

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 151

Cal Poly

Mar. 2006

### ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

We were so anxious to get to Swanton that we arrived on Thursday night, set up camp, and were surprised when bright and early Friday morning Edski, Andy, Bill, Fitz, Richard, Pete, Rick, and Bob all arrived bright eyed and bushy tail, all ready to take on the weekend.

With the weather so nice and sunny we were able to finish the exterior trim on the Cal Barn, as well as steam clean and prep the entire building to have ready for painting the next day. Pete and McNab did right-of-way tree maintenance and spruced up the fruit orchard in the train field. As the day ended and the dinner hour grew closer, Geoff, Aaron, Marty and Carol arrived for an early start on Friday. The red-house crew prepared an Italian feast to coincide with the opening of the Olympics in Torino, Italy. By Friday afternoon we already had 14 of our volunteers on site!

Saturday's activities concentrated primarily on two themes-instructional steam operations and SP working projects. Immediately after breakfast, a steam engine class started off with the firing the 1912 where volunteers gained experience in the firing, operations, and signals of trains. The instructors for the day were Randy Jones and Marty Campbell. The track crew consisting of Dennis, Rick, Pete, Bill Mc Nab and our two new volunteers-Ernie Falk, and Bob Connelly, cleaned out drainage ditches at the wye that got filled during the winter rains. Clinton Barr of the CE&L crew spent the day painting the frame of the boxcar. Mark and Matt made good progress on the 1500. We now have a good historian group—Jean Ward, Chris Taylor and Barbara McCrary—under the leadership of Lou Haughney working diligently on getting historical data organized and projects assigned so that all assistance is being used most effectively. Watch for future articles in the newsletter.

Stan, Fitz and I masked the doors and windows of the Cal Barn. Later in the day Fitz and Richard placed the first coat of barn red on the building. Richard, Stan, Fitz, Aaron, and I disassembled the tractor storage building, and reduced its size to be within the legal footprint allowed.

Lunch was a delicious BBQ tri-tip cooked by Bob, with side dishes provided by Martha, Carol and Mary Ann. A good crowd of 34 volunteers were well fed and highly productive this work weekend. The garden club crew of Martha, Margaret, Carol and Mary Ann continued the battle of “weedin” and sprucing up the grounds for upcoming events and the onset of Spring.

Saturday night a birthday feast for Fitz, Pete, Marty C, Martie W., and myself was celebrated—each received their very own birthday candle and fruit tart to then share with 13 others, along with a delicious meal. Though Sunday saw a smaller volunteer force, all were still highly productive with getting a second coat of paint applied to the Cal Barn, the tractor storage shed got completely re-erected in its new location behind the roundhouse, and our track weeding crew went down the track to spray for weeds, but got side tracked with the gorgeous weather and forgot to spray the weeds! SPRR is such a slice of heaven that sometimes we just need to fully enjoy it! All in all it was a very successful work weekend, with numerous volunteers showing up to help out in many many ways, either participating in some great meals, good times together, as well as getting several projects completed. This all made for a good start in getting things ready for our opening train season on April 9, Al Smith Day. Again a thank you hardly seems enough for all you, our volunteers do, but every contribution each of you make is greatly appreciated. Hope to see many of you at the March weekend.

***REMINDER:*** Anyone wanting to have an article/photo printed in the SPRR newsletter should have copy sent to [ecarnegi@calpoly.edu](mailto:ecarnegi@calpoly.edu) by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

## Down Behind the Railway

With your President, air monkey, & car-barnist.  
Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick  
RGBFitz@aol.com 650.737.9584

My Fellow Swantoons:

The old Julian calendar, (see Gaius Julius Caesar. 100-44 B.C.) from about 46 B.C. , with a day added every fourth year - our leap year, lost synchronization with the seasons after about fifteen hundred years because Mother Earth is not very tidy in her travels about the Sun.

Pope Gregory the XIII established the Gregorian calendar we use today in 1582 A.D. (or C.E. is you are of that persuasion) to correct the misalignment of calendar days and the seasons. I don't know if he did it personally.

The folks in Merry Old England however kept on using the Julian calendar until 1752. Were they slow or resistant to change?

And why am I writing about this? Well, it's historical and has a curious consequence, both themes I enjoy.

The Gregorian calendar changed the way leap years are calculated and made January 1st , rather than March 25th, the beginning of the year.

Then we have George Washington who was born on February 11, 1731 under the Julian system and February 22, 1732 as we reckon days.

So much for history, on to the future.

Al Smith Day - April 9th

The March 11th work weekend will have spring cleaning as a priority, mostly track clearing and such, for those of you trying to work off a few pounds gained over the holidays. And, as always, housekeeping; cleaning, painting, take out the trash. All those things we do when having family and friends over for a party.

### Projects

Spring cleaning brings to mind several projects that have been on the back burner or just set on a shelf awaiting a champion to claim them as their own. Some we have been working on as time allows and others are orphans just waiting for a loving hand.

- Now that the Cal barn restoration is complete it would be very nice to have permanent display cases and storage cabinets, with temperature and humidity controls, for our archived materials.
- In the roundhouse we need to connect the air hose reels to our compressed air system.
- The machine shop has a door that needs repair, a large vice to be mounted, and machine tools to be protected from rust.

- The Car barn needs CAT 5 cable pulled through the conduit from the roundhouse.
- The window casements in the OSH caboos need to be repaired, perhaps with Liquid Wood.
- The interior of the Santa Fe Caboos needs refurbishing.
- The Ford boom truck needs a new engine.
- Several of the signal stands, poles, and signals need paint.
- College Park Station needs to have a fence to control access to the trains.

The list goes on. The 1913 and 1500 restoration projects are still under way. EdSki's Keystone car project is pending having the car's skeleton cleaned, primed and painted.

We need a signals wizard. We would like to have crossing and block signals. As a start, a crossing signal at Stone Crossing as proof of concept. Inductive proximity detectors; battery/solar powered; wireless bus; resistant to weather, vibration, and shock.

There are again as many projects on the list in the yard. Come on over and make one your own.

Hope to see you the 11<sup>th</sup>.

Fitz

## UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

Mar.	11/12	join in on the fun-work weekend
April	8	last minute prep work for run
April	9	AL SMITH RUN DAY

The "ides of March" and the "Luck of the Irish—a day of green" will soon be upon us. Since our volunteer weekend is prior to each of these dates we will be a celebratin' St. Paddy's Day with our usual Sat. night dinner after the work-day. The faire will be of a green nature—the main dish still to be decided upon, will be provided for all coming. However, for those of ye wishin' to participate, please bring a side dish but it must be something in the good ole green. Greenbacks will not count! If you could call to say ye are a comin' and bringin' somethun' that would be much appreciated.

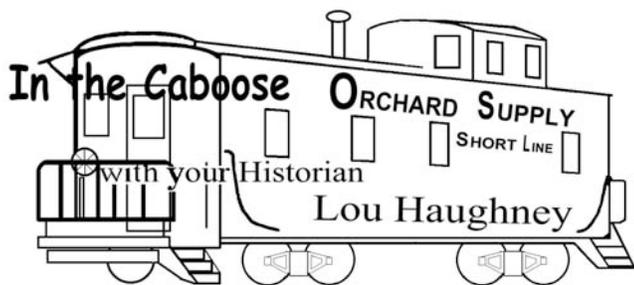
Al Smith Day is also fast approaching and we will be taking inventory of what will be needed in the way of supplies, etc., and who will be a doing what on the eventful day. Should you have guests you would like to invite please copy the invite, as provided in this newsletter and is on the website. Feel free to distribute to as many as you wish. As a reminder—many of you know that Al always liked to end a good meal with a taste of something sweet—cookie, cake, pie, candy, etc. He would say "YES! to all of the above." So as custom goes, we would like to ask that all of our volunteers

honor his wish by bringing something sweet to top off the great meal we serve to all our guests on April 9.

Hope to see many of you in March—and remember your green or beware of Brutus!

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE—REMEMBER: **anyone wanting to stay overnight for work weekends should call or e-mail reservations in ASAP.** Facilities are limited & we want to make sure we can accommodate everyone. Call (805) 995-3659 or e-mail [ecarnegi@calpoly.edu](mailto:ecarnegi@calpoly.edu).

*It also helps in trying to successfully plan for how many people are staying for a Sat. night dinner!*



### MACDERMOT'S MACHINE SHOPS

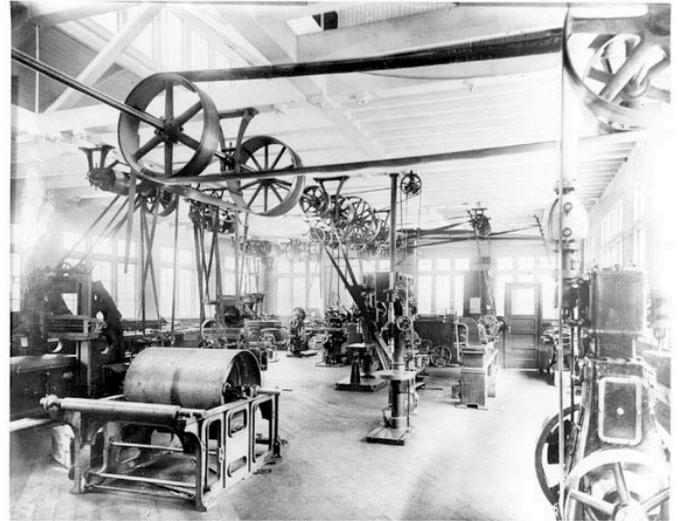
These two pictures show the interior of Louis MacDermot's machine shop, located on the grounds of the MacDermot family's estate in Oakland. The shop was probably built and equipped in 1910, according to entries in a ledger book found in Al Smith's closets. Although this is a large, hard bound book of more than 100 pages, it contains records of expenses and income for only a few months, from August to early November, 1910. The first 13 pages are missing.

The October 1910 pages give information on the machine shop's cost or value. One item reads "added to estimated cost of new shop", namely \$500, which increased the value of the "buildings" to \$5,989.92. The value of the "equipment" was listed as \$12,748.42.

These pictures show a clean, well-equipped machine shop with all the necessary, up-to-date equipment. The object in the right-hand corner appears to be a stationary steam engine, which provided power to the machines through a belt-and-wheel system.

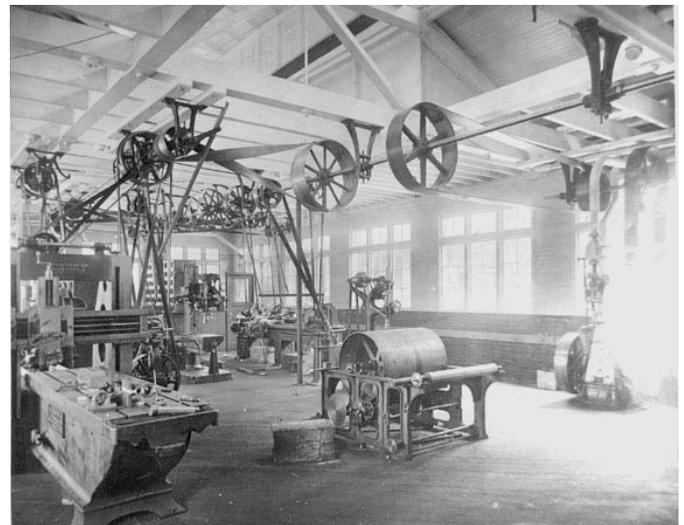
Are the above amounts in 1910 dollars reasonable, when adjusted for inflation, for setting up an equivalent machine shop today?

Note: Using an inflation factor of approximately 20x for converting 1910 dollars to 2005 dollars, one obtains present day values of about \$120,000 for the buildings and \$256,000 for the equipment. The inflation factor is taken from tables developed by Robert E. Sahr, Political Science Department, Oregon State University. ([http://oregonstate.edu/dept/pol\\_sci/fac/sahr/sahr.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/dept/pol_sci/fac/sahr/sahr.htm))



Louis MacDermot's machine shop, right side view, about 1910.

(Photo from the Al Smith collection)



Louis MacDermot's machine shop, left side view, about 1910.

(Photo from the Al Smith collection.)