseers who flock there by thousands to see the animals.

Now their job is nearly finished. The rails for most of the mile-long road are laid. Half a dozen of the 40 passenger cars they will use eventually have been refitted. MacDermot is completing his overhaul of the locomotives.

The line will start at the main gates of the park, Mountain Boulevard and Golf Links Road. From there it will roll along the creek bank to Station No. 1, the monkey houses. The next leg will run to the bear cages, Station No. 2, and the final stretch will be from the bear cages back to the gates.

MacDermot himself will act as engineer and conductor. The fare will be five cents for the run to the monkey gates and another five cents to the bear gates or a 10-cent round trip.



The Overfair Pacific locomotive no. 1913 operating at the Alameda County Zoological Gardens (Oakland Zoo) in 1941 or 1942. The engineer is probably Louis M. MacDermot. Note the changes he made in the configuration of the engine. The leading truck has been removed to negotiate the sharper curves. The outer jacket of the boiler seems to have been removed for unknown reasons. Photographs made in 1941 or 1942 by Al Rose of Modesto, Ca.

Comments by LCH

1. This newspaper article is the only source we have of when MacDermot started his operation at the Alameda County Zoological Gardens. The Library of the California State Railroad Museum has in its "MacDermot/Al Smith" files a pertinent, but not fully informative, document. It is an invitation to "celebrate the private opening in the Zoological Garden, of the first Section of the Mountain Lion Railway (formerly the Panama Pacific International Exposition Railway)". Unfortunately, this invitation has a few blanks to be filled in; principally, the date of that private preview. I have not seen that name "Mountain Lion Railway" used in any other articles on MacDermot's operation at the Zoological Gardens.

2. If the Zoo operation started in August 1941, then when did the operation cease? Once again, there is no definite date mentioned in any printed records seen so far. Frederic Shaw in his *Little Railways of the World* states only that "[MacDermot's] eccentricities...and his conduct finally reached the point where the Zoo management had to sever all connections with [him]..." The only definite date we have of the Zoo operations is that it was operating on Sunday, May 17, 1942 when Warren K. Miller and two friends visited the Gardens and rode the train shortly before they entered military service. Miller's photos appeared in February 2004 issue of the SPRS Newsletter. Unless further information is uncovered, we will assume the Zoo operations continued until late 1942 and maybe into 1943.

Note: The third and fourth photographs in the February 2004 article were erroneously credited to Warren R. Mitchell. The caption for the fourth photograph should read "Warren K. Miller and two friends in the Overfair Railway passenger cars stored at the Oakland Zoo, May 17, 1942". The misidentification arose from confusion of two similar names. Mitchell took excellent B&W photos during a Swanton Pacific Railroad run in 1992.

3). A final question. Why did MacDermot operate the 1913 locomotive without the exterior casings on the boiler? The photographs suggest that those outer covers had been removed.

Accompanying photographs for this article, sent separately.