

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 140

Cal Poly

Mar. 2005

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

With a new year, new beginnings, and new ranch personnel, an increased effort is being extended to improve open communications between all. In order to help facilitate this endeavor we will have a monthly meeting prior to the workday weekend to discuss events, activities, operations and other concerns. I am looking forward to an eventful and productive year for everyone involved with Cal Poly's Swanton Pacific.

Even with threatening weather of rain the weekend was very successful with over 22 volunteers contributing. Concentrated efforts of many were exerted to make the Crown cars and equipment ready to leave the premises. Swanton's 19 inch gauge trucks had to be removed, and the original 24inch gauge reattached. The roundhouse crew under Marty's leadership worked on the 1912 to make sure everything was ready for the upcoming Al Smith Day Run, (Randy was shanghaied to work in the car-barn). Our diesel mechanic, Bob Wilkerson put some finishing touches on the Chinese crawler, and in to our surprise a husband and wife visitors came by. The wife was able to translate a good portion of the instructions, which were in Chinese, to us and was a great assistance to all. Dennis Johnson spent most of the day battling weeds along the track. On Sunday the rains came back, so most of the crew that stayed over installed shelves, constructed from some old salvaged conveyor parts, and conducted a general cleanup in the car-barn. Bill McNab concentrated on sprucing up the fern grove which we are planning to name after George Dela torré. Our faithful garden crew was busy both days, cleaning, removing weeds, and planting. Spring has definitely sprung. It makes me very proud every time I come on to the property and I see how nice everything looks. I must also mention our professional in-house docent Dick Toulson is always present to meet and charm our guests as our gracious host to all arriving guests.

This last weekend, Feb. 26, six volunteers requested permission to volunteer at Swanton both Sat. and Sun. in order to work on some Swanton Projects that they themselves volunteered to take on. Our young members volunteered on their own initiative to rebuild the original MacDermott boxcar. The rebuild is required because about 70% of the original wood has deteriorated, and the boxcar is not structurally sound. It probably has not seen any track service since 1915! This will make a great project for our youth members that volunteered, Clinton Barr, Eric Johnson, and Logan Thiesen. Through this project they will learn from the ground up how to document, organize and plan its construction.

In closing, as a reminder contributions for 2005 are being accepted. These contributions are a tremendous asset to the Swanton Pacific Railroad and they provide the financing for many of our special projects, such as the rebuilding of the boxcar by our youth.

Keep rolling along and we hope to see many of you in the coming months. Thanks for all you help.

Down Behind the Railway

With your President, air monkey, & carbarnist.

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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My Fellow Swantoons:

One more workday before Al Smith Day, (closely followed by Saint Paddy's Day – my favorite). Please consider what you may do to assist in serving our guests as well as celebrating.

The plans for restoration of the Cal Barn are in and approved. We have tentative plans to begin work the week following the workday (14th thru 21st of March). If any of you carpenters out there have a day or two to come by and help please let me or Ed know.

Sunday, March 13th your Executive Board is meeting in the Red House at 9:00 AM, with the meeting formally open for business at 10:00 AM. All members are welcome to attend.

Clint, Eric, and Logan have started on the reconstruction of the broken down boxcar that has sat in the back of the car shed for lo these many years. This is a major undertaking for the C, E & L Boxcar Company and, as the car is mostly wooden construction, they could probably use some advice regarding mortise and tenon joints. If you are a woodworker come on by and lend a hand.

That's all for now. Hope to see you March 12th.

Fitz

From the Secretary Pete McFall

Progress on the on board sound system for our train is continuing. We started on the last two cars the weekend of the 26th of February. One Keystone car has been drilled and ready to have wire installed and their two speakers mounted. The second Keystone car has been marked for drilling holes and had the two speakers mounted. We should be able to pull wires in both cars during the next work weekend.

Our crew consisted of Martie Way, Aaron Theisen, Logan Theisen, Marty Campbell, Randy Jones, Richard Mehr, Fitz FitzPatrick and Pete McFall. Martie Way took on the job of sanding and painting the seats in the rear compartments that had to be temporarily removed to facilitate the drilling of holes for the wire to go through. Along with the sanding, Martie and Marty prepared a very delicious Swanton Stew served at the traditional Swanton Dinner Time. Pete, Aaron and Logan worked on hole drilling and rust collecting.

Richard, Randy and Fitz fabricated plates to hold the interconnecting sockets on the end of the cars. Marty Campbell is making replacement wood parts that have deteriorated over the years. Our goal is to have the complete train wired and working for Al Smith Day, with that in mind we are accepting applications from members to be docents on the train to explain the flora and fauna and other points of interest of our railroad.

From the Roundhouse

It is a pleasure to report that work is proceeding well on the 1913's boiler at Bay City Boiler in S. San Francisco. Four mud ring rivets and several firebox staybolts have been replaced, and the condition of the boiler sheets has been surveyed using ultrasound. Things are generally looking quite good, with high pressure washing and another inspection next on the list.

Also on the 1913, we have successfully concluded a multi-year search for a way to preserve and enhance the exposed steel surfaces of the running gear. For those new to steam locos, the running gear is comprised of the side rods and all the rods and levers that make up the valve gear. These parts collect dirt and moisture like crazy and rust at the drop of a hat, and keeping them clean is almost an impossible chore. After researching a couple of plating options, we stumbled on an anticorrosive ceramic coating process that looks remarkably like polished steel, which is exactly what running gear should be. The 1913 will be done first, with the other locos to follow as soon as time permits.



Plated rods on 1913

Marty and I removed the 1912's throttle valve in order to do some boiler maintenance, and found that the levers and pins on the mechanism were getting awfully tight from rust. Even though the pins are stainless steel, the holes in the levers can close around them with rust, so we cleaned all that up. The valve is not the original design, which leaked badly when used infrequently, but a copy of Erich Thomsen's design which uses a globe valve. The valve stem had the threads removed so it could be pulled straight in and out of the valve body without having to turn a handle. The throttle rod

from the cab connects to the bottom of the yoke, and through links controls the stem, in order to admit steam to the cylinders. The design works really well, but in the future we may want to replace some more parts with stainless steel.



Throttle valve 1913

The weekend of Feb. 26/27 saw several members show up to work on the Keystone cars. Martie and Logan sanded wood parts, while Pete and Aaron drilled holes in the steel framework for the sound and brake cables, and mounted speakers. It is really great to see so many members coming out when they can to help the projects move along and gain new skills at the same time! We hope to have all the cars "sound equipped" by Al Smith Day.

Yours in "Training", Randy Jones

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

Mar. 12/13	Work weekend
April 9	work day
April 10	Al Smith Day Run
May 14/15	work week end
May 28-30	Memorial "3" Day Work Weekend

Sunday, April 10 will be our 12th annual Al Smith Day where we will kick off the year of hosting railroading events. Be sure to mark your calendars for this event, as we will have a "bigger than life" dedication for our friend, Al Smith—you won't want to miss this. Also, be thinking of what all you will want to assist with to make the event successful. A list will be circulating for sign-ups

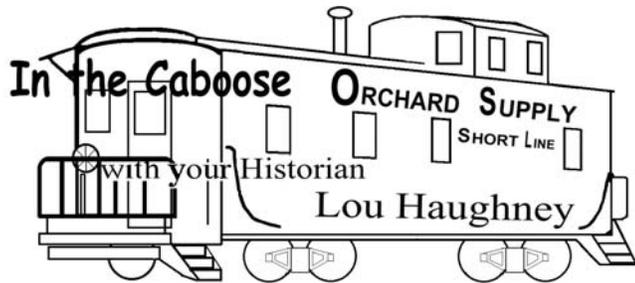
for i.e.: parking, cooking, serving, tours/hosting displays, sales, and especially CLEAN-UP. The more that help, the faster and easier it all comes together and gets put away.

This year the ranch and railroad will be showcasing different displays to promote the various functions of each. Tours of the roundhouse & carbarn, displays of RR equipment, and historical memorabilia of Swanton will be offered, along with a live steam "G" scale train operating. The ranch will display information on the Queseria Creek Restoration Project, have a raffle, display, and samplings for grass fed beef, have a contest and roping demo, provide a forestry walking tour and have people be able to brand their own redwood rounds. WOW it will be a day of fun-filled events for all to enjoy. Each of you should have, or will be receiving an invite shortly. RSVP's will be needed by April 5. If you want to pass the invite on, please copy and pass on or email us to send one out.

As a reminder: The sign-up sheet for volunteering to cook a dinner for a Saturday night workdays, can be found in the machine shop, by the telephone. Be sure to check it out, and more importantly pick a Saturday night that fits your schedule best. As of right now get your taste buds ready for a delicious St. Patrick's Day Irish dinner to be hosted on Sat., March 12 by our very own Irish native—Vera McLean. I know she would appreciate hearing from you if you are planning on being there for dinner as it certainly allows for better planning in how much to cook!

Remember too that **reservations for wanting to stay overnight for the work weekends should be called or emailed in ASAP.** Facilities are limited & we want to make sure we can accommodate everyone. Call (805) 995-3659 or email ecarnegi@calpoly.edu.

Beginning in May, you "MAY have noticed" we start our two work weekends a month and the second work weekend in May falls on the Memorial Day three day weekend. Come on down, over or up and help share in all the fun we have, and the free, full physical workout in our lovely outdoor gym.



MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OVERFAIR
PASSENGER CARS AT BILLY JONES
AND THE #1913 AT THE REDWOOD VALLEY
SHOP

Questions put in recent articles have resulted in helpful responses from our readers; specifically, in regards to the condition of the Overfair Railway's passenger cars when they were at Billy Jones' ranch and about the overhaul of locomotive #1913 in 1974 at the Redwood Valley Shop.

OVERFAIR PASSENGER CARS AT BILLY JONES'
RANCH

In telling about the transfer of the Overfair equipment from the Oakland Zoo to Billy Jones' ranch, I wrote "It is not evident whether or not those cars still had the original roofs and front windows". (Newsletter 134, August 2004). After reading that article, Dudley Westler of Piedmont found in his photograph collections two slides showing the passenger cars as part of the Wild Cat Railroad's consist for a special run. Dudley describes the occasion as follows.

"The enclosed photos taken June 7, 1957 clearly show that both the original roof and lettering and the windows were on the cars. My visit to Billy Jones' place that day was in connection with an excursion honoring T. Louis Chess, the SP General Passenger Agent who for many years had been in charge of the Peninsula commute service. The train, which was powered by ten wheeler 2248 in its 1896 livery and diamond stack, ran from 3rd & Townsend to California Ave. (in Palo Alto), thence down the Los Altos branch to Vasona Jct. and then to Campbell for the stop at Jones' ranch after which it returned to San Francisco via San Jose.

"The last I heard, SP 2248 is still active hauling tourists between Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas. Quite a life for such an old girl!"

His two photos will be reproduced in a future issue as soon as we digitize the photos. Dudley adds an intriguing comment :

"...regarding moving the Overfair Railway equipment to the Oakland. "While I never did ride the thing, I rode over its tracks at night in a hay rack. Needless to say the tracks and that hay wagon were NOT good friends."

That must have been an impressionable and unusual ride over the tracks. Thanks Dudley for sharing your pictures and your memories with us. If any one knows the present status of the SP 2248, let us know.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS ABOUT THE OVERFAIR
LOCOMOTIVE #1913 AT THE REDWOOD VALLEY
RAILROAD SHOP IN 1974.

The article about the renovation of #1913 in 1974 preparatory to Maxfield's starting operations at Calistoga prompted Doug Richter to look through his voluminous note books for references to this event. He suggested that I contact Richard Dunn, a long-time friend of Eric Thomsen and a frequent visitor to Eric's shop. Richard recalls seeing the 1913 in the shop, but he wasn't involved in the work on it. Richard referred me to Chris De Witt, who is now head of the restoration shop at the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City. Chris says that routine maintenance was performed to bring the 1913 up to operating status. For example, the boiler tubes were cleaned; a few had to be replaced. Some parts of the brake spring system had to be remade. Corresponding parts on the #1912 served as models for the remade parts. A few of MacDermot's wooden patterns were still available. Quite a bit of work, however, was performed on the tender. All this work took only "a few months". Nothing was done on the #1912.

Thanks to Chris De Witt for his reminiscences. He invites all SPRS to visit the Nevada State Railroad Museum; he will be glad to show you the work being done in their restoration shop.