

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 136

Cal Poly

Oct. – Nov. 2004

### **ON TRACK with your Director**

Ed Carnegie:

You'll notice that this is the Oct./Nov. newsletter. This reflects our last few weeks of being extremely busy with three significant run days in a row, birthdays, & other activities that kept us all hoping this past month. Activities in the foreseeable future will decrease dramatically starting in Nov., & I am sure will be welcomed by most to get a few things done at home & to just relax a little. This will also give us an opportunity to concentrate on training train crews. Our goal is to have four more qualified conductor/brakeman by Al Smith Day—April 10, 2005. We have noticed a shortage of conductor/brakeman because a few of our volunteers are now training to be fireman & ultimately engineers. Don't be bashful. If you would like to become more involved in Andy, Fitz or me & we will see that you get started in the right direction. In addition to our busy schedule, we have been able to put together a few small projects. A water tower is now operational on the College Station siding, & Pete informed me that the refill time from the water tank has been significantly reduced. With all the digging required to go under the main line & siding track, it was decided to bring additional water sources, & to also be able to control the pump from the water tower. So while the digging crew was working, additional water spigots were installed near the fire pit & the south end of the station. The Cosgrove Station has been built & installed; & work is progressing on a station that will be located near the McNab Grove.. Look forward to seeing you at the upcoming work days.

### **Down Behind the Railway**

With your President, air monkey, & carbarnist.

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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My Fellow Swantoons:

Welcome to October, the end of autumn if you are of the Celtic persuasion. We are a little late in publishing this newsletter as our resources were stretched to the limit with run days at the end of September & beginning of October.

We need to have more Brakemen, Conductors, Firemen, & Engineers, especially Firemen & Engineers. While we use the historic masculine terms, we include all genders in our operations.

To facilitate educating & qualifying members; we have increased the number of 'fun' days that are steam up runs just for members as an introduction to becoming an engineer as well as providing training for those in the process of becoming engineers.

What we need now is willing hands. So my friends, how do we get you to participate?

The to-do list hasn't changed much. The 1913 still has parts to be cleaned, primed painted. The 1500 could use another hand or two aiding its reconstruction. Bob is taking a break from the 1913 by rebuilding the crawler's engine & would welcome some help.

Nominations for officers will have been made by the time you read this & election will take place on Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at our general meeting.

Please think about how we can develop more active, hands-on, members who would like become engineers & firemen.

Fitz



Safety meeting before run

## In the Roundhouse

with Randy Jones

Aug. & Sept. have flown by with a great deal accomplished at your railroad. Continuing from the Sept. newsletter, the repair to the 1912's branch pipe didn't work out because new micro-fractures appeared each time old ones were brazed up.

Ultimately, the old casting was simply too thin. A replacement was fabricated out of heavy-wall steel tube, & then coated for corrosion protection. This was installed & tested before the BAGERS run, & has worked well since then.

Mark Cooper & Clinton Barr made it up for another mid-week work session on the 1500, machining & installing the left side crosshead guides, & then machining the right side crosshead shoes.

Progress is being made on the 1913's boiler.

Following an early August meeting with John Greco & Don Micheletti at Bay City Boiler, John's men have completed installing the wash-out fittings & have removed the tubes. John reported that the tubes were indeed thin, & our decision to replace them was prudent. Don has done the engineering calculations on the boiler & sees no impediment to certification, pending physical inspection. John's men are replacing some rivets in the mud ring & repairing some corroded areas behind the old coal grate brackets & in the lower front tube sheet. The interior is being high-pressure washed, while the exterior is being sand-blasted & coated with high temperature, corrosion resistant paint. Also on boilers, I replaced the remaining two original studs in the 1914's steam dome, & we've instituted a new

boiler water treatment program we hope will better preserve the boilers for future generations.

Marty & Edski spent the better part of a day raising & remounting the air pump on the 1914's tender.

We had a problem with dirt & leaves entering the air intake, & needed more space to access the valves & also attach an air cleaner. I serviced the air check valves, & the pump is running well again.

Another "tender" project involved brakes. While attempting to adjust the 1912's tender's brakes, I found that the braking force was only about one-third that of a passenger car. Re-engineering & remanufacturing followed, including repairs to bent parts, & the improvement is substantial. The 1914's tender brakes were not finished during its rebuild in the 1980's, so I installed a brake cylinder & duplicated the 1912's rigging. A new front truck bolster was made to replace the severely deteriorated original. Frank, Edski, & Eric contributed by dis-assembling the truck, cleaning parts, & then re-assembling the truck with the new bolster.

Future projects include finishing the car electrical systems, re-piping the 1914's air brake system including new brake valves, continuing the 1913's & 1500's restorations, & cleaning & repacking car journal boxes. Lots of dirty, greasy fun for all! Come join us.

### UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

Nov. 13/14 work weekend/elections SPRR

Dec. 11/12 work weekend

Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Run

My thanks to all of you that helped with so many of the tasks for our three big events that took place these past three weekends. Without your contributions, in whatever capacity, the success of the events & all the compliments received would not occur. So again many thanks to each that helped. Nov. is usually associated with "turkey" & so maybe, just maybe, we will try to have our usual turkey feast on Sat. Nov. 13. I know we usually never go hungry at Swanton, but if you are planning on staying for the dinner SAT. night, please call or email [ecarnegi@calpoly.edu] so that we can purchase the right size turkey & trimmings.

Also, the end of the year is fast approaching, & though we have our usual potluck type dinner for New Year's; we again are asking if any of you have specific ideas or plans on how YOU & your guests would maybe like to celebrate New Year's, besides the train rides—give us ideas i.e.—dinner theme, food color/alphabet theme, decoration ideas. New, different, & even “the strange” ideas are always welcomed. Life should never be boring, be expected, or of a routine. Any & all ideas will be considered. In Dec. I believe Bill McNab is trying to contact member Matt Zemny to try & organize a wreath making session for all interested. Wreaths will be made from Swanton redwoods &/or bay wood trees. So if you are interested let us know so that we can make arrangements to have adequate supplies on hand. There will be a minimal cost of \$5.00 to cover supplies. Stay tuned for further info.

membership list, you can pick these up during the work weekends. If you prefer a PDF file via email then you can print your own pages & do not have to wait.



Passing the token at Cosgrove

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

Jean Hawkins	San Jose
Victor Morris	San Jose
Stephanie Raugust	Davenport
Ross Riley	Spreckels
Richard Turner	Soquel
Karen Seale	Cupertino,

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.

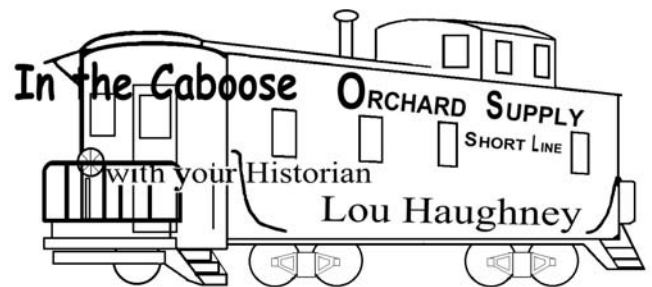


New Cosgrove Station

From the Secretary:  
Pete McFall

Green book updates are available. The Green Book contains our Society By-Laws, membership & training information. New members received the inserts when the secretary received their information. Green Logo Binders are available for pick up at Swanton. See Pete or Andy.

If you already have a Green Book, email Pete at [pmcfall@prodigy.net](mailto:pmcfall@prodigy.net) <<mailto:pmcfall@prodigy.net>> & order a current



THE SAGA OF THE OVERFAIR  
RAILWAY'S RETURN TO OAKL& -  
PART 2



The *Oakland Tribune* followed with much civic pride the return of MacDermot's Overfair Railway locomotive Nos. 1912 & 1913 to the city where they were built. Harre Demoro, a *Tribune* writer, told the story in at least four articles between 1969 & 1975. His first article on the impending sale by the Billy Jones estate appeared in last month's SPRS Newsletter. His next article, of those we have found, appeared in early Nov. 1969. It is reprinted here.

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## Rail History Re-Lived as 1915 Train Comes Home

By Harre W. Demoro  
Tribune Staff Writer

*Oakland Tribune* edition of Sunday, Nov. 9, 1969

Two of the miniature steam locomotives the late Mr. MacDermot designed & built in Oakland more than 50 years ago for operation at the 1915 World's Fair in San Francisco are back in the Eastbay.

They arrived on truck-trailers, not rails. Their new owner, Piedmont real estate appraiser Robert C. Maxfield, put them in an Oakland warehouse. When he finds a place to lay rail, the engines will be steamed up & run again.

Maxfield bought the locomotives & an assortment of other equipment after he read a *Tribune* story [January 5, 1969] about the equipment being for sale.

MacDermot was a shy but skilled craftsman. Member of a pioneer & wealthy Oakland family, MacDermot dreamed of constructing a railroad as modern & efficient as the ones running in 1915. MacDermot's railroad was to be exactly one-third the size of the real ones. It would run on rails spaced 19 inches apart instead of the standard four feet, eight & a half inches.

He designed & had built 60 passenger cars, five freight cars, four passenger locomotives & one switch engine. The entire railroad was installed at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Expedition, hence the name, "Overfair Railway".

MacDermot lost money & when the fair closed, his railroad came home to Oakland. The equipment was stored in the yard & in buildings on the grounds of his home at 7th & Cypress streets.

One of the locomotives & a few cars were used during World War II at the Alameda Zoological Gardens, now Knowland Park. But most of the equipment never ran after the fair closed.

MacDermot died in 1948, & his equipment was acquired by a friend, "Billy" Jones, a SP locomotive engineer who had a smaller railroad in his prune orchard in Los Gatos.

Jones was unable to adapt the locomotives to his railroad. He sold two passenger engines [Nos. 1914 & 1915] & the switcher [No. 1500] to a group in southern California. They have never been placed in operation.

Jones died last year & Maxfield bought what remained at Los Gatos of MacDermot's equipment earlier this year.

The equipment is in excellent condition & operable, Maxfield said. All it needs is a railroad on which to operate.

The type of railroad MacDermot admired - powerful steam engines with shrill, mournful whistles - has disappeared from modern America. But MacDermot's dream is in the custody of Maxfield. He now dreams of MacDermot's dream.

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NOTES: We have found four *Oakland Tribune* articles by Harre Demoro dated from 1969 to 1975 that describe the progress of Maxfield & his Calistoga Steam Railroad. There may have been more, probably one in early 1969 that tells of Maxfield's decision to buy the equipment. The later two articles we have date from 1974 & 1975 & tell about the overhaul of No. 1913 locomotive at the Redwood Valley Shop & of Maxfield's starting construction at the Calistoga Steam Railroad site in Napa Valley. These will be reprinted in future issues. Many of Demoro's articles were reprinted in issues of the *Western Railroader*; such as this one which appeared in abridged form in the December 1969, Vol. 32, No. 12, issue No., 358 of the *W. R.*