

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 134

Cal Poly

Aug. 2004

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

Summer is more than half over and things keep chuggin' along, and we are staying as busy as always, but having fun as well. The first work weekend in July was dedicated to instruction and all members that wanted an opportunity for some "on-the-job-training" on the firing and operations of our steam locomotives had a chance to do so. All who participated said they really enjoyed themselves and provided them with a greater opportunity to understand what goes in to being a fireman or engineer. To add a little excitement to that day, the 1912 developed a steam leak in the manifold between the drive-pipe and the valve gear in the smoke box. This meant that when the throttle was open, the steam would exit out through the stack and was not delivered to the engines. After some discussion, the problem was found, and the manifold was removed. It has since been sent to a weld shop to be repaired, and hopefully will be re-installed in the very near future. Even though it changed the day's operation, it provided an opportunity for many of our volunteers to participate in the analysis and final discovery of the cause afforded them a real on the job experience of trouble shooting and problem solving on a steam engine. These types of experiences increase the in depth understanding of the operation of our locomotives. Two weeks later we hosted the Golden Spikes for their annual outing and picnic to the SPRR. To get ready for this event the track and grounds crew teamed up to spruce up the yards and track so that everything was in top notch shape. Our grove crew, under the leadership of Bill McNab, has made great strides in clearing and

providing tender loving care to our ever expanding redwood groves. This last week efforts were made in tapping into the springs that flow from the hills east of Redwood Sq. and directing water continuously to the trees that can be reached. It appears that over half the trees in this grove will eventually be able to be watered from the existing springs.

The roundhouse crew, under Randy Jones' leadership has been making tremendous progress on both the 1500 and 1913. The cross head guides were refinished, installed and aligned. Each work day more progress is being made in the rebuilding these engines. If you wish to get involved in this activity, please contact Randy Jones, and he will provide you with a project.

Don't forget the upcoming BAGR's Day. It has always been an enjoyable weekend to see the garden railroad on display.

Down Behind the Railway

With your President, air monkey, and carbarnist.

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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My Fellow Swantoons:

This month used to be Sextilis, the sixth month in the Roman calendar, but Augustus considered it to be his 'lucky month' and it was changed in his honor to August in 8 B.C.E. The French Republicans called Thermidor - the hot month, and (for Andy) the old Saxon term was *Weodmonath* (weed-month, weeds being your garden variety vegetation).

August brings the beginning of our busy season with BAGRS run days the weekend of the of the 28th, Cal Poly Day September 26th, Santa Cruz County Land Trust benefit October 3rd. Only a few days you say. Consider those three weekends are half of our scheduled workdays.

What's needed? Train Crews - Engineers, Firemen, Conductors. Well, you knew that. Then there is the Station Master, parking attendants, set-up & clean-up folks, cooks & servers, and docents - and isn't that a fine title for a 'nickel tour' guide?

Who's needed? YOU!

October also brings our General Meeting, with the nomination of candidates for office, as per the by-laws, as a Special Order of Business:

Officers shall be elected for a period of two (2) years, commencing the first of the year following the election. The President, Second Vice President, Fourth Vice President, and Secretary shall be elected in even numbered years and the First Vice President, Third Vice President, and Treasurer shall be elected in odd numbered years.

I have appointed Bob Wilkinson chair of the Nominating Committee so if you wish to run for office please contact Bob, or any other officer. The incumbents; Andy, Randy, Pete, and myself, have declared they are in the running.

The elections will be held at our November General Meeting.

And for those of you who actually plan ahead Al Smith Day will be April 10th, 2005, make your calendars.

Come on over and lend a hand, we'll have fun.

Fitz

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

Richard Anderson	Los Altos
Kent & Lois Butler	Morro Bay
Perry Close	San Francisco
Mauricio Davila	Daly City
Ken Kettwig	Pleasant Hill

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.



Fire Brigade Car watering trees

OBSERVATION CAR

Notes from our volunteers

NEED YOUR HELP!

Martha and I have contacted all the parties we think could have taken the missing aprons, with **no luck**). **Need your help--does anyone know the whereabouts of the missing 8 aprons?** Martie

OOPS!

As one of the two passengers aboard the last train out on the crew training and fun day, I want to commend all of the trainees/mentors, etc. for a very professional approach/analysis/solution to the steam pipe hole mechanical problem on the engine. It took all three engines, about 2.5 hours to get the rolling stock back up to the roundhouse. An excellent Ca Poly "learn-by-doing" exercise. Fixing the pipe is another story. Dinner hour was late. Bill McNab.

SWANTON MEMBERS TO GET HITCHED!

This reporter, who prefers to remain anonymous for fear of libel lawsuits, assassins, etc., reportedly has it on good authority that Swanton Pacific Railroad Members Mark Cooper and Corine Manroe will be coupling their cars sometime down the (rail)road.



Crew at lunch

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

Aug. 14/15 Sat. & Sun. workday
 Aug. 27/28/29 workday and BAGRS weekend
 Sept. 11 Ortiz Family Reunion-Run Day
 Sept. 12 Continuation of work weekend
 Sept. 25 Work day/get ready for Cal Poly Day
 Sept. 26 CAL POLY RUN DAY

BAGRS DAY AT SWANTON PACIFIC

August 29, 2004

Enjoy a full day of unlimited train rides, a great barbecue lunch, tours and just relaxing on the lawn watching the BAGRS Shortline and Live Steam modules.

The official hours are from 10:30 AM to 4 PM. However, if you would like to see the Pacifics getting fired up plan to arrive by 9 AM. The cost will be the same this year:

\$15 for 18 and over, \$8 under 18 and little kids free. Checks or cash may be paid to Bob Wilkinson at the gate. I will be buying food that weekend before so please RSVP by August 20. A model A and model T auto group might be joining us.

Swanton volunteers helping that day will only have to pay \$8. Hope to see you all there

We will have our usual cook'm yourself steak feed on Friday (\$5) and potluck on Saturday.

Would like a rough head count if possible on the Swanton folks thanks

Bob Wilkinson
 (650)343-8150

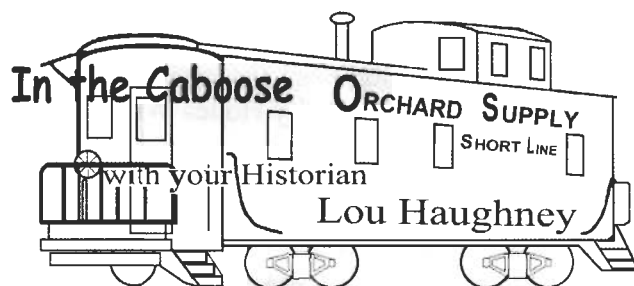
wilkie@pacbell.net Please put BAGRS in the subject line so it won't get mixed with spam

Thanks to all for a successful Family Fun Run Day. The meal was good, but the Dutch Oven pineapple upside down cakes were really good. A special thanks to all who provided their ovens.

Next big event after the BAGRS in August will be CAL POLY DAY that we host for all alumni, friends, and other guests. Mark your calendars. If you have guests you wish to invite be sure to get their addresses to us ASAP as invitations will soon be going out in August.



Trying to find the problem



STILL MORE ON THE OVERFAIR RAILWAY AT THE OAKLAND ZOO, PART 3

The recent articles on the operation of an Overfair Railway at the Alameda County Zoological Gardens (Oakland Zoo) relied on the news reports published in the *Oakland Tribune*. Those articles have resulted in more information being uncovered. Doug Richter looked through his extensive log books and "field notes", which cover many decades of regional railroading lore. He found a note that the transfer of the Overfair Railway equipment from the MacDermot estate started on October 20, 1941. The *Oakland Tribune's* story published November 10, 1941 states that the moving of the equipment was already underway. So Doug's note agrees with the newspaper account because the moving operation probably took a few weeks.



1913 Operating at the Zoological Gardens

More uncertain dates are when the Zoological Gardens' operation ended and when the Overfair equipment was subsequently moved to Billy Jones' ranch in Los Gatos. Helpful information on these points is found in Norman W. Holmes' book *Prune Country Railroading / Steel Trails to San Jose*. On page 176, Holmes describes the ceremony marking the inauguration of the Billy Hones Wildcat Railroad.

"...Billy located some passenger cars once used at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. This equipment was built to a one-third scale and operated on 19 inch gauge track. In order to use the cars, Billy

had to rebuild the trucks and axles to match his 18 inch gauge track.

Some 300 townspeople and the Los Gatos High School Band turned out for a celebration on October 16, 1943, when a gold-plated spike was driven into a redwood tie by Louis M. McDermott. The date was the twenty-ninth anniversary of a similar ceremony on the Overfair Railroad at the 1915 San Francisco World's Fair. The Overfair equipment was then operating in an Alameda County park. All of this equipment was later obtained by Jones and eventually moved to his ranch. ..."

Three points of information are provided by these two paragraphs.

- 1) The laying of the Overfair track must have been finished on October 16, 1914. The Exposition opened to the public on February 20, 1915. It is not known when the track construction was started, but MacDermot was awarded the concession for the train operation in middle of 1913.
- 2) MacDermot sold, lent, or gave some of the Overfair passenger cars to Jones in 1943. It is not evident whether or not those cars still had the original roofs and front windows. Also, Jones and MacDermot knew each other in 1943.
- 3) MacDermot was still operating the Overfair train at the Zoological Gardens in October 1943, according to the above passage. No reports have been found as to the dates when he ceased that operation and moved to Los Gatos. The next published and dated report we have is an article in the *San Jose (Calif.) Mercury-News* of Sunday, January 5, 1947. That article tells of a proposal by MacDermot to run his train in Alum Rock Park.

Thanks to Doug Richter for researching his records and to Mac Gaddis for referring me a few years ago to Holmes' book. Any comments, corrections, and additions from local railroading historians and students will be appreciated.

Reference: Holmes, Norman W., *Prune Country Railroading / Steel Trails to San Jose*, Huntington Beach, CA, Shade Tree Books, 1985