

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 141

Cal Poly

Apr. 2005

### ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

March has been a very busy month for Swanton. Volunteer hours have almost doubled from what they have been in previous years. This past work weekend [March 12/13], actually started on Thursday [10] as the ranch and RR had an informational meeting for coordination and updates. In order to keep up with the rapid growing weeds, Pete and Bill have been working the right-of-way whenever there has been a break in the weather and when a few days of sunlight could be seen. Friday, the 11<sup>th</sup>, concentrated on cleanup, ie. mowing the lawn, etc. Saturday saw a workforce of over 25 volunteers, plus numerous visitors that were given the “dollar tour” by our very own docent Dick Toulson. Mark & Corine Cooper, under the direction of Randy, worked on the running gear of the 1913. A concentrated effort was exerted on the Keystone cars where Pete McFall cornered Martie, Logan, Clinton, Olin, Frank, and anybody else he could to drill the holes and run the wiring for the sound system. While progress was being made there, Randy Jones gathered as many volunteers as he could find to work on the brake systems. The car-barn crew supervised our teenage crew on their rebuild of the boxcar. Stan and I took the work train down towards the end of track and spent the day mowing along side the right-of-way to cut down the rapid growing weeds. By the end of the day everybody was ready for a shower, followed up with wonderful corn-beef/cabbage dinner provided by our true Irish member Vera McLean.

Sunday morning was dedicated to a Board Meeting where one of the prime objectives was to

develop a capital expenditure and project list for budget projections for the next year. Also discussed were activities for the upcoming Al Smith Day and plans for a Christmas tree farm in the train field. One of the problems with the train field is lack of access by ag tractors through most of the year due to the high flows in Scotts Creek. It was discussed that if we could find a 10-15 hp small wheeled tractor that we could transport on one of our flatcars, this would give us the ability to work that field and control weeds and trees during the times that it is unaccessable by other means. If any of you have access to or know of a small, OPERATIONAL tractor, please let us know. Another discussion was that it would be nice to plant pumpkins in the train field and to be able to harvest them in Oct. of course this means that the field needs to be readied and planted NOW. Without the small tractor it really is not feasible to try and do it by hand. These activities would foster the need for the train to serve as a link to the agricultural enterprises of the ranch. In some counties ag tourism has become a hot topic to bridge a mutual understanding of the benefits of agricultural to the general public.

Sunday afternoon Fitz and Richard consolidated the last of the Crown car rail equipment for ease in loading.

Recently, we finally received the building permit and permission to remove the red-tag and bring the Cal Barn up to current standards. A concentrated effort by Fitz, Richard and myself, with assistance from other members occurred during the next full week. Approximately 1/3 of the required work has been completed, and we'll make plans for another concentrated drive for its completion in the near future.

On Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, Remlinger Farms arrived to pick-up all the Crown cars and associated equipment. Approx 15 of our volunteers showed up to help with this removal. When Remlinger Farms realized they did not have enough space to transport all of the equipment, they opted to quick-deed the remainder of the equipment to SPRR. Sunday, the last day that we worked on the Cal Barn, the crew decided to make a short day of it and tried to depart by noon. Most were successful in departing. However, our cat, Miss Shadow, had other plans. Immediately following lunch, as we prepared to pack and leave, Shadow decided to play "hide and seek". After spending approx two hours looking for her we decided it was too late to leave so here we went again—re-set up camp and settle in for the evening. Rain nor shine brought her by, but finally by 7:30pm she decided to venture back for some food. So much for the best laid plans of "Mice and Men"—here the furry cat took control & played boss.

Reservations for Al Smith Day are arriving daily, so it looks like it will be a great success. If you have not turned yours in yet, or still have friends to invite, be sure to get the information to us ASAP. April 5 is the deadline. Likewise, be ready to sign up for the various tasks necessary to make this a positive event. Hope to see you soon.

### Down Behind the Railway

With your President, air monkey, & carbarnist.

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick  
 RGBFitz@aol.com 650.737.9584

My Fellow Swantoons:

All aboard for our 12<sup>th</sup> annual Al Smith Day.

Let's start off with a couple of quotes:

"I'm here for the party!" – Gretchen Wilson

"You just can't beat fun." – Mary Feeley

As with all parties a lot of preparation, set-up, hosting, and cleanup goes into making a memorable event.

MaryAnn and Ed have done the prep work, now it is up to us to jump into 'spring cleaning', setting up displays and BBQ tables, food service, and all the other minutiae associated with a successful event and finally cleaning up afterward.

Lots of things to do, many hands make the work lighter – and shorter.

Come on over Saturday and lend a hand, bring your gloves and a joke. We'll have fun on Sunday with train rides, food, and stories to tell and hear.

Fitz



A good dinner for all

### UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

|           |                               |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 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 12<sup>th</sup> annual Al Smith Day where we will kick off the year of hosting railroading events. This year we will have a "bigger than life" dedication for our friend, Al Smith—you won't want to miss this. I will be asking many of you to assist with 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.

Please note that starting in May we will have two work weekends a month—the second and fourth weekends. Hopefully with longer daylight days and the lazy days of summer you will be able to come on out to Swanton on one or both of the weekends to participate in all the fun we have. We usually have Saturday night dinners outside—either BBQ or Dutch oven cooking style. So as a reminder: The sign-up sheet for volunteering to cook a dinner for a Saturday night workday, 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. In June or July we would like to have all Dutch Oven

cookers prepare a meal for all with their gourmet delights. Let me know which month works best.

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](mailto:ecarnegi@calpoly.edu).



Bill and Gloria McNab looking at McNab Station



Calistoga Steam Railroad train, with Overfair locomotive No. 1913, leaving the station at Calistoga, Napa County, California  
SPRS Achive No. 1969-1978 RCM-0006  
1975-1978,

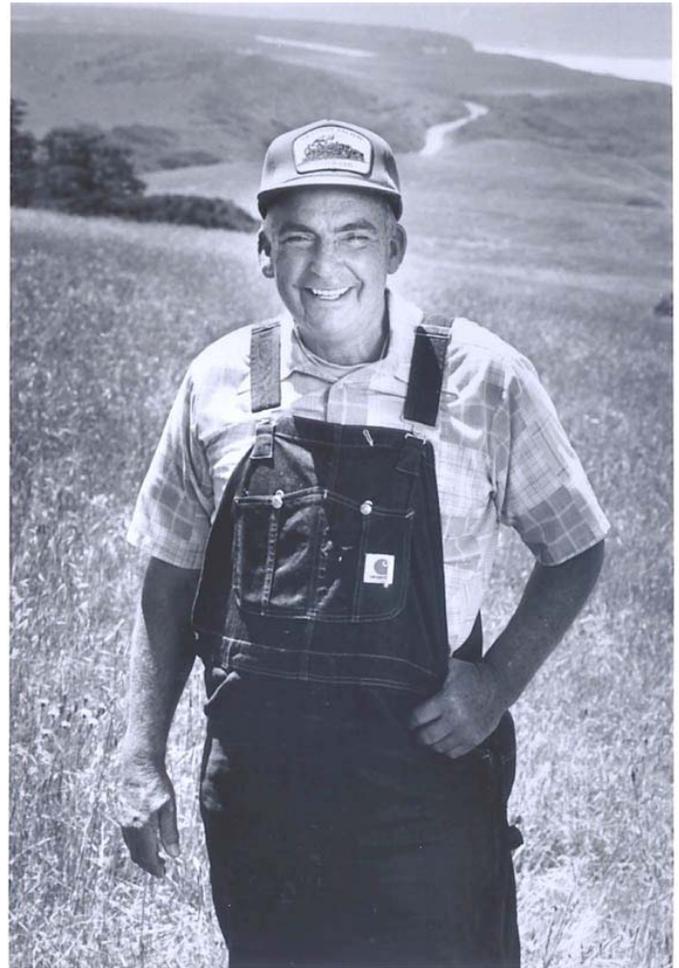
Photo by Warren K. Miller

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

Nancy Proctor  
Ernie Ortiz

Cupertino  
Mountain View

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. Also be sure to introduce yourself to both Pete McFall, Secretary to obtain your membership book with bylaws, etc. & then to Bob Wilkinson so that he can make up your very own "gold", laminated nametag with all pertinent information.



Al Smith's Gift Keeps His Dream Alive  
REMEMBERING A FRIEND

This article is from CAL POLY TODAY FALL 1994  
By Darlene Slack

In life, alumnus Al Smith shared his knowledge, time, friendship and resources with everyone he knew. In death, his extraordinary generosity and his love for Cal Poly, its students, faculty and staff live on.

Smith had three passions in life: teaching, ranching and the railroad.

And he made sure they would live on as well. Prior to his passing away in December 1993, Smith ('44 crop science, '56 M.A. ag ed) established a trust that donates the majority of his estate, including the 3,200-acre Swanton Pacific Ranch, to the College of Agriculture.

The trust, estimated at \$22 million, mandates that Swanton Pacific be kept as a working ranch. This gift is believed to be one of the largest estate gifts ever made to a public, comprehensive university. Endowments were established to operate and maintain the ranch and the one-third scale railroad Smith operated on the property.

The ranch first became a living laboratory in 1987 when Smith leased the coastal rangeland to Cal Poly to enhance the instructional programs in agriculture. Smith enjoyed the chance to be personally involved with the hundreds of students who worked and lived there. In his ever-present bib overalls, Smith worked alongside the students, teaching them about the rangeland, timberland and cropland. He instilled in them a feeling of responsibility and commitment to the preservation of natural beauty.

Smith loved teaching the Cal Poly students and always had a smile on his face and a story to tell. Any student who wanted to learn and work hard was OK with Smith, even if his eyebrows went up at first when encountering a male student with an earring and long hair. As long as the student rolled up his sleeves and put in an honest day's work, Smith respected him. During those times, Smith called on his many years of experience as an ag teacher at both Manteca and Campbell high schools.

He always told a new crop of Cal Poly students about his first day as an ag teacher. Smith said he was very nervous and told the students everything he knew in the first 20 minutes. And, he insisted, he still got nervous talking in front of students, though none was apparent to the Cal Poly students who learned so much from him.

Smith transferred to Cal Poly from San Jose State in the early 1940s to pursue his passion for the railroad. A note in a family journal reads, "Albert decided to go to Cal Poly because of the Cuesta grade railroad tracks and the tunnel." While waiting to be drafted, Smith left Cal Poly to work on the Southern Pacific railroad where he lost his leg when

a blast of steam knocked him off the top of a moving train. He saved his life by taking off his belt and using it as a tourniquet a lesson he learned as a Boy Scout.

With the \$15,000 he received in compensation, Smith put \$5,000 of it together with money from his former scoutmaster and they purchased his Boy Scout camp site to preserve it for the group. That became the first parcel of what is today Swanton Pacific Ranch. Another \$5,000 was put in the bank and the last \$5,000 was used to purchase stock.

After recuperating from his accident, Smith returned to Cal Poly at the urging of his mother who said he would end up a cripple on the street if he didn't finish his education. He completed his master's degree in ag education in 1956.

Smith's father had started a farmers' cooperative in 1931, which eventually became Orchard Supply Hardware. After leaving teaching, Smith spent 17 years as president of the chain, which he expanded from one store to 14. One of the things he loved doing as president was leaving his office--it was in a caboose, of course--and working the cash register. His enjoyment might have outweighed his expertise, however. A time/motion consultant who did not know who Smith was used him as an excellent example of an inefficient worker who needed more training.

Early on, Smith recognized what the hardware store could become and began paying \$1.25 for shares he said were worth a dollar. When he sold the chain to W.R. Grace and Co. for \$47 a share, he could afford to finish buying the last parcels of land around the Boy Scout camp.

Everyone who visited the ranch came away with a sense of its uniqueness and of Smith's love for the land he painstakingly bought over the years. Swanton Pacific Ranch was a 'spiritual experience' for Smith; a place where his passions for teaching, ranching and railroading could be fulfilled. Those passions will continue for future generations, thanks to his generosity.